Melbourne Archdiocese
Catholic Schools

St Bernard's Parish Student Bullying Prevention Procedures

Purpose

These procedures set out the requirements for implementation of the St Bernard's Parish Primary School Bullying Prevention Policy.

Scope

These procedures apply to the principal, all staff and volunteers, students and school community at St Bernard's Parish Primary School regarding the prevention and response to incidents of bullying against students.

Procedures

Staff

Staff members at St Bernard's Parish Primary School will implement a whole-school approach to the prevention of bullying and education of school community members.

Bullying prevention is proactive. A whole-school, multi-faceted approach is the most effective way to prevent and address bullying. At our school we promote bullying prevention by:

- using [insert name of program if relevant] program to prevent and address bullying and support the building of a positive and inclusive school environment
- striving to build strong partnerships with families and the broader community that means all members work together to ensure the safety of all students
- celebrating the diverse backgrounds with our school community and teach [insert name of program if relevant] to promote mutual respect and social cohesion
- participating in the Respectful Relationships initiative, which aims to embed a culture of respect and equality across our school
- teachers using classroom management strategies that promote positive behaviour and discourage bullying
- teaching a Social and Emotional Learning curriculum that educates students about what constitutes bullying and how to respond to bullying assertively. This curriculum encourages resilience, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving
- promoting upstander behaviour as a method of empowering students to take appropriate action when they see or hear a peer being bullied
- undertaking a peer support program that encourages positive relationships between students of different year levels
- participating in the National Day Against Bullying and Violence
- promoting student voice and empowerment in classrooms and using Student Representative Council to discuss matters associated with bullying, cyber bullying, safety and wellbeing
- reviewing and evaluating the school's bullying prevention policy and the responsible use of technology procedures to ensure they are working effectively
- engaging with parents/guardians/carers to review and evaluate the school's bullying prevention policy and the responsible use of technology procedures to ensure they are working effectively
- [add any further school-based actions that meet this responsibility].

Staff members at St Bernard's Parish Primary School will respond to all reported incidents of bullying, perceived or actual, sensitively, fairly and promptly by:

.

- using a Bullying Response Pathway when we become aware of incidents. The Pathway assists with a regulated and thorough response
- implementing a Bullying Prevention Action Plan as part of the Response Pathway
- keeping a record of any bullying investigation
- encouraging students, staff and parents/guardians//carers to report all forms of bullying to the class teacher or directly to the principal
- investigating complaints of all forms of bullying in a manner that respects the dignity and privacy of those involved
- ensuring that complaints of all forms of bullying are handled in a way that is sensitive to students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and that recognises the diverse circumstances of students, ensuring cultural safety is considered at all times
- nominating a staff member to co-ordinate strategies for the resolution of specific bullying incidents reported in this school
- reporting incidents of cyber bullying to the eSafety Commissioner according to the *Cyberbullying Scheme* under the *Online Safety Act 2021 (the Act)*
- notifying parents/guardians/carers of bullying incidents involving their children and allowing them to have input into decisions that affect their children, where this is appropriate
- discussing any serious incident with the relevant MACS Regional Leadership Consultant (RLC)
- contacting the Police/Police Youth Liaison Officer if the bullying situation has involved violence, threat of harm or alleged criminal conduct
- maintaining records of bullying incidents and related interventions in accordance with MO 1359 (and that records are kept in accordance with applicable recordkeeping standards, including the Child Safety and Wellbeing Recordkeeping Policy)
- conducting Student Safety Audits at least once a year to promote safe, inclusive and respectful learning environments.

Staff at St Bernard's Parish Primary School will treat all members of the school community with dignity and respect and build respectful relationships that respond effectively and sensitively to the needs of each student by:

- implementing the student bullying prevention procedures by responding promptly and appropriately to reported incidents of bullying, in a way that is sensitive to the diverse backgrounds and circumstances of students
- supporting the student bullying prevention procedures through positive modelling and the promotion of appropriate behaviour
- engaging in professional learning to support appropriate bullying responses which could include cyber safety, restorative justice practices, mediation and developing social skills in students. Such opportunities are made available to staff on the same basis as other professional learning
- supporting all aspects of related school policies and procedures
- remaining vigilant in how students are using ICT systems and technology through positive modelling and the promotion of appropriate behaviour
- embedding critical thinking, values clarification, respectful relationships education and developing empathy into our teaching practice
- responding to all forms of bullying concerns by providing age-appropriate guidance and boundaries so that students can learn to self-regulate
- communicating the policy and procedures associated with the prevention and response to the school community and providing information on Response Pathways by
    - publishing the policy and procedures on the school website
    - providing pathways for parents/ carers/ guardians to report bullying incidents

.

Students

Students at our school will demonstrate respectful behaviour towards all members of the school community. The staff at our school will encourage and support students to:

- follow the bullying prevention procedures
- follow the ICT Acceptable Usage Policy – Schools
- immediately seek help from a trusted adult if they are aware of or involved in any type of bullying incident
- seek support if bullied and refrain from retaliating in any bullying incident
- understand that any social networking site that identifies the school by name or image or implication is part of the school environment
- in age-appropriate circumstances the student should keep evidence of alleged bullying and produce it on request (for example phone text messages).

