Anti-Bullying (Student) Policy
and Standard Operating Procedures

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Replaces: **Nil**

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Related Documentation:

Catholic Education in the Diocese of Lismore, Foundational Beliefs and Practices, the Essential Framework

Nine Elements for a Parish School Approach to Wellbeing (Diocese of Lismore, poster resource)

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

The National Safe Schools Framework (2011)

The Board of Studies Registration Systems and Member Non-Government Schools (NSW) Manual, Requirement 5.6, a Safe and Supportive (School) Environment

Children and Young Persons Act 1998 (Care and Protection) with reference to 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 VA i.e. Exchange of history of student violence information

Catholic Education Commission New South Wales Anti-bullying Policies

STATEMENT OF POLICY

The dignity of the human person is the foundation of all Catholic social teaching and intrinsic to our education ministry. Consequently, the principle that the person is made in the image and likeness of God, is central to the mission of all our parish school communities.

As a system of Catholic schools we acknowledge the importance of the nature of the learner and the learning process within the evangelising mission of the Catholic Church. This policy identifies the interconnectedness of the characteristics of quality Catholic learning and teaching and has been designed to value, respect and promote the self-esteem and dignity of each learner. A Catholic world-view integrates faith, life and culture. The school will be encouraged to actively promote anti-bullying messages alerting students and staff of the need to be vigilant.

A separate Anti Bullying Policy and Standard Operating Procedure Template designed for school use accompanies this diocesan policy. The template can be used to build a school policy and procedures statement that meets compliance requirements.

Scope of the policy

This diocesan student Anti-Bullying Policy fosters a cohesive approach to the issue of bullying by providing schools with policy advice and procedures which must be incorporated into an individual school Anti Bullying Policy and Procedures statement. This policy statement includes leadership considerations, professional learning activities and specific initiatives which are designed to promote pastoral care, wellbeing and safe school communities.

This policy covers the bullying of students with disabilities. Disabled children and young people need:
- To know they have the right to be safe from bullying. They need to know what bullying is, how to keep safe and what to do if adults do not do enough to stop the bullying
- To be involved in the development and review of school anti-bullying policies
- All children and young people need to know what to do to help stop a disabled child or disabled young person being bullied

Essential to this is the creation and maintenance of a respectful, safe and supportive learning environment that promotes student wellbeing and enables school communities to engage a diverse range of learners.

The Diocesan approved poster resource, included in this policy, Nine Elements for a Parish School Approach to Wellbeing (Appendix E), is based on the work of the National Safe Schools framework and will assist schools locate bullying issues within a wider pastoral care/wellbeing context.

It is vital that learning technologies are used ethically and responsibly in the school environment, so that communication is respectful and human dignity valued. Bullying, cyber-bullying, harassment, aggression and violence disregard core values of our faith including dignity, respect, justice, equity, compassion, trust and courage. Importantly, such actions can adversely affect the wellbeing of students and are therefore unacceptable.
All members of our school communities are expected to prevent and challenge such actions in order to build respectful relationships that respond effectively and sensitively to the needs of each person.

Context

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is a pattern of repeated physical, verbal, psychological or social aggression that is directed towards a specific student by someone with more power and is intended to cause harm, distress and/or create fear. By contrast, conflict between equals and single incidents are not defined as bullying although, of course, such incidents may require intervention by the school. Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term physical and psychological effects on those involved, including bystanders.

Bullying may be carried out overtly (e.g. face – to – face) or covertly (e.g. through repeated social exclusion or via technology). It is a sub-category of aggression and is different to, but also related to, harassment and violence. It is not the same as conflict or social dislike even though, in some cases, the outcome of both can be bullying.

The different types of bullying identified by the National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF) include:

Face-to-face bullying (sometimes referred to as direct bullying) involves physical actions such as punching or kicking or overt verbal actions such as name–calling and insulting.

Covert bullying (sometimes referred to as indirect bullying) is a subtle type of non-physical bullying which isn't easily seen by others and is conducted out of sight, and often unacknowledged by adults.

Cyber-bullying occurs through the use of information or communication technologies such as Instant Messaging, text messages, email and social networking sites. Cyber-bullying involves the use of any information and communication technology involving deliberate, isolated or repeatedly hostile behaviour by an individual or group, that is intended to harm others or is undertaken recklessly, without concern for its impact on others. By virtue of its nature, technology facilitates repeated access to harmful content. It has many similarities with offline bullying but it differs in that the student(s) who is/are bullying can be anonymous, it can reach a wide audience and the sent or uploaded material can be difficult to remove.

Most students who cyber bully also bully off-line. It is now recognised that many forms of covert bullying appear to have significant potential for serious harm.

This definition of bullying is standard across the Diocese and must be included in school anti-bullying policies.

Of particular note is the use of digital technologies which are very much a part of life and learning, offering a wide range of tools and platforms for social and educational engagement. However, the risks of the digital environment must be acknowledged and addressed. Being cyber safe and acting ethically when using electronic communications is the responsibility of all members of each school community.

