

APPLICABLE TO	All diocesan schools
DOCUMENT OWNER	Director of Schools
APPROVAL DATE	22 November 2019
APPROVED BY	CSO Leadership Team
SCHOOL ACTIONS	System policy: Each school may adapt this policy for use as a school policy, with procedures consistent with and aligned to the principles and practices outlined in this policy. This policy and the school's anti-bullying handbook are to be published on the school website.
LAST REVIEW DATE/S	2003, 2012
NEXT REVIEW DATE	2022
RELATED DOCUMENTS	Anti-Bullying for Schools Handbook 2019 Complaints Resolution Policy 2018 Pastoral Care and Wellbeing Policy School Community Code of Conduct Serious Incident Management Policy Social Media Policy

## Purpose

This policy sets out the Catholic School Office's position on student bullying and the requirements for preventing and responding to student bullying, including online bullying, in Catholic schools in the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese. It forms part of the suite of policies to provide a safe, inclusive and supportive environment for students. Guidelines for developing and communicating anti-bullying procedures, strategies and practices relevant to the school's context is set out in the Anti-Bullying for Schools Handbook.

Diocesan schools seek to foster and develop a safe, positive physical and emotional school environment that creates a climate of trust. Students, staff, parents and the school community share the responsibility for making each Diocesan school a respectful and inclusive environment.

## Policy Statement

We are committed to ensuring that Diocesan schools in the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese provide an environment free from bullying behaviours. Bullying in any form is unacceptable behaviour.

## Definitions

**Aggression** – means words or actions that are directed towards another and intended to harm, distress, coerce or cause fear.

**Bullying** – The *National Safe Schools Framework 2011* defines bullying as 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 behaviour has three key features:

- It involves the intentional misuse of power in a relationship.
- It is ongoing and repeated.
- It involves behaviours that can cause harm.

Bullying behaviour can also involve intimidation, victimisation and harassment, including that based on sex, race, religion, disability, or sexual orientation, both online and offline. Bullying of any form, or for any reason, can have long-term effects on those involved including bystanders.

Bullying can be illegal if it involves behaviours that include physical violence, threats of violence, damaging property, or stalking.

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

- students not getting along well
- a situation of mutual conflict such as teasing or disagreement
- single episodes of hurtful words or actions, or random acts of aggression or intimidation.

#### *Appropriate language for use with younger students*

Bullying is when someone targets another child again and again and tries to make them feel bad. They say or do many mean and hurtful things, make fun of them a lot, try to stop them from joining in or make others not like them.

Although it isn't nice if someone says or does something mean to someone else, we don't call that bullying. It also isn't bullying if children of the same age have a one-off argument.

#### *For use with older students*

Bullying is when one student (or a group) targets another student again and again to upset or hurt them. They might hurt them physically, try to socially isolate them or say and do many mean or humiliating things to them.

Although it is neither respectful nor acceptable if someone behaves in a mean or aggressive way on one occasion, it is not considered bullying. A fight or disagreement between students of equal power or status is not considered bullying.

**Bystander** – means someone who sees or knows about bullying that is happening to someone else.

**Cyberbullying** – involves the use of any information and communication technology involving deliberate, isolated, or repeatedly hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others or is undertaken recklessly without concern for its impact on others. By virtue of its nature, technology facilitates repeated access to harmful content.

**Harassment** – means behaviour that targets an individual or group due to their identity, race, culture or ethnic origin; religion; physical characteristics; gender; sexual orientation; marital, parenting or economic status; age; ability or disability and that offends, humiliates, intimidates or creates a hostile environment. Harassment may be an ongoing pattern of behaviour, or it may be a single act. It may be directed randomly or towards the same person/s. It may be intentional or unintentional (i.e. words or actions that offend and distress one person may be genuinely regarded by the person doing them as minor or harmless). Harassment is unacceptable and needs to be addressed as part of creating a safe school but it would not be considered bullying if any one or more of the following three features were present.

- It occurred only once and was not part of a repeated pattern.
- It was not intended to offend, demean, annoy, alarm or abuse.
- It was not directed towards the same person/s each time.

**Supportive Bystander Behaviour** – means the actions of a supportive bystander that stops or diminishes a specific bullying incident or helps another student to recover from it. A bystander is someone who

sees or knows about bullying that is happening to someone else. Supportive bystander behaviours are actions and/or words that are intended to support someone who is being attacked, abused or bullied.

**Violence** – means the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against another person(s) that results in psychological harm, injury or in some cases death. Violence may involve provoked or unprovoked acts and can be a single incident, a random act or can occur over time.

### Terminology

The CSO promotes the use of positive language that supports the values of the National Safe Schools Framework 2011. The terms 'bullies' and 'victims' are not recommended as appropriate terminology to use when identifying, reporting, recording and responding to incidents of bullying.

More appropriate terms to use may include 'bullied students', 'students who are bullied', 'students who bully' and 'students who engage in bullying behaviour'. This will ensure that the unacceptable behaviours are addressed in a manner that supports the individuals involved to learn and demonstrate more acceptable social behaviours without the impact of enduring labels.

## Scope

This policy relates to student bullying in Diocesan schools in the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese. The Work Health and Safety Policy applies to staff bullying in Diocesan schools. When bullying involves a student and staff member, both policies apply.

This policy applies to all student bullying behaviour, including online (cyber) bullying, and applies outside of school hours and off school premises where students have been involved and there is a clear and close connection to the school.

