



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

At St Brigid's the dignity of the human person is the foundation of all Catholic social teaching and is 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 our parish school.

This policy identifies the interconnectedness of the characteristics of quality Catholic learning and teaching. It is intended to value, respect and promote the self-esteem and dignity of each student. The school will actively promote anti-bullying messages, alerting students and staff of the need to be vigilant.

It is essential that we create and maintain a respectful, safe and supportive learning environment that promotes student wellbeing, personal growth and positive self-esteem amongst our diverse range of learners.

The prevention of and responses to incidents of bullying, inappropriate use of technology and disrespectful behaviour are more readily achieved in a caring and supportive school culture that promotes positive relationships and reflects Gospel values. 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 our students and are therefore unacceptable.

2.0 PURPOSE

This policy:

- 2.1 Encourages a culture that is firm about unacceptable behaviour.
- 2.2 Articulates how bullying is defined and addressed; including the means taken to prevent incidents and the response taken when an incident occurs.
- 2.3 Supports the school's Mission and Vision Statement and guidelines of Catholic Education in the Diocese of Sale.
- 2.4 Actively promotes anti-bullying messages, alerting students and staff of the need to be vigilant.

3.0 PRINCIPLES

- 3.1 Every person has the right to be treated respectfully and feel safe from any form of verbal, physical and emotional abuse.
- 3.2 The school is committed to building and nurturing a community that values diversity.

- 3.3 Parents are the prime educators of their children.
- 3.4 The school community is involved in the development of school policies.
- 3.5 Reporting of unacceptable behaviour is essential to the effective implementation of this policy.
- 3.6 Complainant(s) will be protected from victimisation.
- 3.7 Learning technologies are used ethically and responsibly in the school environment.
- 3.8 Communication is respectful and human dignity is valued.
- 3.9 Regular monitoring of school policies is necessary.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

4.1 Bullying

Bullying is 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:

- **Physical bullying:** pushing, shoving, fighting, pinching and any other unwelcome physical contact used intentionally to intimidate or hurt someone.
- **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.
- **Gesture bullying:** non-verbal signals used to silence and intimidate a victim.
- **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.
- **Exclusion bullying:** deliberately being left out of activities is a most hurtful form of bullying.
- **Visual bullying:** offensive notes or material, graffiti, or damaging other people's possessions.
- **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.
- **Cyber-bullying:** the use of various forms of electronic media to spread text and visual messages to cause hurt, embarrassment, intimidation.

4.2 Types of Bullying

There are three broad categories of bullying:

4.2.1 *Direct physical bullying*

This form includes hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.

4.2.2 Direct verbal bullying

This form includes name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, or verbal abuse.

4.2.3 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; and
- cyber-bullying, which involves the use of email, text messages or chat rooms to humiliate and distress someone.

4.3 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:

4.3.1 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.

4.3.2 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.

4.3.3 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.

5.0 PROCEDURES

All members of our school community must be aware of the possibility of bullying and take action to prevent bullying if it is reasonably foreseeable.

5.1 Responsibilities.

The school will:

- Use an Anti-Bullying Response Pathway when aware of any bullying incidents. The Pathway will assist with a regulated and thorough response. (Appendix 1)
- implement an Anti-Bullying Action Plan as part of the Anti-Bullying Response Pathway. (Appendix 2)
- Expect students, staff, parents (and carers) to report bullying and cyber-bullying to the class teacher, a member of the leadership team or directly to the principal.
- Notify parents and carers when their child has been involved in a bullying incident
- Notify their Educational Consultant, Catholic Education Office Diocese of Sale of any serious bullying incident.
- Report to police when a serious criminal offence has been identified. This is the principal's responsibility. Teachers are to contact the principal immediately when conduct such as 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 dissemination of child pornography are brought to their attention.
- Investigate and record complaints of bullying and cyber-bullying in a manner that respects the dignity and privacy of those involved. (Appendix 3)
- Maintain written records of bullying incidents and related interventions. At our school, this written record is maintained by the Principal. As a staff we will review the record at regular intervals to see if any patterns of behaviour are emerging.
- Appoint a nominated person to coordinate strategies for the resolution of specific bullying incidents reported in this school.
- Survey students at least once a year on various matters and include questions about bullying, cyber-bullying, safety and wellbeing.
- Regularly review and evaluate this anti-bullying policy to ensure they are working effectively. (Appendix 4)
- Complete the Anti-Bullying Checklist for Schools at the beginning of each year (Appendix 5)
- involve parents in this review through communication at a Parent Forum and Parents and Friends Association meetings.
- Purchase Anti-Bullying resources and support material for students, staff and parents and ensure easy access to this material for all staff, parents and students.
- Consider using Restorative Practices when bullying has occurred. (Appendix 6)

