



## DEALING WITH BULLYING, HARASSMENT, AGGRESSION AND VIOLENCE (Students) POLICY

### RATIONALE

'Love your neighbour as you love yourself' Galatians 5:14

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School has a vision statement which challenges us to create a learning community based on Gospel values. Making Jesus real in the lives of all members of our school community. Each person is recognized as a unique individual bringing special qualities and gifts to share. Hence, we all have a right to be respected, and a responsibility to respect each other.

Therefore, St Joseph's does not tolerate bullying or harassment in any form. All members of our community are committed to ensuring a safe and supportive environment which promotes personal growth and fosters positive self-esteem for all. We aim to maintain a setting in which everyone feels valued and respected and where individual differences are appreciated, understood and accepted.

St Joseph's has a responsibility to provide an educational environment that promotes the dignity and respect of the person and, therefore, aims to encourage the development of positive relationships between students to reduce all forms of bullying, harassment, aggression and violence. The policies and practices which the school employs enhances the dignity of the human person and reflect the Principles of Pastoral Care as espoused in the CEWA Pastoral Care Framework (2007).

Learning outcomes, physical health, emotional, psychological and spiritual wellbeing can be adversely affected by bullying, harassment, aggression and violence. Students who are bullied, subject to aggression or harassed tend to have poorer health, lower self-esteem, more interpersonal difficulties, higher levels of loneliness, depression, suicidal ideation and increased anxiety. They are also more likely to have a dislike of and want to avoid school, higher absenteeism and lower academic competence. The effects of bullying can begin early in life and, for some, last a lifetime.

The Australian Government's National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF) adopts a whole school approach to safety and wellbeing. It provides a comprehensive range of evidence-informed practices to guide schools in preventing and responding to incidents of harassment, aggression, violence and bullying and to implement their responsibilities in relation to child protection issues.

The National Safe Schools Framework is based on the following overarching vision:  
All Australian schools are safe, supportive and respectful teaching and learning communities that promote student wellbeing.

In the NSSF, a safe and supportive school is described in the following way:  
In a safe and supportive school, the risk from all types of harm is minimised, diversity is valued and all members of the school community feel respected and included and can be confident that they will receive support in the face of any threats to their safety or wellbeing.

The Guiding Principles of the National Safe Schools framework

This Framework is underpinned by the following guiding principles that represent fundamental beliefs about safe, supportive and respectful school communities. These guiding principles emphasise the importance of student safety and wellbeing as a pre-requisite for effective learning in all school settings.

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School:

- affirms the rights of all members of the school community to feel safe and be safe at school
- acknowledges that being safe and supported at school is essential for student wellbeing and effective learning
- accepts responsibility for developing and sustaining safe and supportive learning and teaching communities that also fulfill the school's child protection responsibilities
- encourages the active participation of all school community members in developing and maintaining a safe school community where diversity is valued
- actively supports young people to develop understanding and skills to keep themselves and others safe
- commits to developing a safe school community through a whole-school and evidence-based approach

**The nine key elements that St Joseph’s Catholic Primary School has in place to implement the NSSF are described in the Framework as:**

- 1. Leadership commitment to a safe school
- 2. A supportive and connected school culture
- 3. Policies and procedures
- 4. Professional learning
- 5. Positive behaviour management
- 6. Engagement, skill development and safe school curriculum
- 7. A focus on student wellbeing and student ownership
- 8. Early intervention and targeted support
- 9. Partnerships with families and community

**BULLYING IS**

Bullying is when, over a period of time, an individual or a group intentionally harm a person, who finds it hard to stop this behaviour from continuing.

Additionally, bullying can be characterised as: causing distress, not only at the time of the attack but also by the threat of future attacks; and, an imbalance of power (that is inappropriate and where there is an intention to hurt).

