



Our Lady of Lourdes School - Bayswater

Anti-Bullying Policy

RATIONALE

At Our Lady of Lourdes school everyone should be treated respectfully, every person needs to feel safe and secure and students need an environment that supports their sense of belonging, learning, personal growth and positive self esteem. These aspirations are central to the wellbeing of individual students and to a school environment where all feel safe and respected.

Every person has the right to feel safe from verbal, physical and emotional abuse that takes the form of bullying. A situation where a student feels unsafe in school because of bullying is not tolerated.

PURPOSE

- To promote and support safe and respectful learning environments where bullying is not tolerated
- To ensure that our ongoing focus on safety and wellbeing is implemented and monitored. School safety is not viewed as being separate but as a central component of our school.
- To prevent and respond promptly to incidents of bullying and other forms of unacceptable behaviour.
- To work in partnership with parents/carers to reduce and manage bullying.
- To encourage a culture that is firm about unacceptable behaviour.
- To articulate how bullying is defined and addressed; including the means taken to prevent incidents and the response taken when an incident occurs.
- To ensure that:
 1. Each person in the school community is aware of, and can identify, the signs and evidence of bullying occurring.
 2. Each person takes seriously his or her responsibility, whether as a victim or observer of bullying, to report all incidents.
 3. All reported incidents of bullying are actively attended to.
 4. Both the victim and perpetrator of bullying are supported and assisted to learn from the experience.
 5. Relationships damaged as a result of bullying are, as much as is possible, restored within a reasonable time, using the restorative approach

DEFINITIONS

Bullying includes hostile intent, imbalance of power, repetition, distress and provocation. Bullying is repeated unreasonable behaviour directed towards a person that creates a risk to their health and safety. It occurs when an individual or a group uses power to scare or hurt others.

Forms of bullying include:

- **Physical bullying:** pushing, shoving, fighting, pinching and any other unwelcome physical contact used intentionally to intimidate or hurt someone.
- **Verbal bullying:** put downs, particularly those referring to physical characteristics or gender, can result in loss of self esteem. Racial discrimination of any kind is a form of bullying.
- **Gesture bullying:** non-verbal signals can be used by bullies to silence and intimidate their victims.
- **Extortion bullying:** physically stronger and more powerful students may bully other students into giving up their possessions, buying food and drink, or taking part in rule breaking activities.
- **Exclusion bullying:** being left out of activities on purpose is one of the most hurtful forms for children because it feeds their fear of not being accepted.
- **Visual bullying:** offensive notes or material, graffiti, or damaging other people's possessions.
- **Sexual bullying:** touching, sexually-orientated jokes, drawings of, or writing about someone's body, using rude names or commenting about someone's morals, unwanted invitations of a sexual nature, asking questions about someone's private life.
- **Cyber bullying:** the use of various forms of electronic media to spread text and visual messages to cause hurt, embarrassment and intimidation.

Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, who have more power at the time deliberately upset or hurt another person, their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion.

Types of Bullying

There are three broad categories of bullying:

1. *Direct physical bullying*
This form includes hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.
2. *Direct verbal bullying*
This form includes name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, or verbal abuse.

Serve the Lord with joy.

3. *Indirect bullying*

This form of bullying is harder to recognise and often carried out behind the bullied person's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Indirect bullying includes:

- lying and spreading rumours;
- playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate;
- mimicking;
- encouraging others to socially exclude someone;
- damaging someone's social reputation and social acceptance; and
- cyber-bullying is defined as bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including, but not limited to, a transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted by the use of any electronic device, including, but not limited to, a computer, telephone, cellular telephone, or text messaging device designed to humiliate and distress someone.

What Bullying is Not

Many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying, even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management. If a student is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied. Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different students is not the same as bullying.

IMPLEMENTATION

Anti-Bullying Strategy

There are two key elements to the anti-bullying strategy:

1) Primary Prevention & Early Intervention

- a) The implementation of learning programs aligned with the Victorian Curriculum Capability, Personal and Social Capability. The essential knowledge, skills and behaviours students need are described in the domains of Health and Physical Education, Personal and Social Capability, and Civics and Citizenship. These programs include:
 - A Prep to Year 6 unit through the year with an explicit focus on personal and social learning from the relevant Victorian Curriculum level.
 - Personal and social learning as integral to further Units of work throughout the year.
 - Teachers planning and implementing targeted social skills programs to build resilience and develop conflict resolution, assertiveness and problem solving skills.
- b) Throughout the year, and repeated as needed, each classroom teacher is to clarify with students their responsibilities with regard to preventing and reporting bullying.
- c) Staff and students adhere to and actively promote the school expectations.
 1. Take care of all property
 2. Move safely

3. Speak and act appropriately
4. Follow directions
5. Hands off
6. Listen to the speaker

- d) Parents are kept informed about all elements to the school's approach and regularly reminded and encouraged to contact the school should they become aware of a problem. Ongoing communication between school and home is strongly encouraged.

