ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
ARMSTRONG CREEK

ANTI BULLYING POLICY

Rationale

Our community is united in its stance that bullying will not be tolerated at St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Primary School. All members of our school community – students, staff, parents and carers are asked to treat each other with dignity and respect by modelling appropriate social behaviour at all times.

For the purposes of this policy, bullying is defined as intentional, repeated behaviour by an individual or group of individuals that causes distress, hurt or undue pressure. It can involve all forms of harassment, discrimination (based on sex, race, disability, homosexuality or transgender), humiliation, domination and intimidation of others.

Definitions

Types of bullying behaviour may include:

- **verbal** – for example name calling, teasing, abuse, humiliation, sarcasm, insults, threats
- **physical** – for example hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting, gestures
- **social** – for example. ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating, making inappropriate gestures
- **psychological** – for example spreading rumours, glaring, hiding or damaging possessions,
- **cyber bullying** – the use of electronic devices to belittle or humiliate others, the use of other people's password to send inappropriate messages, malicious SMS and email messages, inappropriate use of camera phones or social media.
- **harassment** – is a type of bullying and includes all of the above examples. Bullying generally has overtones of intention to dominate the victim. For the purpose of this policy we will only refer to bullying as it is a more commonly understood term by community and students.

It is the policy of St. Catherine's of Siena Primary School that bullying is totally unacceptable in that it goes against everything that school stands for, and will not be tolerated at the school.

Bullying intervention strategies – Responses to incidents of bullying

After an incident of bullying has been reported, one or more of the following approaches will be implemented:

- Students involved will be interviewed by teacher/student wellbeing leader to gain further information and to ascertain what has taken place. Notes are taken about the incident/s and any witnesses are also asked to contribute their observations. Records are used in dealing with the situation at hand, and are filed for future reference.

- Parents of students involved will be made aware of the situation by a member of the leadership team. All stakeholders (students, parents and teachers) are involved in the process or resolving the matter.

- If the bullying is of a less serious or one off nature, the issue may be able to be resolved between the students involved by talking the matter through and clarifying to the bully what he/she is doing and the impact that this has on the victim and on other students who witnessed the behaviour. This could lead to a change in behaviour and attitude of the bully, and an empowerment of the student who was the victim of bullying. There are times when these issues are not deep seated and can be turned around quite quickly.

- If the matter cannot be resolved just between the students, there will be the need to ask parents to meet with teachers.

  Meetings will be between the teachers and parent of student who is acting out bullying behaviour. Parents need to be aware of their child's behaviour and that this behaviour will not be tolerated. Parents will be asked to cooperate with the school in reinforcing this message to their child.
  If the bullying behaviour is of a seriously damaging nature and/or it has been sustained for a period of time (making it serious), there will be disciplinary sanctions applied. Further persistence in the bullying behaviour may lead to suspension of the perpetrator.

  There will need to be measures put into place that will support the bully to change his/her behaviour. This will include monitoring of the student's behaviour towards the targeted student and other students by teachers and the student's parents. There may need to be regular meetings set up with parents, where the child is present and the unacceptable behaviour is discussed as well as ways that the child can change the patterns of behaviour.

Sometimes structures of constant monitoring and teacher intervention will be a sufficient deterrent for students who engage in bullying behaviour.

But for some students there may be need for the support of a school counsellor in this process. There cannot just be punishment for unacceptable behaviour, there needs a process to identify why the bullying behaviour is occurring and a structure set up that can support change in the behaviour.

Parents of the student who is the victim of bullying are also invited to meet with teachers. They need to be aware of what has happened, they may have other perspectives that they have noticed to share with teachers eg. Their child's response to the bullying. These parents need to be aware of what the school is doing to address the incident/s and they need to support the student and the school in a way forward that will lead to the empowerment of their child, and helping their child to feel safe at school.

This may be a long process, depending on the experience of the child at the hands of bullies, but it is an important stage in helping the targeted child to feel stronger, resilient, happy and supported. Some of the strategies may involve friends who can support and mentor the student. Other strategies may involve teacher awareness and monitoring in the playground. Another strategy is for parents of the bullied student to regularly communicate with the classroom teacher so that the student's progress can be monitored at school and at home. Every effort will be made to support the student who has been bullied so that he/she can feel safe at school.

In instances where there has been significant trauma caused by bullying it will be necessary to consider some additional support for the child such as counselling.

