



St. Joseph's Primary School

Anti-Bullying Policy 2016

RATIONALE

The rationale of the Diocesan Pastoral Care Policy states - 'we are made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27) and at the core of the Church's pastoral action is a deep respect for the innate dignity and uniqueness of the individual person'.

The Catholic Schools Office is committed to supporting schools in continuing to develop positive, supportive, physically and psychologically safe schools. St. Joseph's School is committed to promoting a safe and caring environment, which fosters respect for others and does not tolerate bullying. At St Joseph's Merriwa, we acknowledge the role of parents and carers as the primary educators of the child. Therefore, in partnership with the home, St Joseph's Merriwa aims to foster life-giving interpersonal relationships with and for all children.

The Catholic Schools Office policy for procedures for responding to a complaint about bullying has been adopted at this school.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying is repeated and systematic attacks on others. A student is being bullied or victimised when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students.

The *National Safe Schools Framework* (2011) defines bullying as repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons.

DEFINITION OF CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying may be defined as:

"..any form of bullying that utilises technology such as instant messaging, online chat rooms, online bulletin boards and email. In many ways this is a more insidious form of bullying since it may reach into a victim's home." In other words, technology now allows the bully to inflict psychological harm on his or her victim anywhere and any time without respite. (Schools and the Law – Des Butler and Ben Matthews, p. 46).

IMPLEMENTATION

At St. Joseph's School we will:

- Provide preventative education for all students on bullying and its impact on students in our school community.

- Use the Positive Behaviour Framework as a key tool in promoting desirable student behaviour and in fostering positive, life-giving relationships.
- Openly talk about bullying, what it is, how it affects us and what we can do about it.
- Teach the children placed in our care the skills, which will build their self-esteem, resilience and empower them to take responsibility for themselves – and give them the opportunity to practise these skills.
- Embed anti-bullying strategies and activities into PD Health programs and other KLAS to build students' resilience and self-esteem as well as promoting positive behaviours.
- Formulate a set of procedures, which clearly states what actions the school will take to deal with bullying behaviour.
- Communicate regularly with parents, students and staff about anti-bullying.

At St. Joseph's School we use the following strategies to enhance respect, tolerance and understanding towards others in order to deter the incidence of bullying.

Responsibilities of the Principal

- Take regular opportunities to educate parents about bullying through Parent Information Sessions and through the school newsletter
- Provide resources for parents and students about anti-bullying, resilience and positive behaviours
- Provide students with opportunities to learn about bullying through the engagement of theatre in education groups where available
- Provide staff with an annual update, awareness raising and annual revision of the anti-bullying policy (including cyberbullying) and procedures
- Provide parents and students with an annual update, awareness raising and annual revision of the anti-bullying policy (including cyberbullying) and procedures
- Ensure that an annual survey of students is conducted where any bullying behaviours may be reported
- Ensure that the policy is posted on the school's webpage.
- Raise the issue of anti-bullying at each enrolment interview, seeking information from parents/ carers about the child's previous bullying history (as alleged victim or perpetrator). If the child has a history of being bullied or having bullied others, put appropriate supports and measures in place to facilitate a smooth transition to St Joseph's Merriwa.

Responsibilities of Staff

- To model appropriate behaviour at all times.
- To deal with all reported and observed incidences of bullying as set out in this policy.
- To report incidences of bullying to the Principal.
- To ensure that students feel and understand that they have been heard.
- To watch for signs of bullying amongst students.
- To build a sense of respect for each individual within the school community.
- To nurture a sense of goodness (Godness) in students.
- To give time and support to children who report instances perceived by them as 'bullying'.
- Document all reported incidents and their follow up on the school Gate21
- Policy will be posted on the school's webpage.
- Follow the school's policy and procedures on anti-bullying.

- Monitor student understanding of anti-bullying policy and processes through the conduct of an annual survey.
- Evaluate the policy annually.

