ANTI-BULLYING POLICY
FOR
DIOCESAN SYSTEMIC SCHOOLS

June 2010
PURPOSE

All students, their families and employees within Catholic education have the right to a learning and work environment free from intimidation, humiliation and hurt. This policy supports school communities to prevent, reduce and respond to bullying.

POLICY FRAMEWORK

Flowing from the Christian vision expressed in the Diocesan Pastoral Care Policy, schools are called to establish relationships which are grounded in love, compassion, reconciliation and justice. In witnessing Christian values the Diocesan Schools System rejects ideas, beliefs and behaviours which marginalise or victimise people.

Pastoral Care in our Diocesan schools

…has as its focus the life of Jesus Christ.

I have come that you may have life and have it to the full. (John 10:10)

The Catholic worldview perceives Jesus as God’s Son, who saved us through his life, death and resurrection, and through whom we enter into the life of God.

… is concerned with the dignity and integral growth of the person.

God created humankind in God's image. (Genesis 1:27)

The Catholic worldview perceives each human being as a unique person created in the image of God, having an inalienable dignity that is always to be respected.

… is a responsibility entrusted to all members of the faith community.

All members may be concerned for one another. If one member suffers, all members suffer: if one member is honoured, all members share this joy. You then are the body of Christ. (1 Corinthians 12:25-27)

The Catholic worldview perceives an imperative to proclaim to others the love we receive from Jesus, by loving them as Jesus loves us.

… is a force for healing, reconciliation and liberation.

I shall look for the lost one, bring back the stray, bandage the wounded and make the weak strong. I shall be a true shepherd to them. (Ezekiel 34:16)

The Catholic worldview perceives the action of the Spirit in the world, inviting and empowering all people to respond to the divine love.

… is an expression of and commitment to justice.

He has sent me to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, and set the downtrodden free. (Luke 4: 18)

The Catholic worldview perceives an obligation to work to create social conditions in which the unique dignity of each person is respected and all human rights protected.

Definition

Whilst there is no universally accepted definition of bullying, there is general consensus that bullying behaviour has the following elements:

Bullying behaviour:

➢ is deliberate and often repeated
➢ intends to cause fear, distress, hurt or harm to another
➢ is action by a more powerful individual or group over a less powerful individual or group
Bullying takes many forms. Examples of bullying include:

- **Physical** - hitting, pushing, tripping, kicking, spitting on others etc
- **Verbal** - teasing, using offensive names, ridiculing, spreading rumours etc
- **Non-Verbal** - writing offensive notes or graffiti about others, using e-mail or text messaging to hurt others, rude gestures etc
- **Exclusion** - deliberately excluding others from group, refusing to sit next to someone etc
- **Extortion** - threatening to take someone's possessions, food or money etc
- **Property** - stealing, hiding, damaging or destroying property etc
- **Cyber** - any form of bullying which is carried out through electronic means such as email, chat room, 'sms', web page etc

**POLICY CONTENT**

1. Each school will develop and implement pastoral care strategies to assist the school community to foster, promote and restore right relationships.

2. The school will review its own anti-bullying policy and/or develop the “St. Catholic's School Policy Against Bullying template” (see attachment A).

3. School documentation needs to clearly articulate:
   - links to the school's vision and mission
   - the school community's definition of bullying
   - the school community's commitment to preventing and minimising bullying
   - the process and procedures for reducing and preventing bullying
   - the school's education program focusing on the explicit teaching of positive behaviours
   - the school's response to incidents of bullying
   - the personnel responsible for the various stages in the response procedure

4. The Principal:
   - is responsible for the implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy and procedures.
   - is required to establish conclusive processes for staff, students and parents to gain understanding and ownership of the policy.
   - will take appropriate steps to ensure that the school will regularly monitor and evaluate its anti-bullying policy.
   - is responsible for the implementation of the school-wide education program focusing on positive behaviours

5. Any variations to this policy require the written approval of the Director of Schools.

**SUPPORT DOCUMENTS**

The Catholic Schools Office will provide materials, professional development and support services to assist school communities with development and implementation of anti-bullying policies and procedures.

**RELATED LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND GUIDELINES**

- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986 (Comm)
- Telecommunications Act 1991 (Comm.)
- Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)
- Children (Criminal Proceedings) Act 1987 (NSW)
- Young Offenders Act 1997 (NSW)
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)
- Pastoral Care Policy for Diocesan Systemic Schools
- Anti-Harassment Policy for Diocesan Systemic Schools
Occupational Health and Safety Policy for Diocesan Systemic Schools
Acceptable Use Policy for Internet/Intranet and Network Services for Diocesan Systemic Schools

POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed not less frequently than once every three years.

POLICY DATES

Date of completion of formulation and adoption: November 2002
Date of next review: June 2013

authorised by
Bishop David L. Walker
Bishop of Broken Bay
Attachment A
This attachment is a template for schools to use in the development of their own school anti-bullying policy. Adjustments and modifications need to be made to suit individual schools’ procedures and practice.

"St Catholic's" School Policy Against Bullying

Purpose

At "St Catholic's" School, we believe that all members of the community have the right to a learning and work environment free from intimidation, humiliation and hurt. We all share a responsibility to foster, promote and restore right relationships. We believe that bullying is unacceptable and we [students, staff and parents] all share a responsibility for preventing it.

This policy builds on the school's Pastoral Care and Behaviour Management Policies to provide clear procedures and strategies to prevent, reduce and respond to bullying.

Policy Framework

Flowing from the Christian vision expressed in the Diocesan Pastoral Care Policy, schools are called to establish relationships which are grounded in love, compassion, reconciliation and justice. In witnessing Christian values we reject ideas, beliefs and behaviours which marginalise or victimise people.

