



BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY

RATIONALE

The dignity of the human person is the foundation of all Catholic social teaching and inherent to our education ministry. The Education Commission of Victoria (CEC VIC) and Catholic Education Melbourne (CEM) recognise the right of 'all students' to feel safe and be free from bullying.

At Holy Family School we do not tolerate bullying, harassment or violence in any form and we believe bullying can have a serious long-term impact on a victim's sense of self-worth, personal growth and self esteem. Every person has the right to feel safe from verbal, physical and emotional abuse that takes the form of bullying. As a result bullying is not tolerated at our school.

DEFINITION

"Bullying is an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more persons. Bullying can happen in person or online, and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying. However, these conflicts still need to be addressed and resolved".

Sourced: *Bullying No Way!* www.bullyingnoway.gov.au/teachers/index.html

Further, bullying may occur in relation to but is not restricted to:

- culture
- gender
- race
- ability or disability
- physical appearance
- beliefs
- age
- religion
- economic status
- sexual harassment
- sexuality

Types of bullying include direct physical bullying, direct verbal bullying, indirect bullying and cyberbullying.

Direct Physical Bullying

Includes punching, kicking, pushing and interfering with or damaging property, offensive gestures, notes or material.

Indirect Bullying

Includes spreading rumours, deliberately excluding someone from activities or events, victimising someone because that person has made a complaint, is proposing to make a complaint, has helped someone else make a complaint and/or is acting as a witness to a complaint.

Cyberbullying

Includes behaviour that constitutes direct and indirect bullying using digital technologies.

Bullying is not

- single episodes of social rejection or dislike
- single episode of nastiness or spite
- random acts of aggression or intimidation
- mutual arguments, disagreements or fights.

Whilst these actions can cause great distress, they are not examples of bullying unless someone is deliberately and repeatedly doing them.

(See Appendix 1: Further definitions of Bullying).

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

At Holy Family School we believe that:

- Everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity.
- Every person's emotional well-being needs to be nurtured.
- Each member of our school community requires a strong sense of well-being, respect, belonging, security and communication opportunities to enhance their health and wellbeing.
- All members of the community must have the opportunity to acknowledge and then restore any harm that occurs through the Restorative Practices approach.
- All staff, parents and students have the right to be heard and valued and will reciprocate these values to others.
- All staff, parents and students will have a common understanding of the values that create a safe and secure environment.
- All students take responsibility for achieving their personal best and gaining a sense of self worth and identity in the school and wider community.
- All students take responsibility for their own behaviour and understand that their behaviour, both positive and negative, has an impact on themselves and the community around them.
- All staff, parents and students operate restoratively whenever possible.
- Students have a right and are encouraged to report bullying when it happens to themselves or someone else.

- Students learn more effectively if they feel safe and have clearly stated and consistent expectations.
- Expectations of all community members need to be clear and explicit and aware of their rights and responsibilities.

RESPONSIBILITIES

All members of the community are responsible for ensuring that acceptable standards of conduct are maintained at all times.

Responsibility of Staff

- To model appropriate behaviours at all times
- To address all reported and observed incidents immediately in accordance with the steps set out in this policy
- To engage in a duty of care for our students
- To report incidents of bullying to the Principal and Student Wellbeing Leader as a matter of priority and work with them to ensure follow up has occurred.
- Communicate effectively with parents in regards to incidents of bullying and actions taken.
- Student Wellbeing Leader to work with classroom and level teachers along with students involved.
- Student Wellbeing Leader to collate and house relevant documentation.
- Student Wellbeing Leader to notify Principal and Deputy Principal of incidences and further action.

Reporting such incidences includes the following process and procedures:

- The School's Leadership are required to formally adopt and implement an anti-bullying policy.
- The school's anti-bullying policy must be made available to school personnel, published on the school website
- The parents of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken; and the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts
- To resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- The relevant teacher must record the bullying behaviour and forward this to the Wellbeing Leader.
- The procedures include oversight arrangements which require that, at least once in every school term, the Student Wellbeing Leader will provide a report to the Leadership team setting out:
 1. The overall number of bullying cases reported to the Principal or Deputy Principal since the previous report.
 2. Confirmation that all of these cases have been, or are being, dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy and these procedures have been adhered to.
 3. The Leadership team must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation by the school.