## Guiding Principles

This policy is based on the following principles, which are informed by the Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy and National Safe Schools Framework (2011). Diocesan schools:

1. 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.
2. maintain policies, plans and structures that encourage positive student behaviour, recognise and reinforce student achievement and wellbeing, and manage disruptive student behaviour.
3. are committed to a holistic, whole-school and whole-community approach to anti-bullying, which includes promoting awareness of anti-bullying interventions and the range of sanctions that may be applied.
4. will have clear and widely communicated anti-bullying procedures/guidelines, strategies and practices for successfully preventing and responding to bullying.
5. promote a culture of reporting bullying and maintain procedures that enable staff, parents, carers and students to report confidentially any incidents or situations of bullying.
6. include educational content in the classroom that allows students to develop social and emotional competencies, and to learn appropriate ways to respond to bullying – both as a student who experiences bullying and as a bystander.
7. provide support and professional development for school staff on how best to enhance understanding, skills and self-efficacy to address and prevent bullying behaviours.
8. expect students and parents/carers to read and abide by, agreements for responsible use of technology and the School Community Code of Conduct.
9. have effective strategies for record keeping and communication between appropriate staff about safety and wellbeing issues.

10. undertake systematic evaluation of anti-bullying interventions.
11. have protocols for the induction of casual staff, new staff and new students and families into the school's wellbeing and pastoral care policies and procedures and community Code of Conduct.
12. if a student or parent/carer believes a matter is not being dealt with effectively, they can refer the matter to the school's principal (or delegate) for resolution in accordance with the Complaints Resolution Policy.

## Responsibilities

The following information sets out levels of responsibility for all involved in creating the conditions for learning within a safe, respectful and positive environment.

### Catholic Schools Office

The Catholic Schools Office (CSO) has the responsibility to:

- Support and resource schools to implement the Anti-Bullying Policy and school procedures, guidelines and approaches.
- Provide anti-bullying and cyber safety information for students, staff and parent/carers.
- Provide opportunities for training staff in appropriate anti-bullying responses.
- Provide support to Principals in the management of bullying incidents.

### Principals

Principals will ensure that:

- The school has procedures and guidelines in place to respond effectively to bullying incidents.
- The school has appropriate guidelines, training and procedures in place to regulate a safe and supportive school environment and that these policies and procedures are regularly monitored.
- Regular opportunities are provided for all school staff to be trained to recognise and respond effectively to bullying.
- Anti-bullying training and familiarisation with the school's policy and procedures are addressed in new staff and student induction processes.
- School staff regularly review their processes for identifying and responding to bullying.
- Records of incidents of bullying are kept systematically by the school and analysed to identify patterns and proactively support student wellbeing.
- Students receive regular explicit instruction on the school's policy and procedures dealing with incidents of bullying.
- Students are educated on respectful relationships and social and emotional skills that enhance students' understanding of pro-social behaviour, bullying and its impact on self and others.
- Parents/carers receive regular advice on the existence of related system policies and school guidelines/procedures for understanding bullying, dealing with incidents, and how they can access assistance.
- This Anti-Bullying Policy and school guidelines/procedures are available on the school website.
- Complaints about bullying are managed in accordance with the Complaints Resolution Policy.

### School-based Staff

School-based staff have a responsibility to:

- Understand the school and system policies relating to bullying, behaviour, responsible use of technology and pastoral care and wellbeing.
- Support the school in maintaining a safe, inclusive and supportive learning environment.
- Model and promote appropriate relationships and behaviours.

- Promote a school culture where bullying is not acceptable.
- Teach students to identify, report and respond to bullying at school and online.
- Access professional learning to support appropriate anti-bullying responses.
- Manage reports of bullying and escalate matters to the principal (or delegate) when necessary.

### **Students**

Students have a responsibility to:

- Act appropriately, respecting individual differences and diversity.
- Follow the school anti-bullying guidelines.
- Participate in learning experiences that address understandings, values and skills relating to anti-bullying and responsible use of technology.
- Agree that any social networking site that identifies the school by name or image or implication is part of the school environment and may be dealt with according to the schools' policies and anti-bullying procedures.
- Report incidents of bullying.
- Seek support if bullied and refrain from retaliating in any bullying incident.

### **Parents/Carers**

Parent/carers have a responsibility to:

- Read, sign and abide by the Conditions of Enrolment and School Community Code of Conduct.
- Work collaboratively with the school in providing opportunities for education on issues related to student safety and wellbeing.
- Treat all members of the school community with dignity and respect.
- Be aware of the school anti-bullying procedures and guidelines.
- Support their students to understand bullying behaviour, to become responsible citizens and to develop responsible online behaviour.
- Discuss appropriate responses to bullying and cyber-bullying including encouraging students to disclose to a trusted adult if this occurs.
- Report incidents of bullying according to the school anti-bullying procedures/guidelines.
- Work collaboratively and calmly with the school to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur.

## **Budget**

The Catholic Schools Office will make provision each year in its annual budget for professional development opportunities in this area. Schools will budget for anti-bullying resources as required.

## **Review**

This policy is managed by the Office of the Director and will be routinely reviewed to maintain currency and effectiveness.

## **Legislative/Professional Guidelines**

*Students and young Persons Act (1998) (Care and Protection)*

*Education Act (1990)*

National Safe Schools Framework (2011)

NSW Education Standards Authority Registration Systems and Member Non-Government Schools (NSW) Manual December 2017