Definition

Whilst there is no universally accepted definition of bullying, there is general consensus that bullying behaviour:

- is deliberate and often repeated
- intends to cause fear, distress, hurt or harm to another
- is action by a more powerful individual or group over a less powerful individual or group

Bullying takes many forms, all of which will cause distress. Examples of bullying include:

- Physical - hitting, pushing, tripping, kicking, spitting on others etc
- Verbal - teasing, using offensive names, ridiculing, spreading rumours etc
- Non-Verbal - writing offensive notes or graffiti about others, using e-mail or text messaging to hurt others, rude gestures etc
- Exclusion - deliberately excluding others from group, refusing to sit next to someone etc
- Extortion - threatening to take someone's possessions, food or money etc
- Property - stealing, hiding, damaging or destroying property etc
- Cyber - any form of bullying which is carried out through electronic means such as mobile phones, email, chat room, social networking, 'sms', web page etc

How do we prevent bullying at "St Catholic's" School?

We believe based on research that prevention strategies through education that involve the whole school community [students, staff and parents] are more likely to reduce bullying. Therefore, at St Catholic's School we recognise that we all share the responsibility to prevent bullying. The Catholic Worldview which represents the antithesis of bullying will be taught explicitly, continually modelled, clearly demonstrated and generously affirmed across all facets of school life.
At “St Catholic’s” School we adopt the following strategies to prevent bullying:

**Schools are to insert specific strategies in place under the following dot points**

- **Explicit teaching of positive behaviours embedded within the curriculum addressing positive relationships, conflict resolution, resilience, bystander action etc**
  - List specific programs such as Friendly Schools and Families, Bounce Back etc
  - Include scope and sequence

- **Regularly recognising and acknowledging students who demonstrate appropriate behaviours that promote and restore right relationships**
  - List specific processes in place for example rewards, citizenship, student of the week, Principal’s awards, Playground buddies, etc

- **Vigilant classroom, playground and transition supervision**
  - Include procedures for collection and review of bullying data that review ‘high risk areas’ such as bullying surveys
  - Include statement around active supervision for example - Teachers are to actively supervise children at all times. Teachers should note supervisory duties for the day and turn up promptly to duty. Teachers are asked to be aware of playground ‘hotspots’ – toilets, stair tower, canteen area and amphitheatre and visit these areas regularly throughout their supervision duty.
  - Include any school based supports such as ‘playground friends’, ‘playground buddies’ etc

- **Provision of safe and structured playground spaces and activities at break times**
  - Include proactive strategies in place that encourage student activity during break times

At “St Catholic’s” School **students** are encouraged to:

- take some positive action to stop the bullying if they observe an incident [eg Walk Talk Squawk, Five Finger approach]
- report the bullying incident to a teacher as soon as possible
- make it clear to their peers that bullying is not accepted

At “St Catholic’s” School, **staff** are expected to:

- take some positive action to stop the bullying when they observe an incident
- pass on information about any reported or observed bullying behaviours to the Principal / Assistant Principal / Year Coordinator / for further action

At “St Catholic’s” School, **parents** are encouraged to:

- listen to their child and encourage their child to speak to their teacher / year coordinator at school
- contact the school if they have a concern (eg Principal, Assistant Principal, Year Coordinator)

**How do we respond to bullying at "St Catholic's" School?**

Bullying is viewed as a major breach of the school rules and behavioural expectations and therefore follow up action will align with our School’s Behaviour Management and Student Discipline Policy.

Any reports of bullying will be investigated and appropriate action will be taken promptly. The response to bullying will include:

1. guidance and other support for the recipient of the bullying (eg re-skilling and re-teaching of strategies, resilience and social skills, counselling, conflict management skills, social networking etc)

2. guidance and support for ‘bystanders’, ‘supporters’ and witnesses of the bullying (eg intervention strategies etc)
3. age appropriate and consistent sanctions for the student who bullied (eg consistent with School Behaviour Management Policy)

4. interventions and support for the student who bullied included in a Behaviour Support Plan (eg specific interventions developed to reduce the bullying behaviour, teaching of replacement behaviours, reinforcers etc)

5. where appropriate informing parents as stated in the policy and involving them in any action and follow up

Procedures for investigating bullying and follow up

In discerning appropriate responses to bullying, school leaders need to balance the collective welfare of the school community with the individual needs of the student.

Recommended resource for interviewing and follow up of Bullying incidents - “The Method of Shared Concern” Dr Anatol Pikas, Sweden, Readymade Productions.

- Preliminary interview(s) will be conducted to ascertain the specific nature of the bullying. These interviews should be with individuals initially (ie student being bullied, students witnessing bullying, student engaging in bullying behaviour, staff etc)

- The initial interviews should focus on the safety of individuals. This should include:
  - a clear statement on the consequences if the bullying continues or if there are any reprisals as a result of the reporting of the incident
  - immediate preventative actions that will be implemented to avoid further incidents.

- Decisions will be made as to the level of severity of the incident and whether the parents of those involved need to be informed.

- Follow up interviews should focus on appropriate strategies to assist and support all involved within a Behaviour Support Plan. This Plan will specifically identify the inappropriate behaviours, name the replacement behaviours, outline strategies to support the replacement behaviours and reinforcers (both negative and positive) when behaviours occur.

- A record of the separate interviews should be kept.

- Regular monitoring and follow up with the students involved is necessary. (for example daily, prior to and after break times etc)

- Review of the Behaviour Support Plan will take place to modify strategies and supports.

- Any further recurrence of bullying may result in an issue of warning re suspension and could lead to the implementation of suspension procedures and, if necessary, removal of the student from the school through:
  - Suspension pending negotiated transfer,
  - Negotiated transfer or
  - Expulsion