5.2 Responsibilities: Staff

Staff at St Brigid's aim to treat all members of the school community with dignity and respect. They are aware that the Duty of Care of staff with bullying and related matters may in certain circumstances extend past the school hours of instruction. Staff still have an obligation to immediately notify a member of the school leadership team.

Staff at St Brigid's will:

- Build respectful relationships that respond effectively and sensitively to the needs of each student.
- Implement the student anti-bullying procedures by responding promptly and appropriately to reported incidents of bullying.
- Immediately notify a member of the leadership team and, in cases of serious bullying, notify the principal when unacceptable behaviour is perceived to adversely impact on the wellbeing of a student.
- Access professional learning to support appropriate anti-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.
- Implement learning programs aligned with the Victorian Curriculum strand of 'Personal and Social Capability'. The Personal and Social Capability curriculum is organised into two interrelated strands: 'Self-Awareness and Management' and 'Social Awareness and Management'. These programs include:
 - a Foundation to Year 6 unit at the commencement of the year with an explicit focus on personal and social learning from the relevant Victorian Curriculum level;
 - personal and social learning as integral to further Units of work throughout the year;
 - an Arts Program, which aims to develop the social confidence and skills of students;
 - as needed, teachers plan and implement targeted social skills programs to build resilience and develop conflict resolution, assertiveness and problem solving skills.
- Support all aspects of related school policies.
- Embed critical thinking, values clarification, respectful relationships and developing empathy into teaching practice.
- Remain vigilant in how students are using technology.
- Support the student anti-bullying and responsible use of technology procedures through positive modelling and the promotion of appropriate behaviour.
- Respond to bullying and cyber-bullying concerns by providing age appropriate guidance and boundaries so that students can learn to self-regulate.
- Consider implementing restorative practices procedures when bullying has occurred. (Appendix 6)

5.3 Responsibilities: Students

Students have responsibilities as well. The staff at St Brigid's will encourage and support students to:

- Immediately seek help from a trusted adult if they are aware of or involved in a bullying or cyber-bullying incident.
- Seek support when bullying occurs and refrain from retaliating in any bullying incident.
- Follow the anti-bullying procedures.
- 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, keep evidence of alleged bullying and produce it on request (for example, phone text messages).

5.4 Responsibilities: Parents and Carers

Parents and carers have responsibilities. The staff at St Brigid's will:

- Expect that parents and carers will model behaviour that is indicative of Gospel values and that reflect the school's Vision and Mission statement. Thus parents and carers are required to act respectfully to all members of the school community at all times.
- Request that parents contact the school immediately through the class teacher, a member of the leadership team or directly through the principal if they know of any bullying incident.
- Remind parents about the need to reinforce the school messages in the proper use of technology to help children grow into ethical and responsible digital citizens.
- Encourage parents 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). When such bullying concerns the wellbeing of their own child, parents are to contact the principal.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- 6.1** A satisfactory response is given to all reported incidents of bullying.
- 6.2** Both the victim and perpetrator of bullying are supported and assisted to learn from the experience.
- 6.3** Opportunities to restore relationships damaged as a result of bullying are available within a reasonable time.
- 6.4** The school and parents work in partnership in responding to incidents of bullying
- 6.5** Each person in the school community is alert to the signs and evidence of bullying occurring.
- 6.6** Every person at St. Brigid's has an understanding of bullying.
- 6.7** Students, teachers and families are aware of the appropriate strategies to take to effectively manage bullying in the school.
- 6.8** The response to complaints or reports of bullying will be sensitive, fair and prompt.
- 6.9** The school promptly resolves complaints of perceived or actual incidents of bullying.

