Anti-Bullying Policy

Classification

Policy Number: TL201604-1.1 • **Version/Last Updated**: 1.0 October 2016 • **Audience**: Public • **Commencement**: 16 December 2013 (reviewed Aug 2016)

Implementation Resources

- Parent Brochure
- National Safe Schools Framework
- Resource site (internal)

▼ 1.0 Rationale

There are specific protections provided in law for each and every member of a school community to experience a safe and supportive school environment. In a Catholic community, there are also important expectations on each person to seek to maintain positive relationships with one another and to resolve conflict in a respectful and dignified manner.

This policy provides a framework for school communities to work together to prevent and address issues of student bullying, in order to build respectful relationships that respond effectively and sensitively to the needs of each person.

The dignity of the human person is the foundation of all Catholic social teaching and is inherent to the ministry of Catholic education. Essential to the dignity of persons is the creation and maintenance of a respectful, safe and supportive learning environment that promotes student wellbeing and enables school communities to engage a diverse range of learners in an inclusive manner. Within this context it is vital that learning technologies are used ethically and responsibly, that communication is respectful, and that human dignity is highly valued.

A caring and supportive school culture that promotes positive relationships and reflects Gospel teachings is best equipped to prevent and respond to incidents of bullying, inappropriate use of technology and disrespectful behaviour in schools. Bullying and cyber-bullying disregard core values of the Catholic faith including dignity, respect, justice, equity, compassion, trust and courage. Bullying, including cyber-bullying, can adversely affect the wellbeing of students and is therefore unacceptable.

▼ 2.0 Guiding Principles

2.1   Each person is created in the image and likeness of God.

2.2   The dignity of every member of the school community is respected.

2.3   Bullying in any form is unacceptable behaviour in a Sydney Catholic systemic school.

2.4   All partners in Catholic education share a joint responsibility to identify and address bullying behaviour.

2.5   Parents/caregivers have an integral role to play in the prevention and resolution of bullying.

2.6   Explicit instruction on the school's policy and procedures for dealing with incidents of bullying is essential.

2.7   Effective record-keeping is a crucial and expected component of a school's response to the issue of bullying.

2.8   Where appropriate, schools should collaborate with outside agencies on matters concerning bullying, to the extent necessary and permitted by law to resolve the matter.

▼ 3.0 Policy

3.1   The Principal will ensure that the school has appropriate policies, training and procedures in place to regulate a safe and supportive school environment and that these policies and procedures are regularly monitored.

3.2   Each school will have, and enforce, responsible use of technology guidelines. (<u>Staff use of Social Media in Sydney Catholic Schools Policy</u> and <u>Student Acceptable Use Agreement Form</u>).

3.3   The Principal will provide regular opportunities for all school staff to be trained to recognise and respond effectively to bullying. This training must include the key elements of digital citizenship.

3.4   Anti-bullying training and familiarisation with the school's policy and procedures are to be addressed in new staff and student induction processes.

3.5   School staff will regularly review their processes for identifying and responding to bullying.

3.6   Records of incidents of bullying will be kept systematically by the school and regularly analysed to identify patterns and proactively support student wellbeing.

3.7   Students will receive regular explicit instruction on the school's policy and procedures dealing with incidents of bullying.

3.8   Students will be educated on the meaning and application of this policy and the school's procedures at an age-appropriate level.

3.9   Parents/caregivers will receive regular advice on the existence of the school's policy and procedures for dealing with incidents of bullying, and details on how they can access assistance if they have concerns in relation to bullying.

3.10   This Anti-Bullying Policy and school procedures will be placed on the school website.

▼ 4.0 Procedures

4.1   **Scope**

The school's student Anti-Bullying Policy covers the behaviour of students, whether as individuals or collectively.

Where the school becomes aware of serious out-of-school hours bullying and cyber-bullying that is outside the scope of this policy, it should report the matter to parents/caregivers, the police or other appropriate authority (such as the Internet Service Provider).

