



# ST. MARY'S PARISH SCHOOL

## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

### Anti-Bullying Policy

#### Rationale

St Mary's Parish School is a Catholic Parish School committed to the development of the whole person and to the provision of a safe, caring environment. Therefore bullying at St. Mary's Parish Primary School is unacceptable.

#### Values

St Mary's Parish School strives to create an educational environment where each individual is respected, accepted, included and free from fear or threat. All members of the St. Mary's Parish School community have the right to:

- Feel safe, cared for and respected at school
- Be valued at school
- Be free from threat or intimidation
- Enjoy a healthy, pleasant environment

#### Policy Statement

We define bullying as acts that occur when a person or group deliberately upsets, harasses or hurts another person, their property, reputation or social acceptance, on more than one occasion. We define bullies as people who deliberately intimidate, exclude, threaten and/or hurt others (whether it be physical, verbal or cyber) more than once.

In considering what constitutes bullying we acknowledge the following points:

- Not all conflict between people constitutes bullying.
- Bullying is usually repeated behaviour and usually involves an imbalance of power between the individuals. The imbalance of power could arise from differences in age, ability, physical strength, social status or some other attribute.
- A particular single incident could be considered bullying behaviour if it involves a gross imbalance of power between the aggressor and the victim.
- Bullying is usually done with the intent to disrupt physically or emotionally, but it can also be an unintentional process, where people are insensitive to the feeling of others and the effects of their actions. It is "recipient defined", i.e. "It was only a joke" or "She/He doesn't mind" is never an acceptable excuse for bullying behaviour.

We acknowledge that bullying can take many forms:

#### Physical:

- Hitting, kicking and punching
- Pushing, shoving and spitting
- Rude gestures
- Taking or damaging items belonging to others
- Forcing others to hand over food, money or other items
- Forcing others to do something against their will

#### Verbal:

- Name calling
- Excessive teasing
- Threatening
- Making fun of someone because of appearance, physical characteristics or cultural background
- Mocking someone's actions or behaviour



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### Indirect:

- Excluding others from the game or group
- Spreading lies and rumours about others

### Electronic/Cyber

- Use of SMS text messages by mobile phones, email, online social networking sites and instant messaging to deliberately intimidate, exclude, threaten and/or hurt others.

## Consequences

### Staff at St Mary's Parish School will:

- Talk openly about bullying – what it is, how it affects us, and what we can do about it.
- Teach our children the skills that will build their self-esteem and empower them to take the responsibility for themselves – and give them the opportunity to practise these skills.
- To clearly state in our policy the steps we will take to deal with bullying behaviour.
- Act as role models of caring and tolerant behaviour
- Listen to and respond promptly to reports of bullying
- Endeavour to protect the target of bullying from further harm
- Act to prevent the bullying behaviour from reoccurring
- Give strategies to the targets of bullying to empower them
- Monitor the situation over time, taking care to regularly 'touch base' with the parties
- Report all instances of bullying to the School Principal who will ensure that the matter is tabled at a staff communication meeting so that whole staff awareness is raised.
- Report instances of bullying behaviours observed on the playground to the class teacher

### St Mary's students who are bullied will be:

- Encouraged to speak to a teacher giving full details of the event
- Encouraged to develop and speak to a network of teachers and friends

### St Mary's Students will be:

- Educated as to what constitutes bullying in a school context and where to access support.
- Educated to act with resilience in situations in which they are bullied and to utilise strategies in place that are designed to address such behavior.
- To 'tell' if they are being bullied or if they see someone else being bullied.
- To help someone who is being bullied.
- To not bully others.
  
- Parents must not individually take action in a bullying situation, especially not correcting another child for his/her perceived actions.
- Members of the school community will be alert to early signs of distress in a student being bullied, and will act accordingly.
- A cooperative approach including both home and school should be the cornerstone of a transparent response to an allegation of bullying.
- It should be recognised that alleged bullying scenarios can be complex and, as a consequence, warrant subtle sustained strategies.
- The school cannot automatically assume responsibility, nor any authority, to address bullying actions outside supervised hours.

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