A School's Duty of Care

If bullying occurs which is foreseeable (a teacher or other school staff member knew of, or ought to have known of, a bullying incident) a breach of the school's duty of care towards students could have occurred.

Schools must take reasonable action to develop plans and implement programs aimed at deterring bullying activities. Schools need to have procedures in place to respond effectively to bullying incidents. There must be a system in place in the school so that this Diocesan Student Anti-Bullying Policy and the school-based Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures are disseminated as appropriate to members of the school community.

In the case of students with disabilities, schools need to take action to prevent bullying and ensure a whole-school approach is adopted to tackling and eliminating bullying. The school needs to ensure that staff show leadership in valuing differences between children. Staff must be able to identify when a disabled child or young person is being bullied and what to do to prevent bullying.

Principals must report conduct to the police where a serious criminal offence has been identified. Such circumstances can include (but are not limited to) stalking, destruction of property, threats to inflict serious injury and/or kill, physical and sexual assault, offensive behaviour, discrimination, cyber stalking, defamation, breach of privacy, hacking, sexting and creating or possessing and/or disseminating child pornography.

In many instances, cyber-bullying can constitute criminal conduct, especially when the behaviour is seriously threatening, harassing or intimidating. According to The *National Safe Schools Framework* (2011) "E-crimes are illegal actions that are carried out through the use of internet or mobile phone technology. They include: child pornography, fraud, impersonation, or sending words or images that cause offence, distress, menace or threaten. Most of these are crimes under Australian federal law but some are also (or only) crimes under some Australian state laws."

If unacceptable behaviour occurs that has a close nexus with the school or with the wellbeing of a child educated at the school but occurs outside school hours, off-site or through the use of a student's personal mobile devices and/or computer, school leadership personnel may still have an obligation to respond. School leaders may have limited obligations to respond to bullying, threatening behaviour, cyber-bullying and inappropriate use of digital technologies when this occurs on devices or networks not actually managed by the school, and there is no close nexus with the school.

Responsibilities: The Catholic Schools Office (CSO)

The CSO will:

- Support and resource schools to implement anti-bullying initiatives and procedures

- Provide anti-bullying and cyber safety information for students, staff and parent/carers

- Manage the Enrolment Application document and statutory obligations (such as Part 5A of the Education Act) so that schools are able to obtain relevant student history that may involve violent behaviour, including bullying, harassment, intimidation and/or threatening behaviour

- Provide opportunities for training staff in appropriate anti-bullying responses including cyber safety, restorative justice practices, mediation and developing social skills in students

Responsibilities: Diocesan Schools

Schools will aim to treat all members of the school community with dignity and respect and:

- Publish and regularly review a school anti-bullying policy that includes plans and procedures for implementing anti-bullying practices and is based on this Diocesan policy
- Inform and make available to students, staff and parent/carers copies of the student anti-bullying and responsible use of technology procedures
- Provide education to students, staff and parent/carers about anti-bullying strategies and the responsible use of technology
- Refer to the school's anti-bullying policy and responsible use of technology procedures within each school's Pastoral Care and/or Positive Behaviour policies, which include specific reference to anti-bullying contact information for School Liaison Police and/or other support services available to the school's community
- Implement a sequential management plan for minimising bullying and cyber-bullying, involving graduated sanctions and appropriate support for all students involved in bullying situations
- Provide documented advice for students, staff and parent/carers on ways to report bullying and cyber-bullying
- Investigate complaints of bullying and cyber-bullying in a manner that respects the dignity and privacy of those involved
- Appoint a Case Manager to co-ordinate strategies for the resolution of bullying incidents
- Notify parent/carers of bullying incidents involving their children
- Notify the Police Youth Liaison Officer if the bullying situation has involved violence, threat of harm or alleged criminal conduct
- Notify NSW Community Services (formerly DoCS) when an incident involving manufacturing, possessing or distribution of child pornography has occurred
- Maintain thorough records of bullying incidents and related interventions using the forms attached to this policy
- Regularly review and evaluate student anti-bullying and responsible use of technology procedures to ensure they are contemporary and sustainable

Responsibilities: Staff

Staff will aim to treat all members of the school community with dignity and respect and:

- Implement the student anti-bullying and responsible use of technology procedures by responding promptly and appropriately to reported incidents of bullying

- Support the student anti-bullying and responsible use of technology procedures through positive modelling and the promotion of appropriate behaviour
- Access professional learning to support appropriate anti-bullying responses which could include cyber safety, restorative justice practices, mediation and developing social skills in students
- Support all aspects of the school's Behaviour/Pastoral Care/Student Management policy
- Embed critical thinking, values clarification, respectful relationships and developing empathy into learning and teaching practice
- Listen to children and young people and be willing and able to act and help disabled children and young people who are being bullied
- Promptly spot when a disabled child or young person is being bullied and to know what to do to prevent it and stop it when it occurs
- Respond to bullying and cyber-bullying concerns by providing age appropriate guidance and boundaries so that students can learn to self-regulate
- Teach resilience, communication and restorative practices as appropriate

