ANTI-BULLYING POLICY
PROMOTING SAFETY, POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR AND SOCIAL INCLUSION
FOR
THE DIOCESAN SCHOOLS SYSTEM

April 2017

1.   PURPOSE

Each Catholic School has a shared responsibility for the pastoral care of students. This policy provides a framework for Diocesan Schools System, to develop their own practices and procedures that promote respectful relationships in order to prevent and address issues of student bullying and cyber-bullying. All students, their families and employees within the Diocesan Schools System (DSS), have the right to a safe and supportive learning environment. The dignity of the human person is inherent to the ministry of Catholic education and all members of the school community share the responsibility to teach, foster, promote and encourage positive student behaviour.

There are specific protections provided in law for each and every member of a school community to experience a safe and supportive school environment. In a Catholic community, there are also important expectations on each person to seek to maintain positive relationships with one another and to resolve conflict in a respectful and dignified manner. Bullying and cyber-bullying disregard the core values of our Catholic faith and are unacceptable.

2.   GUIDING PRINCIPLES

2.1   Each person is created in the image and likeness of God.

2.2   The dignity of every member of the school community is respected.

2.3   Bullying in any form is unacceptable behaviour in a DSS school.

2.4   All partners in Catholic education share a joint responsibility to promote a safe and supportive learning environment, and to prevent and manage bullying behaviour.

2.5   Effective record-keeping is a crucial and expected component of a school's response to the issue of bullying.

2.6   Where appropriate, schools should collaborate with outside agencies on matters concerning bullying, to the extent necessary and permitted by law to resolve the matter.

2.7   Parents/caregivers have an integral role to play in the prevention and resolution of bullying matters, in a collaborative and respectful manner.

3.   POLICY FRAMEWORKS

This policy is informed by the DSS Pastoral Care and Wellbeing Framework for Learning, the National Safe Schools Framework [NSSF, (2013)], and the Positive Behavioural Interventions and Support (PBIS) Framework.

3.1   National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF)

The NSSF provides guiding principles that emphasise student safety and wellbeing as a pre-requisite for optimising student engagement. It affirms the rights of all members of the school community to feel safe and be safe at school to optimise student learning and wellbeing.

3.2   Positive Behavioural Interventions and Support (PBIS) Framework – Preventing Bullying

The PBIS framework for preventing bullying (also known as PBL), is based on a multi-tiered responsiveness-to-intervention approach to preventing bullying behaviour. This approach provides for variations in student responsiveness due to the variations in an individual's risk and protective factors (i.e. self-management and social skill competence).

3.3   Whole School Positive Behaviour Approaches

The most effective bullying interventions typically use whole-school positive behaviour approaches such as; school-wide rules and consequences, teacher training, classroom curriculum focused on social and emotional learning (SEL), conflict resolution training, counselling and partnerships with families. Teaching students the SEL skills (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationships, and responsible decision-making) are foundational competencies that students need in order to prevent and to respond to bullying.

4.   POLICY CONTENT

4.1   What is Bullying?

Bullying is 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. Bullying can involve: humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and all forms of harassment including that based on sex, race, disability, sexual orientation or practice of religion. Bullying of any form, or for any reason, can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.

Cyber-bullying refers to bullying through the use of information and communication technologies by an individual or group that is intended to harm others, or is undertaken recklessly without concern for its impact on others.

Bullying can happen anywhere: at school, travelling to and from school, in sporting teams, or in the workplace. Bullying behaviour can be:

- **verbal,** eg name calling, teasing, abuse, putdowns, sarcasm, insults, threats
- **physical**, eg hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting
- **social**, eg ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating, making inappropriate gestures
- **psychological**, eg spreading rumours, hiding or damaging possessions, malicious SMS and email messages, inappropriate use of communication technology/mobile devices.

Conflict or fights between equals and single incidents are not defined as bullying. Bullying behaviour is not:

- children not getting along well
- a situation of mutual conflict such as, teasing or disagreement
- a single episodes of hurtful words or actions, or random acts of aggression or intimidation.

(Adapted from: National Safe Schools Framework (2011) and DEC NSW Website)

4.2   Scope

The DSS Anti-Bullying Policy and school guidelines applies to the behaviour of students either as an individual or collectively, during school hours or at a school event. Where the school becomes aware of serious out-of-school hours bullying and cyber-bullying that is outside the scope of this policy, it should report the matter to parents/caregivers, the Police or other appropriate authority (such as the Internet Service Provider).

4.3   Safe Environment and Duty of Care

Schools and their teaching staff have a duty to take reasonable care for the safety and wellbeing of students while students are at school or are involved in a school activity. They need to be able to foresee possible harms that might arise and take reasonable preventative measures. A safe environment for students is one where the risk of harm is minimised and students feel safe. Harm relates not only to the dangers in the built environment but also to violence, physical threats, verbal abuse, threatening gestures, sexual harassment and racial vilification [The NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA)].

4.4   Education Program

Schools must ensure that there is ongoing education of students about respectful relationships and the issues associated with bullying, including cyber-bullying, and that students are regularly reminded of the school's anti-bullying procedures.

4.5   School-based Guidelines

School-based guidelines/procedures are informed by this policy and the DSS Behaviour Support Policy. Each school will develop their own school Anti-bullying guidelines, plans, processes and procedures for implementing practices that build a safe and supportive learning environment that minimises bullying. Schools should utilise the Guidelines Template to develop their own version. Students should regularly be reminded of their rights and obligations to seek assistance from a trusted adult without delay if they become aware of, or are involved in, a bullying or cyber-bullying incident, and to follow the school's processes to ensure their safety and that of others.