4.2   **Education Program**

Schools will ensure that there is ongoing education of students on the issues associated with bullying, including cyber-bullying, and that students are regularly reminded of the school's anti-bullying procedures.

Sydney Catholic Schools (SCS) will provide resource materials for schools to implement anti-bullying initiatives and procedures and ensure that all stakeholders are aware of these resources.

4.3   **School-based Procedures**

Each school will have its own plans, processes and procedures for implementing practices that build a safe and supportive learning and teaching environment that aims to reduce or minimise bullying incidents. Each school will include statements defining bullying, outlines of how to make a complaint, contact names and numbers, and details on how to access counsellors and support services.

Students should regularly be reminded of their rights and obligations to seek assistance from a trusted adult without delay if they become aware of, or are involved in, a bullying or cyber-bullying incident, and to follow the school's processes to ensure their safety and that of others.

4.4   **Responding**

Complaints concerning bullying must be responded to and investigated in a timely manner that respects the dignity and the privacy of those involved, whilst observing due process and procedural fairness. (Resolution of Complaints Policy).

When assessing an appropriate response to potentially criminal acts, or alleged acts, strong consideration must be given to advice provided by NSW police. In some matters, Police advice must be sought.

4.5   **Reporting**

It is important that schools have systems to ensure that appropriate people (including year co-ordinators, home room teachers, class teachers, counsellors and support people) are aware of cases of significant bullying, so that students can be properly supported. Parents/caregivers should be advised of bullying that has involved their children. The Police Youth Liaison Officer may need to be advised of a significant bullying situation involving violence, threat of harm or alleged criminal conduct. NSW Community Services need to be notified when an incident involving manufacturing, possessing or distribution of child pornography has occurred.

4.6   **Record-keeping**

Records of incidents of bullying and interventions are to be kept systematically by the school (in accordance with the Record (Data) Management and Retention Policy) and regularly analysed to identify patterns, perpetrators and trends. These incidents should be communicated to relevant staff, maintaining confidentiality as appropriate.

4.7   **System processes**

Where students are relocated to another school under the Student Management: Suspension, Transfer and Exclusion Policy, schools are entitled to, and should be provided with, the relevant student history such as violent behaviour, bullying, harassment, intimidation and/or threatening behaviour.

▼ 5.0   Bases of Discretion

Nil

▼ 6.0   Explanatory Notes and Definitions

6.1   **Bullying**

Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful, and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons.

Bullying can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and all forms of harassment including that based on sex, race, disability, sexual orientation or practice of religion. Bullying of any form,

or for any reason, can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.

Bullying can happen anywhere: at school, travelling to and from school, in sporting teams, between neighbours, or in the workplace.

Bullying behavior can be:

- **verbal,** e.g. repeated name calling, teasing, abuse, putdowns, sarcasm, insults, threats

- **physical,** e.g. repeated hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting

- **social,** e.g. repeated ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating, making inappropriate gestures

- **psychological,** e.g. repeated spreading rumours, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions, malicious SMS and email messages, inappropriate use of camera phones.

Conflict or fights between equals and single incidents are not defined as bullying. Bullying behaviour is not:

- children not getting along well

- a situation of mutual conflict

- single episodes of nastiness or random acts of aggression or intimidation.

(NSW Public Schools Website)

6.2   **Cyber-bullying**

Cyber-bullying involves the use of any information communication technology by an individual or group to carry out deliberate, isolated or repeatedly hostile behaviour that is intended to harm others, or is undertaken recklessly without concern for its impact on others.

6.3   **Safe Environment and Duty of Care**

A safe environment for students is one where the risk of harm in minimised and students feel secure. Harm relates not only to the dangers in the built environment but also to violence, physical threats, verbal abuse, threatening gestures, sexual harassment and racial vilification (Board of Studies, NSW).