Its nature may be:

- verbal - name-calling, put-downs, threats (spoken, written, electronic or cyber which may also apply to the following points)
- physical - hitting, tripping, punching, throwing objects, stealing
- social – ignoring, hiding, ostracizing
- psychological – stalking, threatening looks, spreading rumours, damaging possessions

**TYPES OF BULLYING**

	<b>Direct</b>	<b>Indirect</b>
<b>Physical</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hitting, slapping, punching</li> <li>• Kicking</li> <li>• Pushing, strangling</li> <li>• Spitting, biting</li> <li>• Pinching, scratching</li> <li>• Throwing things, e.g. stones</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting another person to harm someone</li> </ul>
<b>Non-Physical</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mean and hurtful name-calling</li> <li>• Hurtful teasing</li> <li>• Demanding money or possessions</li> <li>• Forcing another to do homework or commit offences such as stealing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spreading nasty rumours</li> <li>• Trying to get other students to not like someone</li> <li>• Cyberbullying, cyber harassment and sexting (ignoring someone or sending nasty messages through social media; sending harassing, abusive or offensive messages online e.g. through social media or phone; spreading rumours online e.g. through social media or phone</li> <li>• Deliberate exclusion from a group or activity</li> <li>• Removing and hiding and/or damaging others’ belongings</li> </ul>
<b>Verbal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Threatening and/or obscene gestures</li> </ul>	
<b>Non-Verbal</b>		

(adapted from Rigby, 1996)

**HARASSMENT**

Harassment is any unwanted, unwelcome or uninvited behaviour which makes a person feel humiliated, intimidated or offended. (Adapted from Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia Policy, Harassment in School, 1998).

Harassment can be seen as one form of bullying.

Bullying and harassment are often thought of separately, however, both involve a more powerful person or group oppressing a less powerful person or group, often on the grounds of ‘difference’. These differences can be related to culture, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, sexual orientation, ability or disability, religion, body size and physical appearance, personality, age, marital status, parenting status or economic status. (Bullying. No Way! website cited in the National Safe Schools Framework, 2003).

## **SCOPE**

This Dealing With Bullying Policy applies to St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Western Australia.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Behaviour Support Policy
- Acceptable Use of ICT Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- CEWA Code of Conduct
- Making Jesus Real and School Values
- Staff Handbook / Parent Handbook
- Privacy Policy

## **PRINCIPLES**

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is a safe and supportive environment where the 6 guiding principles and 9 key elements of the National Safe Schools Framework are practised.

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School owes a duty of care to their students.

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School provides supportive environments which:

- acts to prevent instances of bullying, harassment, aggression and violence
- encourages socially appropriate behaviour using positive behaviour management and direct teaching of curriculum in areas such as interpersonal and self-management skills
- promotes respect for self and other
- develops physical/emotional well-being and resiliency
- develops interpersonal skills and positive mental health

Responding to bullying, harassment, aggression and violence requires quality leadership and role modelling to facilitate strategy implementation and sustained change, together with a whole-school community approach that is consistent with the Catholic Education Western Australia's Pastoral Care Framework, the school's Pastoral Care practices and the school's Evangelisation Plan and which partners with parents and other agencies.

Bullying, harassment, aggression and violence may occur outside of the school. When these behaviours impact on a student's learning and behaviour in school, St Joseph's school takes action to support the continued wellbeing of those involved.

All bullying, harassment, aggression and violence shall be responded to. When bullying, harassment, aggression and violence are ignored or overlooked, it serves to condone or reinforce the behaviour. Bystanders, (those who observe bullying) can encourage or assist those who bully simply by doing nothing.

While the aim is to promote and encourage positive behaviour, school policy and procedures shall contain clear statements regarding the range of appropriate consequences that may be applicable for unacceptable behaviour. In looking at consequences relating to specific issues, consideration should be given to other circumstances which may have bearing such as family or mental health matters.

All parties to incidents of bullying, harassment, aggression and violence are entitled to appropriate support.

