



School Policy against Bullying

Statement of Faith

Our schools are communities of faith, learning and transformation founded upon the person of Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life, where the gospel is proclaimed and lived within the communion and the rich tradition of the Catholic Church.

Our Mission Statement—To Provide Excellence in Education.

- > Through quality teaching and learning
- > By providing a safe and creative learning environment
- > By challenging students to strive for academic excellence
- > By being a place where faith and values are enriched and shared within the Catholic Tradition
- > By creating a valued partnership with staff, parents, parish and the wider community

Reviewed: 2013.



Purpose

At St Mary's School, we believe that all members of the community have the right to a learning and work environment free from intimidation, humiliation and hurt. We all share a responsibility to foster, promote and restore right relationships. We believe that bullying is unacceptable and we [students, staff and parents] all share a responsibility for preventing it.

This policy builds on the school's Pastoral Care and Behaviour Management Policy to provide clear procedures and strategies to prevent, reduce and respond to bullying. References should be made to Restorative Practices. This policy is provided at the commencement of the school year to all school community members. Regular reminders of the policy and its processes will be included in the school newsletter.

Definition

Whilst there is no universally accepted definition of bullying, there is general consensus that bullying behaviour:

- is deliberate and often repeated
- intends to cause fear, distress, hurt or harm to another
- is action by a more powerful individual or group over a less powerful individual or group

Bullying takes many forms, all of which will cause distress. Examples of bullying include:

- *Physical* - hitting, pushing, tripping, kicking, spitting on others etc
- *Verbal* - teasing, using offensive names, ridiculing, spreading rumours etc
- *Non-Verbal* - writing offensive notes or graffiti about others, using e-mail or text messaging to hurt others, rude gestures etc
- *Exclusion* - deliberately excluding others from group, refusing to sit next to someone etc
- *Extortion* - threatening to take someone's possessions, food or money etc
- *Property* - stealing, hiding, damaging or destroying property etc
- *Cyber* - any form of bullying which is carried out through electronic means such as email, chat room, 'sms', web page etc



How do we prevent bullying at St Mary's School?

Research suggests that prevention strategies that involve the whole school community [students, staff and parents] are more likely to reduce bullying. Therefore, at St Mary's School we recognise that we all share the responsibility to prevent bullying. The Christian values which represent the antithesis of bullying will be taught explicitly, continually modelled, clearly demonstrated and generously affirmed across all facets of school life.

At St Mary's School we adopt the following strategies to prevent bullying:

- Explicit teaching of positive behaviours embedded within the curriculum addressing positive relationships, conflict resolution, resilience, bystander action etc
 - *Teaching of our five school rules which are on display in each classroom*
 - *Peer support programme*
 - *Buddy building programme*
 - *PDHPE programme focus on positive relationships and peer support*
- Regularly recognising and acknowledging students who demonstrate appropriate behaviours that promote and restore right relationships
 - *Weekly merit awards, school rule awards, student of the week, Principal's awards, Kinder buddies, Good News Notes.*
- Vigilant classroom, playground and transition supervision
 - *Teachers actively supervise children at all times. Teachers note supervisory duties for the day and turn up promptly to duty.*
 - *K-3 play areas and 4-6 oval playtime to give all children opportunities to have required space with own peer groups.*
- Provision of safe and structured playground spaces and activities at break times
 - *Regular teacher supervision for rules and code of conduct.*

How do we respond to bullying at St Mary's School?

Bullying is viewed as a major breach of the school rules and behavioural expectations and therefore follow up action will align with our School's Behaviour Management Policy.

Any reports of bullying will be investigated and appropriate action will be taken promptly. The response to bullying will include:

1. guidance and other support for the recipient of the bullying (e.g. re-skilling and re-teaching of strategies, resilience and social skills, counselling, conflict management skills, social networking etc)
2. guidance and support for 'bystanders', 'supporters' and witnesses of the bullying (e.g. intervention strategies etc)
3. age appropriate and consistent sanctions for the student who bullied (e.g. consistent with School Behaviour Management Policy)
4. interventions and support for the student who bullied included in a Behaviour Support Plan (e.g. specific interventions developed to reduce the bullying behaviour, teaching of replacement behaviours, reinforcers etc)
5. informing parents and involving them in any action and follow up
6. Instances where a parent/ carer reports bullying the school must report progress and management of the complaint.



At St Mary's School students are encouraged to:

- *take some positive action to stop the bullying if they observe an incident*
- *report the bullying incident to a teacher as soon as possible*
- *make it clear to their peers that bullying is not accepted*

At St Mary's School, staff are expected to:

- *take some positive action to stop the bullying when they observe an incident*
- *pass on information about any reported or observed bullying behaviours to the Principal for further action*

At St Mary's School parents are encouraged to:

- *listen to their child and encourage their child to speak to their teacher or Principal at school*
- *contact the school if they have a concern (e.g. Principal, class teacher)*

Procedures for investigating bullying and follow up

In discerning appropriate responses to bullying, school leaders need to balance the collective welfare of the school community with the individual needs of the student.

Recommended resource for interviewing and follow up of Bullying incidents – Restorative Practices

- Preliminary Interview(s) will be conducted to ascertain the specific nature of the bullying. These interviews should be with individuals initially (i.e. student being bullied, students witnessing bullying, student engaging in bullying behaviour, staff etc)
- The initial interviews should focus on the safety of individuals. This should include:
 - a clear statement on the consequences if the bullying continues or if there are any reprisals as a result of the reporting of the incident
 - immediate preventative actions that will be implemented to avoid further incidents.
- Decisions will be made as to the level of severity of the incident and whether the parents of those involved need to be informed.
- Follow up interviews should focus on appropriate strategies to assist and support all involved within a Behaviour Management Plan. This Plan will outline specifically identify the inappropriate behaviours, name the replacement behaviours, outline strategies to support the replacement behaviours and reinforcers (both negative and positive) when behaviours occur.
- A record of the separate interviews should be kept.
- Regular monitoring and follow up with the students involved is necessary. (for example daily, prior to and after break times etc)
- Review of the Behaviour Plan will take place to modify strategies and supports.
- Any further recurrence of bullying may result in an issue of warning re suspension and could lead to the implementation of suspension procedures and, if necessary, removal of the student from the school through:
 - Suspension or
 - Expulsion
- St Mary's School will provide an annual updated Anti-bullying policy to the parent community



Attachment B: Up to Date Bullying Websites

- Bully Beware
<http://www.bullybeware.com>
- Bullying UK
<http://www.bullying.co.uk>
- Kids Help Line
<http://www.kidshelp.com.au>
- Where you are not alone
<http://www.bullying.org>
- Stop Bullying
<http://www.stopbullying.co.uk>

