Anti-Bullying Measures

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is the misuse of power, position and privilege. It is done to intimidate, coerce, engender fear and to control. Bullying can take a number of forms: physical, verbal, cyber, emotional, racist or sexual.

Bullying affects everyone, not just the offender and the victim. It also affects other people who may witness violence, intimidation and the distress of the victim. Bullying can also damage the atmosphere of a class and the climate of a school. In accordance with these beliefs, we do not tolerate bullying of any student by another student or a group of students. We insist that justice and due process be extended to both the victim and the offender.

For an incident to be classified as bullying, the following three factors normally need to be involved:

- there is an imbalance of power (i.e. a group of students against a single student; an older student against a younger student; a physically/mentally/emotionally stronger student against a weaker one)
- the behaviour is intentional in a premeditated sense
- the behaviour is usually, but not always, repeated.

Possible Signs of Bullying

A student who is being bullied may show signs of the following behaviours:

- unwillingness to attend school
- complaints of feeling ill
- lack of motivation and engagement with school work
- going home hungry
- withdrawal and lack of confidence
- distress, anxiety, lack of appetite
- nightmares
- loss of money and/or possessions
- refusal to say what’s wrong
- increase in agitation, aggression and unreasonable.
if these behaviours are unusual for the student in question then bullying needs to be investigated as a possible cause.

**Negative Peer Interactions (usually not bullying)**

Some negative interactions can occur among students, which may involve inappropriate behaviour and directly break school/class rules. These interactions do not usually amount to bullying if there is:

- no imbalance of power
- the incident is a response to a ‘one off’ set of circumstances
- no pre-meditated malice or intent is established.

Incidents involving inappropriate behaviour will require attention using the regular procedural guidelines outlined in the *Student Management Policy – Flow Chart od Student Management Steps*.

**A Whole School Approach to Anti-Bullying**

Research has shown that a reduction in school violence and bullying occurs when a whole school approach is adopted. A whole school approach provides a prepared and supportive foundation so the challenges can be more effectively met. It encompasses both prevention and response. With adequate prevention strategies in place, the need for intervention is often reduced. Teachers, parents and students can all take actions that assist in preventing potential incidents of bullying.

**Preventative Measures**

Saints Peter and Paul Primary School seek to be a place of acceptance, affirmation and justice. We believe that bullying strikes at the very basis of these values and prevents students from reaching for excellence in every dimension of their lives. Students are entitled to receive their education free from humiliation, harassment, oppression and abuse.

Teachers are expected to:

- be observant
- conduct class meetings to discuss school rules and expectations
- conference any issues with students
- teach Personal Development programs which include the anti-bullying message
- provide opportunities to access whole school anti-bullying initiatives
- provide strategies to avoid cyber bullying by incorporating programs such as ‘Cybersmart’ into Personal Development Programs (cybersmart.gov.au)
- promote exemplar behaviour
- model Christian values.
The Role of Parents

Bullying incidents can occur at all ages and in all situations. Therefore it is part of the role of parents as co-educators to try to prepare their children to deal with potential conflicts.

Parents are encouraged to:
- teach their child to be assertive, resilient and bounce back from situations
- watch for possible signs of bullying
- be supportive and try to discover what happened
- encourage their child to report any bullying incidents either as a victim or bystander
- inform the classroom teacher of any bullying incidents
- refrain from discussing the incident with another child other than their own.

It is extremely important that the parent community realise that any discussion about behaviour with a student at school must be left to either the parents or guardian of that student and the staff members at the School to address. Any issues of concern regarding another student’s behaviour, even if their own child is also involved, should be addressed with the School staff members and never with individual students who are not their own children. The normal process is to address the issue with the classroom teacher initially and then move to the Leadership Team. If a parent wants to talk to the Principal directly about a matter they simply need to contact the Front Office for an appointment.

Anti-Bullying Strategies for Students

Students require opportunities to practise and develop skills that enhance resilience, negotiation skills, conflict resolution, problem solving, communication and help seeking.

Students should be encouraged to:
- report all incidents of bullying to a teacher
- put on a brave front - be assertive and confident
- use a strong, loud voice
- walk away if possible (don’t let the bully see that you are upset)
- avoid places where bullying might take place
- seek out friends
- talk to someone about issues (parents/carers, teachers and friends)
- maintain secure passwords and report any incidents of cyber bullying.
Anti-Bullying Vocabulary for Students

**Fogging** – best used when being teased or put down

Fogging involves the student who is the target of the bullying behaviour, responding to teasing with neutral statements or by indicating they don’t care, thus not inflaming the situation. Bullies like to get a reaction from their target. When this doesn’t happen, the bully will often move on. If needed, the student being targeted can repeat these messages whilst walking to safety near friends or a teacher.

**‘I’ Statements** – useful to show feelings towards bullies

Students who use ‘I’ statements may feel empowered because they have attempted to take control of the situation rather than walk away or call the teacher. The bully may begin to empathise with the student’s feelings or at least cease the behaviour because of the level of hurt involved.