## **OBJECTIVES**

- To actively counter bullying at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
- To raise awareness of bullying as an issue amongst staff, students and parents
- To provide strategies to resolve conflict and respect differences
- To create a school environment where all students, staff and parents feel safe and welcome
- To create a climate where it is okay to talk about bullying and to ask for help
- To promote positive mental health

## **RIGHTS**

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School:

- Every person has the right to feel safe. Any person who bullies another is denying them that right. This means we have to think about others (not just ourselves) in the classroom and in the playground. The right to feel safe means we have a responsibility to consider how we speak and act towards others. Bullying takes away a person's sense of security. The right to safety means that any bullying of any kind is unacceptable.
- Every person has the right to be treated with respect and fairness. This means we show respect to other people, and their property, in class and in the playground. The right to receive respect and fair treatment requires from us the responsibility to show manners and courtesy towards each other.
- Every person has the right to learn. This means we all have the responsibility to support the learning of others, to cooperate and to ensure that we do not adversely affect the learning of another student.
- It is everyone's responsibility to take the necessary steps to stop bullying behaviour. The school will not tolerate any action that undermines a person's right to feel safe, respected and to learn.

**RESPONSIBILITIES** Staff, Students and Parents have the following Responsibilities:

### **All Staff will:**

- Support, promote, enact, maintain and review the school's Dealing with Bullying and Harassment Policy, and Procedure, and related policies e.g the Code of Conduct

### **Teachers, Education Assistants and Support Staff will:**

- Be models of caring and tolerant behavior
- Teach positive behaviours and Christian values in line with the school's Behaviour Support Policy
- Integrate the Making Jesus Real program into the daily life of the school as outlined in the Behaviour Support Policy
- Teach the Keeping Safe program in all year levels
- Listen to reports of bullying
  - and act upon these
  - and inform the Principal
- Protect the victim from further harm
- Act to stop the behaviour recurring
- Record identified bullying incidents

### **Students who are bullied need to communicate about it with:**

- A teacher, a staff member or student of trust and give full details of the event and/or
- Their parents and give them full details of the event
- Write details about the event and place in the Class Meeting Box or similar anonymous facility

### **Student witnesses to bullying should:**

- Intervene if they are able and
- Seek teacher assistance
- Document if requested

### **Parents should:**

- Listen sympathetically to reports of bullying
- Speak to relevant school personnel. (Not the alleged student/s concerned)
- Work with the school in seeking a permanent solution
- Follow St Joseph's CPS's Code of Conduct and the Dealing with Bullying and Harassment Policy

### **Parent Witnesses:**

- Are limited to verbal intervention
- Seek teacher assistance
- Document if requested by school staff

## ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL'S STRATEGY TO COUNTER BULLYING:

Our strategy has two aspects: Prevention and Relief. Prevention Strategies assist to make students resilient. At St Joseph's a number of measures have been established to promote a Christ centred environment. Making Jesus Real is at the forefront of our school's culture, where we ask ourselves, "What Would Jesus Do?" This in itself encourages students to understand the right path to follow. However, should bullying occur the Relief Strategy we apply is the 'Shared Concern' approach (see Appendix 5). Although this approach is not based on sanctions or punishments, St Joseph's has a range of such measures available, up to and including suspension or exclusion which are in accord with our Behaviour Management Policy, and which may be used in response to bullying.

