St Mary's School Bullying Position Paper

For God and Country

STMs Bullying Position Paper

Rationale

St Mary's School will not tolerate bullying, harassment, aggression, or violence in our school. It is in the best interests of all, for all members of the school community to take a pro-active stance to promote the safety and wellbeing of every child.

Catholic schools have 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 and the application of restorative practices to reduce all forms of bullying, harassment, aggression, and violence.

The Australian Government's National Safe Schools Framework 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. We also need to acknowledge that as we are made in the likeness of Jesus, we must accept our failings such as poor decision making and seek to forgive and learn from our experiences.

The STMs Bullying Position Paper is to be read in conjunction with the St Mary's School Engagement and Behavior Guidelines, STMs Student Code of Conduct and CEWA Ltd Bullying and Harassment Policy and Executive Directives.

What is Bullying?

Disagreement	Both students disagree where a restorative conversation can be had. This is not ongoing and no imbalance of power.
Unkind	An on-purpose incident. An intent to hurt someone. This is not ongoing and not an imbalance of power.
Bullying	Ongoing Physical, Emotional, or verbal harm. Abuse of power.

Misuse of the term 'Bullying'

It should be noted that due to the saturation use of the term 'bullying' in all forms of media, many behaviours associated with bullying are NOT in fact bullying.

The National Centre Against Bullying (2010) acknowledges that while the following behaviours are often upsetting to those involved, they do not constitute bullying:

- arguments and disagreements;
- disliking someone;
- one-off acts of social rejection;
- one-off acts of meanness or spite;
- incidental incidents of aggression, intimidation or violence;
- rough play;
- taking someone's belongings without asking.

Whilst these behaviours would not be considered as bullying (because they do not involve deliberate and repeated harm and/or a power imbalance) they will be addressed in the same way as other inappropriate student behaviours as defined by our school Behaviour Management procedures.

Direct Bullying - Bullying is when an individual or a group continually and intentionally harm a person over a period of time. It is important to clarify that the term bullying should not be used to label one off incidents. 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).

Indirect / Covert bullying - can be almost impossible for people outside the interpersonal interaction to identify. Covert bullying can include repeatedly using hand gestures and weird or threatening looks, whispering, excluding, or turning your back on a person, restricting where a person can sit and who they can talk with. (2017, Bullying. No Way!). This form is the most difficult to detect and prove.

Covert social or verbal bullying can be subtle and even sometimes denied by a person who claims they were joking or 'just having fun'.

Some bullying is both covert and indirect, such as subtle social bullying, usually intentionally hidden, and very hard for others to see. This type of bullying is often unacknowledged at school, and can include spreading rumours, threatening, blackmailing, stealing friends, breaking secrets, gossiping, and criticising clothes and personalities.

Indirect covert bullying mostly inflicts harm by damaging another's social reputation, peer relationships and self-esteem, that is, through psychological harm rather than physical harm.

Bullying Online – Cybersafe

Bullying does not have to occur face to face, it may also occur online via social media. The use of social media (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat etc) is not recommended for primary aged children. This is affirmed by the minimum age of consent for tools such as Facebook (13), Instagram (13), X (formerly Twitter) (13), and Snapchat (13). While this form of bullying may not occur at school, or within school hours the ramifications of such actions are often seen at school. St Mary's School will deal with these in school situations as per the Behaviour Management Procedures and CEWA Bullying & Harassment Policy

Position - STMS will not tolerate bullying, harassment, aggression or violence in our school. Staff cannot solely shoulder the load of monitoring and dealing with bullying. It is in the best interests of all, for all members of the school community, to take a pro-active stance to promote the safety and wellbeing of every child under our care.

We wish our students to feel safe when online. It is inevitable that students, will through the course of their lives, come across uncomfortable situations online. It is our obligation to ensure that the students under our care have had access to resources enabling them to become good digital citizens. St Mary's School seeks to become proactive in this area in order to help students better deal with situations. Students are urged and expected to inform parents or teachers when they become the victim of cyber harassment or cyberbullying.

When an issue has occurred outside school hours it is not the school's obligation to intercede. However, if the actions of those involved impact student behaviour at school it will be dealt with in accordance with the Behaviour Engagement Guidelines. The school shall notify parents that an issue has been dealt with and may require further parent investigation or clarification.

Staff are guided by the St Mary's School Bullying Position Paper, the STMs Code of Conduct and the Student Engagement and Management Guidelines in dealing with instances of bullying. Paramount to the process are.

- Ascertaining if in fact bullying is occurring;
- Documenting findings;
- Communicating with students, families and staff;
- Ensuring that follow up protocols are followed
- Principal (or delegate) is notified and directly involved

Faith – Respect – Challenge - Teamwork

Level	Behaviours exampled by but not limited to	Action and Response	People Involved
One *Low level disruption and breaches of school expectations*	**Class** - Occasional disruption to teaching and learning - Task avoidance **Playground** - Littering - Unsafe action to self or others - Rough or reckless play	**Individual classroom behaviour management system implemented.** • School expectations implemented by Duty Teacher	Classroom Teacher/s Duty Teacher and Classroom Teacher/s
Two *Moderate level disruption and breaches of school expectations - No positive response and/or escalation of Level One behaviours* ***Entered into SEQTA***	**Class** - Consistently disrupting teaching and learning - Low level defiance - Rude behaviour - Dishonesty **Playground** - Ongoing rough or reckless play - Inappropriate language	**One on One Teacher/Student Restorative Discussion** • Individual classroom behaviour management system implemented • Support requested from Leadership Team (if required) • Parents Notified • Optional Buddy Teacher Break (10 Minutes) • Game timeout (5 mins) • School expectations implemented by Duty Teacher - Support requested from Leadership Team (if required)	Classroom Teacher/s Leadership Team Parents
Three *Serious disruption and breaches of school expectations - No positive response and/or escalation of Level Two behaviours* ***Entered into SEQTA***	**Class** - Serious disruption and disrespect to teaching and learning - Serious ongoing defiance - Serious ongoing misuse of equipment and technology **Playground** - Deliberate and intentional aggressive behaviour - Leaving school grounds - Intentional physical force	**Withdrawn to Principal Office** • Restorative conversation had between Principal and Student • Consequence determined by Principal • Parents notified and parent meeting coordinated with student present	Classroom Teacher/s Leadership Team Parents Principal
Four *Bullying and Most serious disruption and breach of school expectations - No positive response and/or escalation of Level Three behaviours* ***Entered into SEQTA and CEWA Ltd notified***	**Class** - Extreme disruption and disrespect **Playground** - Intentional and ongoing aggressive physical and verbal behaviour	**Withdrawn to Principal Office** • Immediate withdrawal from classroom • Investigation conducted • Parents contacted – student collected from school • Internal/External suspension • Parent Meeting with Principal – Reentry process • Discussion regarding enrolment at St Mary's School	Principal Parents