



ST. MARY OF THE ANGELS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ANTI- BULLYING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

St Mary of the Angels School believes every child has a right to a peaceful environment and does not tolerate bullying in any form. All members of our school community are committed to ensuring a safe, caring, Christian environment, which enhances the personal development, and self esteem of all.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is an act of aggression, which breaches the right of others to enjoy a safe, peaceful environment.

- It can take a number of forms: verbal, physical, gestures, threats, exclusion.
- It is an abuse of power.
- It can be planned, organised or unintentional.
- It may involve individuals or groups.

SOME EXAMPLES OF BULLYING

- Physical violence, hitting, kicking, spitting
- Using offensive names, teasing, spreading rumours
- Writing offensive notes or graffiti
- Using put-downs or belittling others
- Hurtfully excluding others
- Forcing others to act against their will
- Interfering with another's property, destroying, stealing, hiding
- Ridiculing another's appearance
- Making degrading comments about another such as gender, race, culture or background etc..
- Electronic bullying including electronic devices such as mobile phones, facebook etc.

HOW CHILDREN MAY REACT TO BULLYING

- May feel frightened, unsafe, embarrassed, unfairly treated, humiliated
- Work, sleep and concentration may suffer
- Family, peer relationships may deteriorate
- May feel confused and helpless
- Withdrawal from others
- May be tearful and stressed
- Retaliate inappropriately
- Reluctant to go to school

PROCEDURES TO DEAL WITH BULLYING

Staff is aware that in any school environment occasional occurrences of bullying will arise. In an attempt to minimize bullying and deal with incidents that occur the following strategies are put into place:

- Positive, responsible behaviour is encouraged at all times.
- Incidents that arise are dealt with according to school policies regarding Pastoral Care and Code of Behaviour and the Bishop's Commission policy "Suspension, Expulsion or Exclusion of Students" and procedures outlined in SOC 08:08
- In severe cases of bullying the Bishop's Commission policy "Suspension, Expulsion or Exclusion of Students" may be enacted.
- Awareness of bullying and strategies to deal with bullying are taught as part of the curriculum. The resource "Bullying – Identify, Cope, Prevent" (R.I.C. Publications 2002) is available to all classes but teachers may choose other appropriate programs or resources). Strategies will be taught from the Bounce Back Program to help students develop resilience.
- If necessary the school can provide access to counselling through Centacare for students and parents with concerns about bullying.

Students are required to:

- a) Abide by St Mary of the Angels School Code of Behaviour.
- b) Refuse to be involved in any bullying situation.
- c) Report any incident.

Staff are required to:

- a) Be role models in word and action at all times.
- b) Make efforts to prevent occasions for bullying by active supervision duty.
- c) Be observant of signs of distress and suspected bullying.
- d) Support victims by:
 - Offering a safe haven.
 - Listening to victims supportively and with understanding.
 - Teaching resilience skills to the children.
 - Pointing out the value of playing in groups and learning communication skills
 - Teach assertion skills (not aggression) and social interaction skills.
 - ✓ Be assertive and stand up for themselves
 - ✓ Communicate positively with others
 - ✓ Think positively before reacting
 - ✓ Listen with your head and your heart
 - ✓ Learn how to negotiate
 - ✓ Walk away from bullying
 - ✓ Become part of a friendship group and stay away from bullies
 - ✓ Learn how to report anti-social incidents

St Mary of the Angels School recommends that parents:

- a) Encourage children to abide by a positive code of behaviour.
- b) Take an active interest in their child's social development.
- c) Advise their child to inform a staff member about any incidents.
- d) Do not encourage their child to retaliate.
- e) Communicate with the school staff if concerned about an incident *immediately*.
- f) Be willing to attend interviews if their child is involved in any bullying situation i.e.: as the victim or the bully.
- g) Be supportive of the school's anti bullying policy.

Our community of staff, students and parents can work together to create a more peaceful, safe and Christian environment at St Mary of the Angels.