### **ACTION PLAN: PREVENTION STRATEGIES**

1. "Dealing With Bullying and Harassment (Students)" Policy, initiated, reviewed and revised every three years
2. Code of Conduct, initiated and made available to the school community, January 2017
3. Behaviour Management Policy reviewed, revised and made available to the school community, May 2017
4. All staff made aware of bullying issues, student attitudes, the need to take action and of their role in implementing and monitoring the policy
5. The Bullying Policy clearly articulated to staff, students and parents
6. All staff to provide careful supervision
7. Discuss the issue of bullying regularly at staff meetings and provide training to all staff
8. Teach conflict resolution and problem-solving skills to students
9. Include bullying-related issues as part of the curriculum
10. Promote positive mental health as part of the curriculum
11. Offer a range of preventative, support systems such as peer mentoring and safe places.
12. Inform the students about opportunities enabling incidents to be reported confidentially in a verbal or written form to staff, Principal, parents, student leaders
13. New students arriving later in each school year to be advised
14. Offer individual or group counseling with the Principal or Assistant Principal
15. Introduce all parents to the policy and make copies available
  - \* Policy and practice comments to be highlighted in the school newsletter as required
  - \* Pamphlet to provide information to parents on how to deal with bullying (See Appendix 1)
16. Monitor the policy with staff during staff meetings

### **ACTION PLAN: RELIEF STRATEGIES**

- Teacher (or Principal) meets individually with the person/persons who bullied and the person being bullied:
  - Use the 'Shared Concern' approach to deal with incidents of bullying. See detailed notes Appendix 5
  - Provide an opportunity for the person bullied to let the teacher (or Principal) know
    - \*what the person who bullied did was unacceptable
    - \*how she/he felt
    - \*that she/he wants the behaviour to stop
  - Teacher (or Principal) meets with those involved in the bullying which may include bystanders
  - Teacher (or Principal) uses the Shared Concern approach to build empathy, solve the problem and stop the bullying
  - Provide support for the person being bullied as required
  - Record incidents and those involved on the *Bullying Incident Form* (Appendix 4). Copy given to the Principal. Stored in the Assistant Principal's files.
  - If necessary advise of or apply sanctions
  - If necessary contact / write to advise parents of all students involved in the incident
- Repeated or Extreme Incidents of Bullying:
  - Interview with Principal who will decide on further action that will also involve meeting with parents
  - Apply consequences where students resist behaviour modification and repeat offend
  - Incidents of continued bullying to result in counseling for the student being bullied and the student bullying. Punitive action for the student bullying to be implemented if and as needed.

### **BULLYING PROCEDURE**

All parties are expected to treat each other with respect and dignity, and ensure the confidentiality of any issues that may arise.

### **TEACHERS: RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Teachers to be familiar with the school's Bullying Policy and Procedure.
- Be models of caring and tolerant behaviour
- In the first weeks of each school year, the non-acceptance of bullying is to be discussed in class.
- Make students aware of their responsibilities with regard to this policy.
- Implement lessons to develop resilience to bullying. Health lessons for year 1 – 7 term 1 from 'Friendly Schools' or other resources listed in Appendix 2.
- Teach relevant strategies. (Refer to Appendix 3)
- Attend to reported instances of bullying behaviour
- Treat information regarding bullying confidentially

## ACTION (In Sequential Steps)

1	Protect the bullied child from further harm.
2	Write down name/s of the bullied child, who reported the incident, and the bystander/s
3	Individually interview bystander/s using the Shared Concern Approach. Discuss strategies these students might use to avoid bullying in the future
4	Interview the bullied child to find out what happened
5	Suggest strategies that the bullied student might use to avoid being bullied in the future
6	Record what happened on the bullying incident form
7	Give a copy of the form to Principal
8	Monitor the situation over the following few days
9	<b>Where necessary</b> , speak to class without using any names: conduct circle time, small group meetings, class meeting box, etc
10	<b>Where appropriate and using discretion (having ensured that the Principal is already informed)</b> work with parents of the bullied child to assist their child to avoid being bullied in the future. Keep them informed about progress and the measures taken
11	<b>If necessary, where appropriate and using discretion (having ensured that the Principal is already informed)</b> inform the parents of the child bullying and work with them to establish joint strategies for behaviour modification

- **Unresolved or Ongoing Incidents:**

- Refer to Principal with documentation
- Teacher or other involved staff member/s to write an incident report individually
- Principal interviews students and contacts parents within two school days
- Counselling and conflict resolution including Class Teacher where appropriate
- Reflection time
- Further social skills and problem-solving skills training for student/s involved