Responsibilities: Students

Students will aim to treat all members of the school and wider community with dignity and respect and:

- Follow the student anti-bullying and responsible use of technology procedures regarding student/student, student/staff and student/community member relationships. In addition, students from Years 5 to 12 will read and sign the relevant school documents
- Seek help from a trusted adult if aware of or involved in a bullying or cyber-bullying incident
- Seek support if bullied and refrain from retaliating in any bullying incident
- Participate in learning experiences that address understandings, values and skills relating to resilience, anti-bullying and responsible use of technology
- Agree that any social networking site that identifies the school by name or image or implication is part of the school environment and may be dealt with according to the school's policy in these matters
- In age appropriate circumstances keep evidence of alleged bullying and produce it on request (for example phone text messages).

Responsibilities: Parent/Carers

Parent/carers have a responsibility to treat all members of the school community with dignity and respect and:

- Read and abide by the Primary and/or Secondary School Enrolment Application Form

- Read, sign and abide by the student anti-bullying and responsible use of technology procedures as part of the application for enrolment at the Diocesan school

- Work collaboratively with the school in providing opportunities for education on issues related to student safety and wellbeing

- Notify the school promptly of all bullying situations involving their children

- Follow the student anti-bullying procedures to report bullying or cyber-bullying, whether actual or suspected

- Model prudent use of technology and supervise and discuss internet content and time spent using technology to help children grow into ethical and responsible digital citizens by discussing appropriate responses to bullying and cyber-bullying. Encourage children to always disclose to a trusted adult if this occurs.

- Provide appropriate protection and safety, such as filtering devices, for their children when using various technologies

- 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, as relevant, to the school

- Follow due process and use relevant procedures when bringing complaints and grievances to the notice of a school and/or the Catholic Schools Office

Anti-bullying School Policy Inclusions

Refer to the Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures Template

Each school will be required to develop, publicise and review an anti-bullying policy. This policy must be available on the school's web site and be referred to in all relevant parent correspondence. The school's anti-bullying policy must include the following provisions:

1. An overarching statement referring to the ethos and core values of your school and the priority given to:

   - the dignity of all human persons

   - the care and safety of each member of the school community

   - the need for a whole-school approach to anti-bullying that engages in dialogue and reflection with a view to develop shared understanding and responsibility

   - a strategic commitment from the school community guided by school leaders, to address anti-bullying

2. Definitions of bullying and cyber-bullying (copied direct from this Diocesan policy)

3. Examples of what bullying is not (the Diocesan definition will assist)

4. Identification of different types of bullying, with examples included (copied direct from this Diocesan policy)

5. A system where anti-bullying procedures are widely disseminated to appropriate stakeholders/members of the school community

6. A description of how the school will collect reliable data on incidents of bullying, for example audits, surveys, online reporting tools

7. A procedure for how the school will deal with bullying incidents including avenues for reporting to parents and if necessary, the Child Protection Helpline, the Police and the Catholic Schools Office. A pathway for how bullying incidents will be managed is available and can be individualised for the school (Appendix A and B as a minimum standard)

8. Procedures for keeping safe members of the school community who report bullying incidents

9. Contact information for School Liaison Police and other support services available to the school's community

10. A statement referring to the consequences for students who ignore school rules, asserting that an investigation and possible disciplinary action may be undertaken

11. An outline of how the school may support students involved in a bullying incident for example counselling, restorative practices, social skills development, conflict management, empathy and resilience building or values education

12. An outline of the process for record keeping within the school (Appendix C as a minimum standard)

13. An overview of where the school will embed learning and teaching strategies on anti-bullying and responsible use of technology

14. A strategy for the support of staff professional learning including a statement similar to 'staff will engage in appropriate professional learning opportunities on bullying and related issues'.

15. A strategy for the inclusion of parent education on anti-bullying and cyber safety

16. A statement of how members of the community including parents and students are involved in the development, implementation and regular review of the school's anti-bullying plan and procedures. This might include surveys, Parents and Friends meetings, Student Representative Council initiatives (see appendix in this Diocesan policy)

17. Connections with relevant policies and supporting documents including the Foundational Beliefs and Practices, school Mission and Vision statement, technology policy

18. A strategy for acquisition of resources to support school-wide implementation of anti-bullying procedures and learning and teaching practices

19. Anti-bullying plan/procedures review process (Appendix D)

LIST OF APPENDICES (found in the School Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures Template)

Appendix A: Anti-Bullying Response All Schools

Appendix B: School Anti-Bullying Action Plan

Appendix C: Bullying Record Keeping and Investigation (Guidelines)

Appendix D: Policy Review Tool