2) Intervention on an Incident Being Reported

- a) The staff member is to immediately notify the Principal who will initiate the process of response.
- b) Each incident is fully investigated and the actions taken are documented. These actions will include:
 - a. Once identified, the victim, the perpetrator, and any witnesses are interviewed.
 - b. The parents of all students involved are contacted and meetings as needed are arranged.
 - c. An action plan, which takes the intent of restoring the relationship and that equally, addresses the needs of both the victim and the perpetrator is put in place.
 - d. The action plan is monitored and adjusted as needed.
- c) If the perpetrator persists in bullying, the above process will be repeated and will result in a revised action plan. Where necessary the specialist staff from Catholic Education Melbourne and/or other professionals may be asked to become involved. Students who continue to bully will be closely supervised.
- d) Parents are encouraged to contact the school immediately if they become aware of a problem.
- e) Public recognition to be given of positive behaviours in the classroom and at whole school assemblies.
- f) Students who have been bullied may:
 - a. Be excluded from class for a period.
 - b. Be subject to a personalised behaviour plan.
 - c. Be excluded from the yard for a period.
 - d. Have privileges reduced or withdrawn.
 - e. Be required to cooperate by attending counselling from an appropriate agency.
 - f. Be suspended, or in extreme cases an enrolment transfer to another school.

Restorative Practices

The term Restorative Practices refers to a range of processes which are underpinned by the following concepts:

Serve the Lord with joy.

- misconduct is viewed as a violation of people and relationships.
- these violations create obligations and liabilities; and
- problem-solving focuses on healing and making things right.

These practices, ranging from proactive to reactive, involve the development and enhancement of relationships in schools and teaching of conflict resolution and other problem-solving skills. They also involve classroom management that is participatory and democratic and focused on problem-solving.

These practices require a shift in philosophy from traditional punitive models of behaviour management to those relational models which, as well as holding wrongdoers accountable for their behaviour, provide support for the community affected by the wrongdoing.

Specific Restorative Practices include:

Community Conferences

A community conference brings together, in the wake of a serious incident of harm, the wrongdoer and the student being bullied, along with their families and appropriate school personnel. Conducted by a trained facilitator, a series of scripted questions is directed to participants in order to understand the incident and its antecedents and the effects of the incident on the community. An agreement is reached whereby all participants feel that there has been some restitution and that relationships have been repaired. The agreement also reflects plans to meet identified needs of the participants, such as counselling, and to implement necessary changes to school policy and practice. Follow-up is crucial for ongoing support and to ensure compliance with the agreement.

Small Group Individual Conferences

These are usually confined to a small group of students or an individual student and perhaps teacher(s) who have been involved in a less serious incident of harm. Typically small group conferences might be used to deal with low-level bullying before matters escalate. Parents, while not directly involved, are informed of the process and its outcomes. Follow-up is crucial for ongoing support and to ensure compliance with the agreement.

Classroom Conferences

Through CircleTime the whole-class group is involved in addressing issues which have affected teaching and learning in the classroom and student wellbeing, such as classroom bullying and more generally, classroom disruption.

Resources

- CECV policy 1.14: "Pastoral Care of Students in Catholic Schools" incorporating the "Guidelines for Student Behaviour Management" February 2008.
- Safe Schools are Effective Schools – a resource for developing safe and supportive school environments. Dept of Education and Training 2006
- Guidelines for developing The Student Code of Conduct Directorate of School Education 1994

Evaluation

Research indicates that it is essential that bullying prevention measures are reviewed regularly and revised to ensure that the school's bullying prevention practices remain effective. It is important to:

- monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the bullying prevention practices and make adjustments when needed.
- review the Policy annually in line with the school's Annual Action Plan
- regularly revisit and change the Policy with the school as it moves forward.
- report the effectiveness of the Policy and the schools' bullying prevention strategies to the school community annually.

History of Updates to Policy

Date	Review: Major, Minor, etc
2015	Written and ratified
2019	Minor update - amendment