- **Escalating or Extreme Incidents**

- Refer to Principal with documentation
- Principal to interview students
- Principal to contact parents: problem solving with parents
- Options available at Principal's discretion
  - \*after school detention
  - \*withdrawal from class
  - \*suspension from school (suspension to be followed by interview with student and parents before reentry to school)
  - \*counselling with School Counsellor if required
  - \*expulsion (CEO involvement)

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **References**

- Rigby, K (2001). *Stop the Bullying. A Handbook for Schools*. ACER, Australia
- Curriculum Corporation (2000), *Mind Matters*, Commonwealth of Australia
- National Safe Schools Framework (2003, revised 2011). Education Services Australia as the legal entity for the Ministerial Council on Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs [MCEECDYA]).
- Mitchell, P. *Making Jesus Real*
- Murphy, Ed and Lewers, R. (2000). *The Hidden Hurt: how to beat bullying in schools*. Australia: Wizard Books
- Quon, M. (2001) *Bully Proof: practical strategies for dealing with bullying in schools*. NSW: User Friendly Resource Enterprises Ltd.
- *Friendly Schools Bullying Intervention Project*. WA Centre for Health Promotion Research. Curtin University
- *Dealing With Bullying and Harassment (Students) WA: CEO Policy*
- The RE Units of Work Catholic Education Office of WA
- Collaborative Learning Strategies
- Petersen, L. (2002). *Stop Think Do: Social Skills Training*

### **Related Documents**

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Bunbury Policy Documents:

- Social Media
- Behaviour Support
- Acceptable Use of ICT
- Pastoral Care
- CEWA Code of Conduct
- School Values
- Staff Handbook / Parent Handbook
- Privacy Policy
  
- Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia Policy 2-C4 Harassment, Discrimination and Bullying
- Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia Policy 2-D3 Child Abuse
- Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia Policy 2-D8 Management of Confidential Information in Schools
- Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia Policy 2-D7 Exclusion of Students for Disciplinary Reasons
- Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, *Framework for the Development of Pastoral Care in Catholic Schools (2007)*
- *Framework for Schools Dealing with Bullying* Available on request:
- *Friendly Schools and Families (Acerpress)*
  
- The National Safe Schools Framework

### **Review History**

Next review 2020 St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Behaviour Management Committee

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **RELEVANT STRATEGIES**

- Shared Concern Approach. (See Appendix 5)
- Stop, Think Do Strategies. See Petersen, L. (2002). *Stop Think Do: Social Skills Training*
- The 'Bounce Back Plan', a five point (five finger) plan to counter bullying:
  - Thumb: Talk (Tell the bully to stop, how you are feeling etc.)
  - Index: Bounce Back (Say something surprising to them)
  - Middle: Walk (Walk away, ignore, leave the situation and report it to teacher)
  - Ring: Talk to Teacher (Tell the teacher about the incident/s)
  - Pinkie: Teacher talks to bully (Documents and follows up)
- Introduce Dobbing as D=Don't, O=Obey a, B=Bully! in PP to year 3
- Players In The Bullying Game (See Appendix 6)