7.0 APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: Anti-Bullying Response Pathway
- Appendix 2: School Anti-Bullying Action Plan
- Appendix 3: Bullying Record Keeping and Investigation Tool
- Appendix 4: Policy Review Tool
- Appendix 5: Anti-Bullying Checklist for Schools
- Appendix 6: Restorative Practices

8.0 REFERENCES

Catholic Education Office Melbourne (COM) policy 2.26: “*Pastoral Care of Students in Catholic Schools*” incorporating the “*Guidelines for Student Behaviour Management*” Revised February 2013.

Department of Education and Training (DE&T) 2015. [Bullying Prevention Policy](#)

Department of Education and Training (DE&T) 2015. [Safe Schools Hub – Helpful Resources](#)

Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood. [National Safe Schools Framework](#) (Revised 2010: Updated 2013)

[Restorative Practices in Catholic School Communities](#). 2015. Retrieved from CEVN/CECV/Curriculum & Student Support/Student Wellbeing/Video Resources/Restorative Practices

Restorative Practices Research Document 3, Catholic Education Office Melbourne, James Goold House; October 2007. Retrieved from CEVN/CECV/Curriculum & Student Support/Student Wellbeing/Research Documents.

9.0 REVIEW

This policy is reviewed at least annually.

APPENDIX 1

ANTI-BULLYING RESPONSE PATHWAY

1. Policy access and awareness

Policy is made available on the schools website; articles and resources on bullying are made available through newsletter and other means.

2. Initial disclosure made, first response

School becomes aware of an incident involving possible bullying. Physical contact is stopped (if this involves physical action). Safe environment is established for the victim.

3. Life threatening incident or risk of significant harm involved?

Yes - Go to Point 6 below OR No - Go to Point 4 below

4. Information gathered on Bullying Record Keeping and Investigation form

Completed by staff member - copy to principal. Pay attention to repeated offences, intent to harm, imbalance of power.

5. Is this bullying?

Yes - Go to Point 6 below or No - Go to behaviour management as per school policy

6. Informing appropriate personnel

Principal informs relevant staff (teacher, leadership team, etc.).

7. Formal information gathering

Principal collects statements from interviews. Investigation Form contains advice.

8. Case management instituted by principal ('nominated person')

Anti-bullying plan adopted (see Appendix 2). Principal and senior staff agree on a written anti-bullying action plan to stop the bullying. Includes support for the victim. Parents of victim involved.

9. Situation monitored

'Nominated person' reports as required in the anti-bullying action plan to principal.

10. Review of plan's effectiveness. Has the plan and the actions stopped the bullying?

Yes - All records retained, monitoring continues at a lower level.

No - Matter referred to St Brigid's Education Consultant. Plan may be modified, additional support may be offered, suspension and or expulsion may be considered or police may be involved.

APPENDIX 2

ST BRIGID'S ANTI-BULLYING ACTION PLAN

An action plan to support an anti-bullying response to a bullying incident should consider for inclusion:

- details specific to each situation or person;
- addressing issues identified in the Investigation Form;
- parent involvement and agreement, signatures required;
- outlining the role of the 'Nominated Person' in monitoring, assisting and addressing the bullying clearly listed in the plan;
- roles of supporting staff clearly outlined;
- various support measures for victim listed (counselling, peer support, teacher contact, safe zones, etc.);
- monitoring mechanisms outlined;
- sanctions and restrictions for the perpetrator(s) listed.
- strategies for the instigator of the bullying incident listed (behaviour plan, assistance with empathy, counselling, family support, lunch restrictions, etc.)
- outlining the class teacher's supporting role.
- first and second review points (actual date) indicated, convened by the 'Nominated Person'.

APPENDIX 3

BULLYING RECORD KEEPING AND INVESTIGATION TOOL

Bullying is a serious offence and is not acceptable in our school. All school employees are required to report alleged violations and every act of bullying will be duly investigated, and parents/carers informed.