Responsibilities of Children

- To 'tell' if they are being bullied or if they feel someone else being bullied – both at school and on the way to and from school.
- To help someone who is being bullied. To provide support for an individual.
- To not bully others.
- To respect the judgement of teachers when assessing 'bullying'.
- To respect themselves as individuals and as part of a loving and encouraging community.
- To respect the viewpoint of others and to strive to empathise and understand that no one viewpoint has absolute authority over another valid, positive viewpoint.
- Accept responsibility for one's own behaviour, to own your problems.
- To not deflect your choices of behaviour onto others.
- Follow the school's policy and procedures on anti-bullying.
- Have an understanding and awareness of what constitutes bullying.
- Participate in an annual anti-bullying survey.

Responsibilities of Parents

- To work with the school community to encourage good (God) values of respect and tolerance of individuality.
- To understand that conflict is a normal part of relationships.
- To distinguish between relationship conflicts and 'bullying'.
- To participate in the annual evaluation of the anti-bullying policy and processes.
- To watch for signs that their child may be bullied.
- To speak to someone on staff at the school if they suspect their child is being bullied.
- To instruct their children to 'tell' if they are bullied.
- To support the procedures outlined in this document.

RECORD OF INCIDENTS

Children and their parents can report incidents of bullying to any teacher or the Principal. Any bullying incidents that are dealt with will be recorded on the school Gate 21 Pastoral site. It is important that a clear definition of bullying is established.

Responding to Reported Incidences of Bullying: investigations

When a bullying incident is reported or observed, the school will use the following procedures:

- Isolate the 'bullying' behaviour and establish that 'bullying' has occurred.
- Endeavour to outline 'bullying' behaviour to the offender.
- Have the offender recognise his/her own involvement – name the behaviour and their acknowledgement.
- Reassure the 'victim' that he/she has a right to feel safe and protected.

- Establish a process to recognise the outcome of behaviour for the offender and others involved.
- Make amends to the victim/community.
- Establish a process for perpetrator and victim to meet and discuss actions of bullying.
- Inform parents of the offender and victim.
- Engage with the “Bullying Assessment and Action Flow Chart” to guide the process.
- Use the “Alleged bullying – initial action tool” as a form of further documentation.
- In the ordinary course of events, reports of alleged bullying will be investigated within five (5) school days, unless extenuating circumstances preclude this from occurring.

Possible Disciplinary Actions

- Once an investigation has been completed, the principal will make a determination about the allegation of bullying based on all of the available information regarding the incident(s). The perpetrator of a bullying incident may be the subject of disciplinary measures that could include: class detention, suspension from playground, in-school suspension, external suspension and/or expulsion in extreme cases.

Police Intervention

- In certain circumstances, police intervention may be required in cases of bullying (eg possession of a weapon, extreme assault) and cyberbullying (eg sexting). If police are called to the school to interview a child, parents/carers will be informed as a matter of courtesy before any interview takes place. In the first instance, the School Liaison Police will be contacted.

Post Investigation Follow-up and Support

- Following an incident of bullying, the victim will be followed-up for a reasonable period to ensure that the bullying behaviour has ceased. Documentation of this follow-up will occur via the school’s Gate 21 pastoral.
- Offers of counselling support will be made to both the bully and the victim.
- The school’s complaints and grievance policy may be consulted if parents/carers are unhappy with the outcome of the investigation.

Communication of Policy/Procedures

- This policy will be communicated to staff, parents and students annually and it will be evaluated annually in light of the latest developments in CSO and Government policy with respect to bullying. .
- The policy will be available to parents upon request and can be found on the school’s webpage.
- Parents will be informed about the policy through the school newsletter on an annual basis.

EVALUATION OF POLICY

The school community will review this policy annually.

APPENDICES

1. Bullying Assessment and Action Flow Chart
2. Anti-bullying Procedures for Staff – Flow Chart
3. Student Procedures to be Reinforced by the School
4. Advice for Principals – Police notification
5. Alleged Bullying – Initial Action Tool
6. Letter to parents of notification of a bullying incident: perpetrator
7. Letter to parents of notification of a bullying incident : victim