4.6   Responding

Complaints concerning bullying must be responded to and investigated in a timely manner that respects the dignity and the privacy of those involved, whilst observing due process and procedural fairness (DSS Complaints Handling Policy). When assessing an appropriate response to potentially criminal acts, or alleged acts, NSW Police advice must be sought.

4.7   Reporting

It is important that schools have systems to ensure that the appropriate staff (including class teachers, year co-ordinators, home room teachers, counsellors and support staff) are aware of cases of significant bullying, so that students can be properly supported.

4.8   Record-keeping

Records of incidents of bullying and interventions are to be kept systematically by the school. These incidents should be communicated to relevant staff, maintaining confidentiality as appropriate.

School incident data should be regularly analysed to identify patterns, perpetrators and trends.

4.9   System Safety Processes for Technology

The CSO will strive to implement appropriate protection and safety processes for technology, such as filtering devices and surveillance of content, while recognising that the rapidity of technological change requires regular adaptation.

5.   RESPONSIBILITIES AND DELEGATIONS

5.1   Principal

The Principal will ensure that:

5.1.1.   The school has appropriate policies and guidelines, training and procedures in place to regulate a safe and supportive school environment and that these policies and procedures are regularly monitored. (Refer to Attachment 1)

5.1.2   Regular opportunities are provided for all school staff to be trained to recognise and respond effectively to bullying. This training must include the key elements of digital citizenship and responsible use of ICT.

5.1.3   Anti-bullying training and familiarisation with the school's policy and procedures are to be addressed in new staff and student induction processes.

5.1.4   School staff regularly review their processes for identifying and responding to bullying.

5.1.5   Records of incidents of bullying are to be kept systematically by the school and regularly analysed to identify patterns and proactively support student wellbeing.

5.1.6   Students receive regular explicit instruction on the school's policy and procedures dealing with incidents of bullying.

5.1.7   Students are educated on respectful relationships and social and emotional skills that enhance students' understanding of pro-social behaviour, bullying and its impact on self and others.

5.1.8   Parents/caregivers will receive regular advice on the existence of related system policies and school guidelines/procedures for understanding bullying, dealing with incidents, and how they can access assistance.

5.1.9   This Anti-Bullying Policy and school guidelines/procedures are available on the school website.

5.2   Staff

School staff have a responsibility to:

- Respect and support students
- Model and promote appropriate respectful behaviour

- Understand the school and system policies relating to bullying, behaviour, responsible use of technology and pastoral care
- Respond in a timely manner to incidents of bullying according to the school's Anti-Bullying Guidelines
- Provide a safe and supportive learning environment.
- Provide curriculum and pedagogy that supports students to develop an understanding of bullying and its impact on individuals and the broader community.

5.3   Students

Students have a responsibility to:

- Act appropriately, respecting individual differences and diversity
- Act as responsible digital citizens and responsible users of ICT
- Follow the school anti-bullying guidelines
- Act as a responsible 'upstander' rather than a bystander
- Report incidents of bullying
- Seek support if bullied and refrain from retaliating in any bullying incident.

5.4   Parents/Caregivers

Parent/carers have a responsibility to:

- Treat all members of the school community with dignity and respect
- Be aware of the school anti-bullying guidelines.
- Support their children to understand bullying behaviour, to become responsible citizens and to develop responsible online behaviour
- Support their children in developing positive responses to incidents of bullying
- Report incidents of bullying according to the school anti-bullying guidelines
- Work collaboratively and calmly with the school to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur.

5.5   The Catholic Schools Office (CSO)

The CSO has the responsibility to:

- Support schools to implement the DSS Anti Bullying Policy and school guidelines/procedures.
- Provide support to Principals in the management of bullying incidents.

6.   RELATED LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

6.1   Legislation

- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986 (Comm)
- Telecommunications Act 1991 (Comm.)
- Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)
- Children (Criminal Proceedings) Act 1987 (NSW)
- Young Offenders Act 1997 (NSW)
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)

6.2   Relevant National and State Requirements

The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (2008)

The National Safe Schools Framework: A whole-school approach to safety and wellbeing (2011)

The NESA Registration Systems and Member Non-Government Schools (NSW) Manual
Includes, Requirement 5.6 describing conditions for a Safe and Supportive (School) Environment.

Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act, 1998.
Includes, Chapter 16A Exchange of Risk of Harm information

Keep them Safe: A Shared Approach to Child Wellbeing, with reference to the Mandatory Reporting Guide, specifically, physical abuse and psychological harm.

Education Act Part 5A i.e. Exchange of history of student violence information.

Catholic Education Commission, New South Wales Anti-bullying Policies: Action Requirements Memorandum ref: 249/10.

6.3   Related Policies/Guidelines

- Behaviour Support Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy and Pastoral Care Framework for Learning
- Acceptable Use Policy for Internet/Intranet and Network Services
- Complaints Handling Policy
- Child Protection Policy: Managing Risk of Significant Harm and Wellbeing Concerns
- Privacy Policy
- Preventing Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Cyber safety Guidelines

7.   POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed not less frequently than once every five years.

8.   POLICY DATES

Policy date of completion of formulation and adoption	November 2002
Date of current edition of policy	April 2017
Date of next review	April 2022

Authorised by
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