Parents/Guardians/Carers

Parents/guardians/carers at our school will demonstrate and model respectful behaviour towards all members of the school community. Our school will work in partnership with parents/guardians/carers in responding to incidents of bullying. Staff at our school will:

- remind parents/guardians/carers about the need to reinforce the school messages in the proper use of technology to help children grow into ethical and responsible ICT users
- encourage parents/guardians/carers to report serious matters of out-of-school hours bullying and cyber- bullying to the Police or other appropriate authority (such as the Internet Service Provider and eSafety Commissioner) and, as relevant, to the school
- ask parents/guardians/carers to contact the school immediately if they know of any bullying incident
- expect that parents/guardians/carers will model behaviour that is indicative of Gospel values and that reflect the school's Vision and Mission statement. Thus parents/guardians/carers are required to act respectively to all members of the school community at all times.
- encourage parents/guardians/carers to be involved in decisions regarding incidents of bullying that affect their child, where this is appropriate.

Definitions

Bullying

Repeated unreasonable behaviour directed towards a person that creates a risk to health and safety. It occurs when an individual or a group deliberately upsets or hurts another person, their property, reputation, or social acceptance on more than one occasion. Refer below to list of examples of bullying and further information.

Communication systems

Email, video conferencing, instant messaging (public or private), electronic bulletins/noticeboards, electronic discussion/news groups, weblogs (blogs), social and professional networking (e.g., use of Facebook, TikTok, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Twitter, in accordance with age restrictions) and any other material (video / image, etc) sent electronically.

ICT systems

Systems of technology that includes a variety of hardware and software, learning and digital technologies including but not limited to computers, devices, internet and network services, local and web-based applications, peripheral or external devices such as printers or USB storage, telephones including mobile and VOIP, and all online services including social media and instant, direct or private messaging systems.

Harassment

Language or actions that are demeaning, offensive or intimidating to a person. It can take on many forms, including sexual harassment and disability harassment. While harassment may not always

.

be considered bullying. It is inappropriate behaviour that is also not tolerated and must have consequences.

Record

A record is information in any format created, received and maintained as evidence of business activities and decisions. A record may be digital (such as an email, Word, Excel, PowerPoint or finalised and/or scanned PDF documents) or hardcopy (paper) format.

School environment

Means any of the following physical, online or virtual places used during or outside school hours:

- a campus of the school
- online or virtual school/service environments made available or authorised by MACS or a MACS school for use by a child or student (including email, intranet systems, software, applications, collaboration tools and online services)
- other locations provided by the school or through a third-party provider for a child or student to use including, but not limited to, locations used for camps, approved homestay accommodation, delivery of education and training, sporting events, excursions, competitions and other events) (Ministerial Order No. 1359).

Bullying Definitions

Bullying

Repeated unreasonable behaviour directed towards a person that creates a risk to health and safety. It occurs when an individual or a group deliberately upsets or hurts another person, their property, reputation, or social acceptance on more than one occasion.

Forms of bullying include:

Cyber-bullying	The use of various forms of ICT systems to spread text and visual messages that threaten, intimidate, harass or humiliate a person or group of people.
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.
Gesture bullying	Non-verbal signals used to silence and intimidate a victim.
Physical bullying	Pushing, shoving, fighting, pinching and any other unwelcome physical contact used intentionally to intimidate or hurt someone.
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.
Social Bullying	Also called **Relational, Emotional or Exclusion** bullying, examples include deliberately excluding someone, spreading rumours, sharing information that will have a harmful effect on the other person and/or damaging a person's social reputation or social acceptance.
Verbal bullying	Put downs, particularly those referring to physical characteristics, can result in loss of self-esteem. Racial discrimination of any kind is a form of bullying.
Visual bullying	Offensive notes or material, graffiti, or damaging other people's possessions.

Categories of Bullying

There are three broad categories of bullying

Direct physical bullying	This form includes hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.
Direct verbal bullying	This form includes name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, or verbal abuse.
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 - cyber-bullying, which involves the use of email, text messages or chat rooms 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. There are three socially unpleasant situations that are often confused with bullying including:	
Mutual conflict	In mutual conflict situations, there is an argument or disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the problem. However, unresolved mutual conflict sometimes develops into a bullying situation, with one person becoming targeted repeatedly for 'retaliation' in a one-sided way.
Single-episode acts	Single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. 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.
Social rejection or dislike	Unless the social rejection is directed towards someone specifically and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others, it is not bullying.

Related policies and documents

Supporting documents

Related MACS policies and documents

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
Complaints Handling Policy
Duty of Care Policy for MACS Schools
Enrolment Policy
Pastoral Care Policy for MACS Schools
Student Behaviour Policy
ICT Acceptable Usage Policy - Schools
Code of Conduct

Resources (external to MACS)

Privacy Compliance Manual (2020). Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) (CEVN website)

.

Department of Education and Training (Vic). 2021. Bullying Prevention and Response Policy

Department of Education and Training (Vic). 2021. Cybersafety and Responsible Use of Digital Technologies

Department of Education and Training (Vic). 2020. Mobile Phones - Student Use.

Bully Stoppers – a resource containing information and advice for the school community, including students, parents and school staff.

Bullying. No Way! – a website for Australian schools, managed by the Safe and Supportive School Communities Working Group (SSSC) which has representatives from all states and territories, including the Catholic and independent schooling sectors.

eSmart – assists schools to develop a culture that promotes the safe, smart and responsible use of technology.

eSafety Commissioner – provides a range of up-to-date information and resources, coupled with a complaints system to assist children who experience serious cyberbullying and image-based abuse.

Australian Student Wellbeing Framework (2018)

Student Wellbeing Hub

Public Record Office Victoria Recordkeeping Standards

Policy information table

Approving authority	Director, Learning and Regional Services
Approval date	8 September 2023
Next review by	March 2026
Publication	CEVN

.