

SACRED HEART SCHOOL MOSMAN ANTI-BULLYING POLICY (July 2014)

OUR SACRED HEART MOSMAN MISSION

At Sacred Heart School we are inspired by our mission and committed to:

- Teaching and living as a Catholic Eucharistic Community with the person and message of Jesus Christ at our heart.
- Teaching and living the values of our school motto, Faith, Generosity and Courage.
- Providing a high quality, challenging and holistic education that will inspire life-long learning.
- Nurturing and empowering children to build resilience and to use their talents to contribute positively in a changing world.

POLICY FRAMEWORK

Our school Anti-Bullying Policy fits within the context of the Sydney Catholic Education Office 'Pastoral Care of Students in Catholic Schools' (2003), our own Sacred Heart School Pastoral Care Policy (2014)) and 'Sydney Catholic Education Office (CEO) Anti-Bullying Policy' (2014) documents. Our Sacred Heart Anti-Bullying policy articulates in every respect with the Sydney CEO Anti-Bullying Policy and should be read in conjunction with this policy. Both our Sacred Heart Policy and the Sydney CEO Policy are accessible on the Sacred Heart School website.

STATEMENT OF BELIEF AND PURPOSE

Our Sacred Heart School Anti-Bullying Policy, like our Behaviour Management Policy, is a fundamental component of our whole approach towards Pastoral Care. Our approach to pastoral care is structured around the principles of Positive Psychology which are foundational to Positive Education. Our approach at Sacred Heart uses the framework of *'Learn it, Live it, Teach it, Embed it.'* All staff at Sacred Heart are committed towards the building of a school community where the wellbeing of all students and staff is given the same priority as academic achievement. At Sacred Heart we believe that an individual's wellbeing is the foundation on which success in life is built. If students are able to develop healthy levels of personal wellbeing then they will be more likely to achieve their academic potential; more likely to establish supportive relationships; more likely to make a meaningful contribution to their community and more likely to lead a fulfilling life.

In keeping with the Sacred Heart Statement of Mission and the above paragraph we believe that all members of the community (children, staff, parents and pastors) have the right to a learning and work environment free from intimidation, humiliation and hurt. We all share a responsibility to create a culture of caring in which all forms of bullying including cyber-bullying are not tolerated.

This policy, aligning with the CEO policy, aims to provide clear and agreed procedures and strategies for combating bullying at Sacred Heart, responding to bullying behaviours and

supporting all parties involved. As a Catholic school community we are called to establish relationships which are grounded in love, compassion, reconciliation and justice. In giving witness to these Christian values we reject ideas, beliefs and behaviours which marginalize or victimize people.

OUR DEFINITION OF BULLYING:

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

In seeking to deepen our shared understanding of what constitutes bullying we acknowledge the following points:

- a. Not all conflict between people constitutes bullying.
- b. 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.
- c. A particular single incident could be considered bullying behaviour if it involves a gross imbalance of power between the aggressor and the victim.
- d. 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.

In consideration of all of the above 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

Indirect:

- Excluding others from the game or group
- Spreading lies, stories 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 or is undertaken recklessly without concern for its impact on others.

POLICY AND AND PROCEDURES STATEMENT

At Sacred Heart School every person has a right to feel safe. Any person who bullies another is denying them that right. Staff at Sacred Heart will not tolerate any action that undermines a person's right to feel safe and will take the necessary steps to stop such behaviour.

Everyone at Sacred Heart is responsible for taking an active stance against all forms of bullying behaviour. The Principal is responsible for the implementation of the Sacred Heart School Anti-bullying Policy and Procedures and will, with the support of the School Leadership Team and school staff, take appropriate steps to ensure that the school community is regularly made aware of the policy and procedures that are in place.

Staff at Sacred Heart will:

- 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
- Mediate between the two parties when appropriate, using restorative as opposed to retributive practices.
- Monitor the situation over time, taking care to regularly 'touch base' with the parties
- Work during 2014 towards the full implementation all of the processes and procedures outlined in the resources that have been created to support the implementation of the Sydney CEO Anti-Bullying Policy across all Archdiocesan schools. Particular emphasis will be placed on the tracking and recording of instances of bullying behaviour. These supporting resources are available to all staff on Google Drive.
- Explicitly teach bullying awareness through Positive Education lessons; 'moral education' in the context of Religious Education; 'across the curriculum' values teaching in the classroom and teaching specifically related to bullying in the PDHPE curriculum.

Sacred Heart 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
- Listened to empathically and non-judgementally by staff.

Sacred Heart students who witness bullying will:

- Intervene if they can safely stop the bullying
- Immediately seek teacher help if they can't stop the bullying
- Report all incidents of bullying to a teacher or other member of staff

Sacred Heart parents will:

- Listen sympathetically to reports of bullying
- Contact the school to arrange an appointment with the child's teacher in the first instance.
- Support the school to find a satisfactory solution

Sacred Heart School will:

- Raise whole staff awareness of individual instances of ongoing bullying at staff communication meetings.
- Conduct periodic surveys to determine the extent of bullying in the school from a child's perspective.
- Participate in the Anti Bullying component in the Peer Support Program cycle.
- Organise liturgies and assemblies where the value of the individual is affirmed and the importance of qualities such as compassion, kindness, reconciliation, tolerance, respect and justice are encouraged.
- Provide activities which develop a culture of caring for one another and acknowledging the worth and contribution of others and which helps develop compassion.
- Make appropriate provision of counseling or other support services
- Make provision of support for parents through information seminars and support networks.
- Purchase classroom resources to support the creation of a school culture of Anti-Bullying.
- Emphasise the development of social competencies through lessons in Positive Education, Buddy System and Peer Support Program.
- Inform parents of any child who is involved in persistent and/or serious bullying incidents and work to support them.
- Protect and support targets of bullying to eliminate the likelihood of them being bullied again.
- Support Sacred Heart children and their families through the implementation of all the processes and procedures outlined in the resources created to support the effective implementation of the Sydney CEO Anti-Bullying Policy (2014).
- Work with the parents of the child to establish joint strategies to assist the child in making appropriate behavioural choices.
- Assist the child who is choosing to bully someone to change his/her behaviour.

- Remove any child who continues to bully from the playground/classroom/school in accordance with school and Archdiocesan policies for a period of time should there be no change in his/her behaviour.

Summative Policy Statement

This policy will be subject to ongoing further refinement throughout 2014 and beyond as we continue to implement the recommendations outlined in the Sydney CEO Anti- Bullying resources (2014) designed to support all systemic schools in their work to combat bullying behaviours.

This will include sections on:

- communication to parents of Sydney CEO Anti-Bullying Policy (2014).
- Staff training.
- Parent protocols on how to make a complaint.
- Tracking, recording and record keeping in relation to bullying behaviour.