Responsibilities of Students

- To report observed incidents to an adult at school verbally or through such avenues as the Report It! box or the student homepage reporting bullying form

- To support peers by reporting bullying to a teacher.
- To treat others with respect.

Responsibilities of Parents

- To be aware of the signs of bullying eg.
 - unwillingness to attend school
 - damaged clothes
 - pattern of feeling unwell
 - missing equipment
- To inform the school as soon as possible if they become aware of bullying behaviour either via email or through the parent initial contact form for bullying as linked to the school website.
- To be aware of information relating to student wellbeing as presented to parents via the school newsletter, parent information programs/forums or in any other form as offered by the school.
- To support their child to inform a teacher if he/she is being bullied or has observed bullying behaviours.

Parents are not to approach another student or parent in relation to a bullying incident. Parents and carers should address their concerns to their child's classroom teacher, a member of the school leadership team or the Principal.

PROCESS

If a bullying situation is reported to the school, the following steps will be followed.

1. The complaint will be investigated by the classroom teacher and the Student Wellbeing Leader by use of the Initial Bullying Report Form which can be located on the school website on the Wellbeing Page or in the school office.
2. If the complaint is shown to have substance then any or all of the following actions will follow
 1. Restorative conversations in the presence of the classroom teacher and Student Wellbeing Leader.
 2. Appropriate support for the student will be organised.
 3. Notifications to all parents and carers will occur.
 4. If appropriate, direct consequences for behaviour will be implemented. These may include a restriction of playground areas, etc. The final decision for any behavioural consequences will be at the discretion of the Principal, or the Principal's nominated delegate.
 5. Follow up monitoring of all parties involved.
2. Appropriate records will be maintained by members of staff and overseen by the Student Wellbeing Leader.
3. Consideration of addressing bullying behaviours at class/whole school assemblies will be considered.

Preventative Measures

Holy Family School will

- Provide staff with ongoing professional learning related to bullying

- Include material on bullying, resilience, social skills and social emotional learning in the general curriculum
- Provide material and resources on bullying, resilience, social skills and social emotional learning regularly in school newsletters and on the school website.
- Participate in days of action against bullying.
- Promote positive behaviour through education programmes.

Holy Family School will ensure that Ken Rigby's (2010) six major intervention methods are reflective in coming to a mutual resolution. These include:

- **Traditional Disciplinary Approach** which includes preliminary discussions with the class, talks with parents and students.
- **Strengthening the victim** with strategies to assist them to learn to respond to matters using a positive approach.
- **Mediation** involves all parties seeking help from a mediator/teacher to resolve the issue that is causing conflict.
- **Restorative Practices** are designed to restore damaged relationships between individuals or groups.
- **The Support Group Method** which involves interviewing the victim, then the group of students or individuals involved, then ending with a combined meeting with all parties.
- **The method of Shared Concern** is based on reports and/or observations and then meeting with suspected Bullies individually.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

National Centre Against Bullying - Alannah and Madeline Foundation

National Safe Schools Framework

Safe Schools Hub

Bullying No Way

Bully Stoppers

Lifeline

Kids Helpline

Parenting Ideas - Michael Grose

Ken Rigby (2002) New Perspectives on Bullying.

Sheryl Hemphill (2014) "School Bullies Twice As Likely to Engage in Violent Behaviour"-Catholic Communications, Sydney Archdiocese.

Australian Communication Media Association (ACMA)

RATIFICATION

This policy will be reviewed annually in consultation with the Education Board.

It will then be made available on the school website and via the school office.

APPENDIX 1: OTHER DEFINITIONS OF BULLYING

(Rigby, 2002) defines Bullying as involving a desire to hurt +hurtful action + a power imbalance + (typically) repetition + and unjust use of power + evident enjoyment by the aggressor and a sense of being oppressed on the part of the victim.”

(Hemphill, 2014) defines “School-based ‘traditional’ bullying as aggressive or hostile intentional acts perpetrated repeatedly by one or more individuals towards a victim with an intent to harm. Bullying is further differentiated from other forms of aggression on the basis of power imbalance between the perpetrator and the victim such as the difference in physical size or strength or status within the school community. Bullying can be covert, such as spreading rumours and exclusion, or it can be overt such as verbal and physical abuse.