

ST JOHN PAUL II CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



Dealing with Bullying and Harassment – Students Policy



Review due 2017

Rationale:

St John Paul II Catholic Primary School has a responsibility to provide an educational environment that promotes the dignity and respect of the person and, therefore, aims to eliminate bullying, harassment and violence in all forms.

Learning outcomes, physical health, emotional, psychological and spiritual well being can be adversely affected by bullying, harassment and violence. Students who are bullied or harassed tend to have poorer health, lower self esteem, more interpersonal difficulties, higher levels of loneliness, depression, suicidal tendencies 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 be early in life and for some, last a lifetime.

Definitions:

Bullying involves:

- a desire to hurt
- hurtful behaviour (physical, verbal or relational)
- an imbalance of power
- an unjust use of power
- typically repetition
- is experienced by the target of the aggression as oppressive, and by the perpetrator as enjoyable. (Adapted from Rigby 2001)

Bullying can be characterised as:

- Repetitive, causing distress, not only at the time of the attack but also by the threat of future attacks
- 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 or electronic)
- Physical – hitting, tripping, punching, throwing objects, stealing
- Social – ignoring, hiding, ostracizing
- Psychological – stalking, threatening looks, spreading rumours, damaging possessions (MindMatters 2000)

Harassment is any unwanted, unwelcome or uninvited behaviour, which makes a person feel humiliated, intimidated or offended. (Adapted from CEO 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 and marital status, parenting status or economic status.** (Bullying. No Way! Website cited in the National Safe Schools Framework {NSSF})

Unlike bullying and harassment, violence is not necessarily associated with an imbalance of power. It can occur between people of equal power. It implies extreme forcefulness, usually (but not always) of a physical kind. (Rigby, cited in the NSSF, 2003)

Principles:

St John Paul II Catholic Primary School is a safe and supportive environments where the 11 principles and 6 key elements of the National Safe Schools Framework are practiced. The school owes a duty of care to their students and provides supportive environments which:

- encourage socially appropriate behaviour using positive behaviour management
- promote respect for self and other
- develop physical/emotional well-being and resiliency
- develop interpersonal skills and positive mental health

Dealing with bullying, harassment 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 Office of Western Australia's Pastoral Care Framework, the school's Pastoral Care practices and the school's Evangelisation Plan.**

Bullying, harassment and violence shall be dealt with. When bullying, harassment 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 and violence are entitled to appropriate support.

Procedures:

St John Paul II Catholic Primary School has developed a school-based policy on bullying harassment and violence, based on a comprehensive risk assessment, which includes:

- an expanded definition statement which states that the school does not tolerate bullying, harassment and violence and which encourages all members of the school community to take a pro-active stance
- examples of behaviours that are considered to be bullying, harassment and violence
- statements defining and advising the responsibilities of each of the major parties to the policy, the Principal, staff, students and parents, and, encouraging help-seeking through designated staff members when bullying, harassment or violence is experienced or witnessed
- strategies and responses (including curricula, programs and pedagogy and, where school resources are limited, forming partnerships with the wider community) to address:
 - the development of supportive environments and positive relationships
 - problem-solving and empowerment of students
 - skills in conflict resolution
 - promotion of tolerance
 - acceptance of difference, and, a culture of cooperation, empathy and respect
 - the resolution of problems involving those who bully and those who are bullied (including in this resolution, the early and appropriate involvement of parents)
 - the support and restoration to wellbeing of children who have been harmed by hurtful behaviour. This includes assisting in retaining a connectedness to school

and facilitating reintegration in those whose attendance may have lapsed as a consequence of bullying, harassment or violence

- the amelioration of the behaviour and attitudes of students who bully
- the pro-active engagement of bystanders to discourage bullying behaviour
- the broader needs of the school community
- **the prevailing attitudes within the school including the 'culture' of the school**
- teaching and learning programs to support the strategies and promote good citizenship skills in students, staff and parents
- school support systems that promote positive mental health
- reporting, recording and data collection procedures to be used when investigating incidents, as a basis to facilitate evaluation and justify any modification to approach, and to inform prevention and management activities
- a case management model to be used when bullying, harassment or violent behaviours persist
- a statement on appropriate confidentiality
- The school-based policy shall be developed using a broad consultative and educative process involving students, staff and parents. The completed policy should refer to any other relevant policies or procedures and should be disseminated and promoted to the school community.
- Schools shall provide professional development and appropriate resourcing to meet the needs of their staff in implementing the school policy.
- **The policy shall be monitored and reviewed every 3 years or immediately following any incident that raises issues in respect to policy and practice.**

Year of Review:

2004
2007
2011
2014

Reviewed by:

admin
admin
admin
admin

Amendments/Review

Originally Released
Reviewed
Reviewed
Reviewed