## **APPENDIX 5**

### **The “Shared Concern” Approach to Bullying**

1. It is assumed that bullies typically (not always) are insensitive to the harm, or the extent of the harm, they are doing to the victim. This insensitivity is due to their involvement in a group which seems to give legitimacy to their bullying activities and prevents them from feeling personally responsible for the outcomes.
2. What they appear to gain mostly through bullying is a sense of being part of a group which is “having fun”.
3. Yet as individuals, bullies commonly feel uncomfortable about what is being done.
4. A hostile blaming attitude on the part of an authority figure is likely to increase the desire for them to continue bullying and unite the bullies more strongly.
5. Working with individuals by initially sharing with them one’s concern for the victim is likely to elicit a more positive response.
6. Although the method involves a non-blaming approach, it does not in any way seek to excuse or condone bullying. It is in fact quite direct and confrontational. It strongly invites and expects a responsible response.
7. Having made a commitment to the interviewer, generally means that members of the bully group will not talk to each other about what has transpired. Group influence is thereby weakened.
8. Careful monitoring of what ensues after promises have been made is absolutely essential.
9. Interviewing the victim first would be avoided, because if the bullies suspect that the victim has informed on them, he or she will be further endangered.
10. Victims are not always “innocent”, and it is important to understand what they may be doing to provoke the bullying. One may need to work directly on changing the victim’s provocative way of behaving.
11. Although the aim is to re-individualise bullies, the idea is not to “break up” groups (students have right to enjoy being in a group) but eventually to change their attitudes and behaviour towards the victim and other potential victims.
12. It is important to see the whole group of “bullies” together after progress have been made towards improving the situation, to congratulate them on what they have been able to do, and to work through any residual problems with the victim present.  
An important benefit from this approach is that it can lead to a “change of heart” on the part of bullies and remove the need for constant surveillance.
14. The use of punishment is often ineffective. It may breed resentment, increase group solidarity, jeopardize the victim further, and challenge bullies to practise ways of bullying that are hard to detect.
15. It does require some careful thought and planning on how to use the method with students. However, it need not be time consuming. Short interviews and meetings only are often all that is needed.
16. There is now good research evidence that the method is effective in at least two cases in three (see Smith and Sharp, 1994). It has been used in many British, European and Australian schools with excellent results.
17. However, In severe cases of bullying or where individuals do not respond to shared concern, further action may be needed, including interviews with parents and even suspension.

#### **THE METHOD**

Briefly, the Method of Shared Concern involves the following stages:

- A. A bully/victim problem is identified. For this one needs to have reliable information about who is involved, including
  - (a) the person or persons who are being bullied by another individual or group.
  - (b) the person or persons who continually engage in carrying out the bullying.

Information about what is happening and the concern felt by the victim is ideally obtained through observations and reports, rather than through talking directly with the victim. (This is to prevent repercussions on the victim for having “told”)

- B. A number of students are identified as having taken part in the bullying, or to have supported it in some way. Each one is seen in turn, starting (if known) with the likely ringleader.

## APPENDIX 6

### Players In The Bullying Game

Addressing the problem of bullying in a school is a complex task because of the interlocking layers within a school community. The following aspects are pivotal to an effective anti-bullying action plan.

#### ***The wider school culture.***

*This includes the relationships between teachers and students, staff awareness of bullying within the school and staff willingness to take action to reduce bullying and protect victims. The culture to “Not Dob” needs to be addressed. Dobbing needs to be clearly differentiated from speaking up to protect yours and others’ rights. (Dobbing re-conceptualised as D+Don’t, O=Obey a, B=Bully).*

#### ***The bystanders.***

*The students who witness bullying but are not directly involved are an important resource that can be used to monitor behaviour and make bullying less socially acceptable within the school. The action plan needs to raise their awareness, empower them and enlist them in our schools efforts against bullying. Watching a person bullying another without intervening or without moving away to get help can be considered as support for the child bullying.*

#### **The targets of bullying.**

They are the recipients of the schools concerns. They deserve all the protection that the school can offer. Protection is only a short-term measure. They **may** need training in skills such as assertiveness, confidence and positive self image. The goal is to make the children bully proof. **(You Can Do It).**

#### **The children who bully.**

They are the targets for behaviour modification. The school has an obligation to them as well. Unless change can be made these children face a problematic future with a basis of dysfunctional relationships. **(You Can Do It).**

#### **Recruiting the Bystanders.**

Recruiting the bystanders is founded on the notion that bullying can be lessened, if not prevented all together, if the peer group is activated in defence of victims.

Bullying is an expression of power, it thrives on an audience – the bystander. Bystanders are a part of the problem because they reinforce the bully’s behaviour by their laughter or their silent acknowledgement of the bully’s power.