Bullying Prevention measures

The best way of dealing with bullying is to prevent it happening. The role of the school in the lives of students is to promote growth and learning. The motto of the school is **ENGAGE – EMPOWER – EXCEL.** The Mission of the school talks about cultivating a positive learning environment, creating a collaborative, compassionate and caring community. This is the Vision of our school and we will endeavour to bring this about by:

(Staff)

- Ensuring that staff regularly engage in professional learning that deals with issues of student wellbeing, social and emotional intelligence, bullying and cyber bullying, discrimination and discrimination laws, duty of care, behavior management and the positive behavior approach to discipline.
- Staff professional learning will also include strategies for dealing with student disclosures and for supporting students who are victimised, discriminated against or abused by other students or adults.

- Staff professional learning occurs in many ways and includes staff meeting discussions, directions from school leaders, professional reading, online courses, requirements of the profession as per Child Safety, duty of care and also through professional input at whole staff professional learning activities or specific targeted courses for groups of teachers.

(Students)
- Communicating our policies and expectations regarding student behaviour and the wellbeing of all students in the school through our teaching, by having posters up in the school and discussing these. Also by constant reminders in class meetings and at assembly. (Cf. C.4.1.xvii. Communication to Students)
- Promoting positive behaviour and leadership by acknowledging and rewarding the positive things that students do in the school. Eg. Assembly awards
- Promoting inclusive practices within each class and in the school so as to strengthen engagement and connectedness.
- The development of positive student-teacher relationships.
- Encouraging a safe and welcoming environment in the school.
- Encourage an environment where students feel that they are heard
- Using programs that support student-student relationships, eg. Buddies, Peer Mediation, Peer tutoring.
- Using resources from the studentwellbeinghub.edu.au in the classroom for activities and discussion. These resources could also be used parents.

- Offering a Religious Education program based on the explicit teaching of Christian values
- Explicit teaching of social and emotional intelligences
- Curriculum initiatives to support awareness and appropriate socialisation: eg. Bounce Back, games from variety of Wellbeing Programs, anti-bullying posters, inclusion of anti-bullying content in inquiry units, raising awareness about the dangers of cyber bullying and modelling appropriate use of social media and social skills programs.
- Introducing students to " *ICT Acceptable Use Agreement"* and ask students to sign these, as well as their parents.

(Parents)

- Welcoming parents into the school in order to engage within our community of learning.
- Informing parents of our policies and expectations through policies posted on the school website and other school related publications such as enrolment information. (Cf. C.4.1,xvii – Communication Summary-Parents)
- Publishing reminders regarding students expectations and bullying in the newsletter from time to time and providing information about any parent education opportunities in relation to these matters eg. Cyber bulling
- On occasions the school will offer information and opportunity for discussion on matters involving students and their wellbeing. Eg. At parent nights or with Speakers engaged for a particular topic.

Evaluation: This policy will be constantly reviewed in the light of changing demographics and advances in ICT, and in view of the ongoing development of the school's behaviour management policy and resources.

Drafted: 2019

Review: 2023

Maintaining Records of Bullying Incidents

As soon as possible after the bullying incident is reported a written record should be written by the staff member/s involved – describing the incident and the follow up. The record is retained in a special file that can be referred to in cases of repeat incidents or for the purpose of identifying patterns or trends that need to be addressed.

To be included in the Report:

Details

- the name of the student/s involved
- name of teacher/s taking the report about bullying
- date, time and location of the incident
- names of witnesses (staff and other students)
- what exactly happened (a brief factual account)
- names of witnesses (staff and other students)

Conclusion of the Investigation
- a statement confirming the outcome of teacher investigation of the issue – was bullying identified, are other issues involved etc. In formulating this conclusion take into account;
  - the nature of the incident
  - any injuries or damage to property
  - any improper use of computers or electronic devices

Post Report Actions

- details of contact with the student's parent/carer
- details of proposed follow up action in relation to the offender/s
- details of follow up action in relation to the victim of bullying
- details of any post-incident support provided or organised.
- details of any modifications of school procedures as a supportive follow up to the incident.

Filing a Report
- When complete the Report is given to the Principal and then filed for future reference with regard to behaviour issues and trends.
- A copy may also be filed in each student's file.

Related School Policies:
- Behaviour Management
- ICT Acceptable Use Agreement
- School Vision and Mission
- Communication Summary – Parents and Staff
- Communication of Student Wellbeing & Students Behaviour Management Policies to Students.

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