Younger students are taught to say, ‘Stop it, I do not like it.’

Responding to a Reported Incident of Bullying

Teachers are expected to use their professional judgement when investigating an incident of bullying. However a usual procedure to follow would include the following:

**For a reported incident of bullying**

1. Interview the victim of the incident, the alleged offender and any witnesses.

2. Report the incident to the coordinator who will keep a formal record of the incident via the Reflection Plan – Student Management Policy appendix 1 or 2

3. **If the bullying behaviour continues**

   A second Reflection Plan – Student Management Policy appendix 1 or 2 is completed and a meeting called involving the student, their parents, the coordinator and if necessary the class teacher is held to discuss the matter. There will be consequences involved and if any further bullying incidents occur then the student will move to step 7 on the Student Management Policy – Flow chart of Student Management Steps.

If the matter were considered serious then teachers would follow Critical Incident flowchart as appropriate for the incident.

– appendix 1

**Consequences**

The consequences of inappropriate behaviour should be related to the behaviour and aimed at remedying the situation. Consequences should always leave the self-respect of the student intact. Consequences will depend of the severity of the inappropriate behaviour but may include; time-out, a restorative conference, phone call to parents, an apology.

**Assisting a Victim of Bullying**
Teachers, parents and students should realise that if a bullying incident has occurred, the main students involved will require follow up support.

Teachers are expected to:
- reassure the student that the bullying is not their fault
- teach the student to strategies to minimise opportunities for bullying
- teach and practise assertiveness techniques with students
- provide opportunities for students to talk and express their feelings about issues
- give the student responsibility and praise efforts
- encourage participation in self-esteem and/or resilience building programs
- provide access to the School Counsellor.

Working with the Bystanders

If a bully does not have a supportive audience, often he/she either will not proceed with the plan or will be swayed by the actions of the bystanders. All students need to be trained to recognise a bullying act and to immediately get assistance for the victim of bullying.

Students should be encouraged to:
- accept their responsibility to assist any victims of bullying
- use strategies to prevent acts of bullying
- warn the potential victim of an impending bullying incident and stay with the potential victim
- verbally support the potential victim
- seek the help of a teacher.

Working with the Bullying Student

Teachers, parents and students should realise that if a bullying incident has occurred, the offender will require follow up support.

Teachers are expected to:
- work out ways for the student to make amends and apologise to the victim
- clearly state to the student that it is the behaviour (not them) that is unacceptable
- remind the student of the difference between assertive and aggressive behaviour
- if possible, discover the underlying cause of the behaviour with the student
- praise the student when they are seen to be doing the right thing
- teach a social skills program within the context of the classroom
- provide access to the School Counsellor.
Saints Peter and Paul Primary School
Garran
CRITICAL INCIDENT FLOWCHART

CRITICAL INCIDENT?
(Principal or most senior staff member consulted, identifies whether situation is a critical incident)

Appendix 1

IMMEDIATE RESPONSE
If Emergency situation is in progress, address the imminent danger:
- Contact Emergency Services on '000' (if necessary)
- Administer any necessary First Aid
- Assess and address any imminent threat to life
- Consider ways to minimise further potential damage to person or property. If the threat cannot be contained, consider possible evacuation
- Minimise access to location
- Provide relevant staff information regarding situation
- Contact the CE Head of Directorate Services via Reception on 6234 5455
- Contact the appropriate authority (eg. WorkSafe ACT) if it is a reportable incident
- Contact parents of any students involved, and inform all other parents that a critical incident has occurred
- Complete a CE ‘School Incident Recording, Notification and Management’ (Must be completed within 24 hours of incident)
- Organise a Support Centre for any individuals directly affected by the incident.

POST INCIDENT RESPONSE
Once all immediate threats have been contained, the following steps should be taken for the school to recover and return to routine as soon possible:
- Activate your Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT)
- Conduct a Risk Analysis to identify and mitigate any further potential risks
- Hold a staff meeting to inform staff of incident.
- Organise appropriate support for students and staff involved. Support plans should be organised in collaboration with the Principal, School Counsellor, RE Coordinator and Local Parish Priest.
- Inform Parents.
- Contact other Schools which may be affected by the incident, or are likely to have Students who may be affected.
- Consider any community groups who may need to be informed (eg. Sporting teams, or extra-curricular activities)
- Organise any necessary repairs to infrastructure
- Consider re-entry plans for any students who have been absent from school as a result of the incident.
- Submit appropriate Initial Injury Notification Forms to CE for any employee injuries
- Consider notifying the insurer

EVALUATION
- Compose Incident Report for CE
- Ask all affected individuals for their feedback on the School’s Response
- Ask CIRT and other staff members to review CIRT roles and duties to identify any issues that were overlooked or possibly mishandled
- Address any relevant feedback within Critical Incident Response Plan