Schools and their teaching staff have a duty to take reasonable care for the safety and wellbeing of students while students are at school or are involved in a school activity. They need to be able to foresee possible harms that might arise and take reasonable preventative measures.

6.4   **NSW Police**

The Police Local Area Command (LAC) appoints a Schools Liaison Officer to schools. The Liaison Officer can provide advice on a wide range of areas associated with bullying. These could include understanding the best ways to address instances of bullying from the perspective of legal or criminal processes, or providing general advice on the burden of proof required for a bullying matter to be progressed through the legal system. Schools have a reciprocal obligation as responsible corporate citizens to provide the police with any relevant information they have on community members engaged in matters of interest to the police. Schools should keep in regular contact with their Schools Liaison Officer.

6.5   **Parents/Caregivers**

For the purposes of this policy, a parent is deemed to be any biological parent, adoptive parent, or person who is formally the primary caregiver for a student enrolled in a Sydney systemic Catholic school.

6.6   **Pastoral Care Policy**

Each school will implement the SCS <u>Student Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy</u> and the Management of Students with Challenging Behaviours <u>Primary</u> and <u>Secondary</u> Guidelines.

6.7 **Perpetrator**

A perpetrator is a person who is responsible for bullying another person.

6.8 **System Processes**

SCS will strive to implement appropriate protection and safety processes for technology, such as filtering devices and surveillance of content, while recognising that the rapidity of technological change requires regular adaptation.

▼ 7.0 Supporting Documents

7.1 **Related policies**

- <u>Staff use of Social Media in Schools Policy</u>

- <u>Student Acceptable Use Agreement Form</u>

- <u>Resolution of Complaints Policy</u>

- <u>Student Management: Suspension, Transfer and Exclusion Policy</u>

- <u>Student Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy</u>

- <u>Record (Data) Management and Retention Policy</u>

7.2 **Supporting documents**

- <u>The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (2008)</u>

- <u>The National Safe Schools Framework: A whole-school approach to safety and wellbeing (2011)</u>

- <u>The Board of Studies Registration Systems and Member Non- Government Schools (NSW) Manual</u> includes requirements 5.6 describing condition for a safe and supportive (school) environment

- <u>Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act, 1998</u> Chapter 16A Exchange of Risk of Harm information.

- <u>'Keep Them Safe: A Shared Approach to Child Wellbeing'</u>, with reference to the mandatory Reporting Guide, specifically physical abuse and psychological harm.

- <u>Education Act Part V</u>, Exchange of history of student violence information.

- <u>Catholic Education Commission New South Wales Anti-Bullying Policies: Action Requirements Memorandum ref 249/10</u>

▼ 8.0 Appendices

Nil

▼ 9.0 Classification

9.1 **Policy number:** TL201604-1.1

9.2 **Version:** 1.0

Last modified: October 2016

This policy supersedes all previous policies relating to matters contained therein. In so much as any aspect of this policy may appear to be in conflict with another Archdiocesan system or school-based policy, then precedence is to be given to this policy.

9.3   **Audience**: Public

9.4   **Review by**: August 2019

Changing laws, legal precedents, and experience may all serve as triggers for immediate review.

9.5   **Originally Approved by Leadership Team**: November 2013

Review Approved by Leadership Team: 4 August 2016

9.6   **Originally Endorsed by SACS Board**: 11 December 2013

Review Endorsed by SACS Board: 26 October 2016

9.7   **Originally Approved by Executive Director of Sydney Catholic Schools**: 16 December 2013

Review Approved by Executive Director of Sydney Catholic Schools: 9 October 2016

9.8   **Commencement Date**: 16 December 2013 (reviewed Aug 2016)

Related Policies

- Staff use of Social Media in Schools
- Student Acceptable Use Agreement Form
- Resolution of Complaints Policy
- Student Management: Suspension, Transfer and Exclusion Policy
- Student Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy
- Record (Data) Management and Retention Policy