Directions:

The Bullying Record Keeping and Investigation Tool is to be used when an alleged bullying incident is reported. This document is to be confidentially maintained in accordance with the National Catholic Education Commission. Upon completion, the Bullying Record Keeping and Investigation Tool is to be filed in the appropriate student records.

School:

Investigating Teacher:

Name of Students Involved:

Date/Time of Incident:

Was the incident life threatening or was the target a high-risk concern? If Yes, immediately inform the principal and as appropriate:

Seek medical assistance	Inform parent/carers	Contact the police	Inform DHS (if appropriate)	Inform the Educational Consultant	Inform the Parish Priest
-------------------------	----------------------	--------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------------	--------------------------

If the incident is not life threatening or the child is not a high-risk concern, continue completing this document.

Where did the incident occur? *Please circle:*

Online	Bus/transport	In playground	In classroom	Outside school	Other
--------	---------------	---------------	--------------	----------------	-------

Who reported the alleged incident: *Please circle:*

The alleged victim(s)	Other student(s)	Parent/carers	Staff member	Member of wider school community	Other
-----------------------	------------------	---------------	--------------	----------------------------------	-------

Describe the incident:

Identify the nature of the alleged bullying incident. *Please circle:*

Written	Including: graffiti, notes, letters, writing on books, written threats, ridicule through drawings
Social	Including: lying, spreading rumours, playing a nasty joke, mimicking and deliberate exclusion
Verbal	Including: name calling, insults, threats, severe sarcasm, abusive comments, racist remarks
Physical	Pushing, shoving, fighting, tripping, hitting, poking, spitting
Cyber	Including: using technology such as email, mobile phones, chat rooms, social networking sites, etc. to verbally, socially or psychologically bully.
Damage to property	theft of bags, clothes, money, property, tearing clothes, ripping books
Psychological bullying	Including intimidation, manipulation and stalking
Accessory	A person who is able to help the target, who joins the bullying either willingly or inadvertently
Bystander	Encouraging others to bully or deliberately witnessing bullying without taking affirmative action

Is there evidence of an imbalance of power in this incident through either: *Please circle:*

Academic ability	Age	Social status	Strength	Size	Other
------------------	-----	---------------	----------	------	-------

Is there evidence that this behaviour was deliberate or planned?

According to the alleged victim/s, has he/she/they experienced other or repeated incidences of bullying from the alleged perpetrator? (If yes, please give dates, who was involved and outcomes.)

Does/do the alleged victim/s fear for his/her/their safety or for his/her/their property?

What evidence supports the allegation (physical, material, digital)?

Is there concern the alleged incident may have been influenced by any of the following?
Please circle:

Race/culture	Beliefs	Disability	Gender	Socio-economic	Other
--------------	---------	------------	--------	----------------	-------

Is there any relevant background/history to this alleged incident?

What effect is the situation having on the wellbeing of the alleged victim/s, including self-esteem, physical health, relationships with peers, ability to learn, absenteeism, etc.?

Were there any witnesses to this incident? (If yes, identify student names and year level/learning groups)

Description of the incident, according to the witness

Did this student play an active role in the incident?

Indicate other investigative procedures carried out. *Please circle:*

Interviewed parents of alleged victim(s) Date/Time:	Interviewed parents of alleged perpetrators(s) Date/time:	Interviewed parents of witnesses/bystanders/accessories Date/time:
---	---	--

Annotations on interview with parents

After investigation, was the allegation of bullying confirmed?

Yes / No

If 'No', please sign below and place a copy of this document into student(s) file and refer to schools'.

If 'Yes", please sign below, place copy of this document into student(s) file and refer incident to the principal or principal's delegate.

Signed:

Date:

Where will this incident report be filed for future reference?

File placement:

APPENDIX 4
POLICY REVIEW TOOL

Plan/Policy: Reviewed by: Date:
--

KEY QUESTIONS	RESPONSES	ACTIONS
Has the plan/policy clearly identified the issue it will address?		
Does the plan/policy clearly state procedures for how to respond to the issue?		
How have the plan/policy and procedures been widely disseminated to all members of the school community?		
Have there been any recent changes to Church documents affecting the plan/policy?		
Have there been any recent changes to Federal and/or State legislation affecting the plan/policy?		
Which key diocesan policies, strategies and priorities are relevant to and have been consulted within the plan/policy?		
How does the policy/plan reflect the vision and mission of our school?		

Is there recent and relevant research affecting the plan/policy that needs to be included?		
What current data has been collected to inform the plan/policy?		
Have there been any significant events within the school affecting the plan/policy since the last review?		
Have there been any significant changes to the student population affecting plan/policy since the last review?		
What are the key trends that affect this school community?		
How does the plan/policy take into account the views of the people it will affect?		
How have new staff been informed of this plan/policy?		
When will the plan/policy be next reviewed?		

APPENDIX 5

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY CHECKLIST FOR SCHOOLS

YOUR BULLYING POLICY MUST:	
Make a clear statement on the school's stance on bullying, harassment and violence	<input type="checkbox"/>
Define what constitutes bullying, harassment, discrimination, violence, cyber-bullying and sexual harassment and use language consistent with the Equal Opportunity legislation. Additional definitions can be found in the <i>National Safe Schools Framework Resource Manual</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide information about the effects bullying has on individuals	<input type="checkbox"/>
Be reviewed annually and involve parents and students in the process	<input type="checkbox"/>
IN ACTIONS RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS, YOUR BULLYING POLICY SHOULD:	
Allow for flexibility depending on the nature, severity and extent of bullying in light of natural justice principles	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inform parents about serious incidents involving their child	<input type="checkbox"/>
Follow up victims and perpetrators	<input type="checkbox"/>
COMPLAINT HANDLING PROCESSES AND REPORTING MUST CONSIDER:	
How is bullying reported?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Who is it reported to and when must it be reported?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Responsibilities of the principal, staff, students and parents	<input type="checkbox"/>
YOUR BULLYING POLICY SHOULD BE COMMUNICATED IN THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY BY:	
Ensuring students/parents/teachers/community receives a copy of the policy (and consider how, and when a copy is provided?)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making sure the policy is placed on the school's website and is communicated regularly (for instance in assembly)	<input type="checkbox"/>
RECORD POLICY IMPLEMENTATION BY:	
Documenting processes and forms used such as action plans, reporting forms, bullying register, follow-up documentation forms, advice to parents/students/staff	<input type="checkbox"/>
PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION:	
Ensure all prevention, intervention and post-intervention strategies that are used are well documented	<input type="checkbox"/>
Document how bullying is addressed through the curriculum	<input type="checkbox"/>
TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT:	
Provide training and development to teachers, parents and students (and decide who will provide this training and development, as well as how and when)	<input type="checkbox"/>
When/how will training and development be updated?	<input type="checkbox"/>

APPENDIX 6

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

The philosophy underpinning Restorative Practices is based on a relational model where people are held accountable for their actions and support is provided for the community affected by another's actions. These practices range from proactive to reactive, involving the development and enhancement of relationships in schools and teaching of conflict resolution and other problem-solving skills. They also involve classroom management that is participatory and democratic and focused on problem-solving.

Teachers implementing Restorative Practices at St Brigid's may use the following suggestions:

Community Conferences

A community conference brings together, in the wake of a serious incident of harm, the wrongdoer and the student being bullied, along with their families and appropriate school personnel. Conducted by a *trained facilitator*, a series of scripted questions is directed to participants in order to understand the incident and its antecedents and the effects of the incident on the community. An agreement is reached whereby all participants feel that there has been some restitution and that relationships have been repaired. The agreement also reflects plans to meet identified needs of the participants, such as counselling, and to implement necessary changes to school policy and practice. Follow-up is crucial for ongoing support and to ensure compliance with the agreement.

Small Group Individual Conferences

These are usually confined to a small group of students or an individual student and perhaps teacher(s) who have been involved in a less serious incident of harm. Typically small group conferences might be used to deal with low-level bullying before matters escalate.

Parents, while not directly involved, are informed of the process and its outcomes. Follow-up is crucial for ongoing support and to ensure compliance with the agreement.

Classroom Conferences

These involve the whole-class group in addressing issues which have affected teaching and learning in the classroom and student wellbeing, such as classroom bullying and more generally, classroom disruption.