



## **BULLYING POLICY**

### **Our vision statement:**

At St Joseph's School we aspire to live the values of Jesus within a welcoming Catholic community that celebrates and integrates faith, life, learning and culture; empowering all to live with integrity and to contribute to an ever changing world.

With this as our vision for all members of our community, we believe that bullying in any form is unacceptable, and will not be tolerated. This policy is designed to inform and guide the behaviour of all members of our community: students, staff, and parents.

This policy addresses:

1. Definition and examples of bullying
2. Signs of bullying
3. School response to bullying including responsibilities of students, staff and parents.

This policy is supported by our Behaviour Management Policy.

### **Definition:**

At St Joseph's we believe bullying is:

When a person or a group of people, deliberately hurt, threaten or frighten another person repeatedly.

Bullying contains the key features of physical, verbal or emotional harm including:

- A misuse of power in a relationship
- Being ongoing and repeated
- Behaviours that can cause harm

*Bullying is **not** arguing with friends, or occasional name calling or exclusion of a child from playground or group activities.*

### **Examples of bullying:**

Bullying can be overt or covert. Overt bullying is obvious and can involve physical actions such as punching or kicking or overt verbal actions such as insulting.

Covert bullying is a subtle type of non-physical bullying which isn't easily seen by others and is conducted out of sight. Covert bullying can be repeatedly:

- Using hand gestures and threatening looks
- Whispering, excluding, turning your back on a person
- Blackmailing, spreading rumours, threatening, stealing friends
- Breaking secrets, gossiping, criticising clothes, physical features and personalities

Cyberbullying is another form of bullying. It can be conducted in many ways using different media. Including:

- The sending of abusive texts or emails
- Taking and sharing unflattering or private images, including naked or sexual images
- Posting unkind messages or inappropriate images on social networking sites
- Excluding individuals from online chats or other communication
- Assuming the identity of the victim online and representing them in a negative manner or in a way that may damage their relationship with others
- Repeatedly, and for no strategic reason, attacking players in online gaming
- Accessing or altering other people's electronic files and documents

### **Signs of Bullying:**

Each individual student who has been bullied or is bullying others will respond and act differently. A student's behaviours and moods can also change for a variety of reasons.

The following are some signs that may indicate a student is experiencing bullying:

Signs a teacher may notice:

- Becomes aggressive and unreasonable
- Starts getting into fights
- Refuses to talk about what is wrong
- A decline in achievement at school
- Student is often alone or excluded from friendship groups at school
- Student is a frequent target for teasing, mimicking or ridicule
- Change in the student's ability or willingness to speak up in class and appears insecure or frightened

Signs a parent may report:

- Child doesn't want to go to school
- Changes their method or route to school or are frightened of walking to school
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Changes in eating patterns
- Frequent tears, anger, mood swings
- Unexplained bruises, cuts, scratches
- Missing or damaged belongings or clothes
- Arriving home hungry

The following are some signs that may indicate a student is bullying other students:

- Repeatedly teases, imitates or makes fun of the same students
- Feels the need to dominate or control others
- Shows no compassion for someone who is experiencing bullying
- Repeatedly ignores or excludes the same student
- Whispers or pulls faces behind the backs of other students

Students who bully others are more likely to:

- Feel disconnected from school and dislike school
- Demonstrate good leadership skills
- Demonstrate good verbal skills and an ability to talk themselves out of trouble

## **School response to bullying:**

At St Joseph's we will:

- Openly talk about bullying – what it is, how it affects us and what we can do about it.
- Teach our students skills which will build their self-esteem and empower them to take responsibility for themselves using restorative practices
- Take action when bullying behaviour is reported or sighted. Depending upon the severity of the bullying, this action may include:
  - Documentation of incidents in playground monitoring book and on wellbeing
  - Consultation with the school psychologist
  - Exclusion from the playground or classroom
  - Education about what bullying is and why it is inappropriate
  - Contact made with parents by classroom teacher, deputy principal or principal
  - Development of a behavioural contract to support re-introduction to the playground or classroom

## **Responsibilities of students:**

- To not bully others
- To help others who are being bullied
- To inform a member of staff if they are being bullied or if they, as a bystander see someone else being bullied

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## **Responsibilities of staff:**

- To model appropriate behaviour
- To deal with all reported and observed incidences of bullying in a constructive and supportive manner as described in this policy, including documenting in playground monitoring book and on Wellbeing
- To ensure students are supervised at all times
- To report incidences of bullying to the Principal
- To review prevention, intervention and post-intervention strategies for dealing with bullying issues on a regular basis

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## **Responsibilities of parents:**

- To watch for signs that their child may be being bullied
- To speak to a staff member (class teacher in the first instance) if they believe their child may be being bullied, or being a bully
- To discuss with their child, the appropriate ways to respond to and report bullying behaviour

## **Resources:**

Beane, A.L. (2005) *The Bully Free Classroom*

McGrath, H. & Noble, T. (2011) *Bounce Back*

Suckling, A. and Temple, C. (2001) *Bullying: A Whole School Approach*

The Alannah and Madeline Foundation <http://www.amf.org.au/FactSheets/>

Safe Australian Schools [www.bullyingnoway.gov.au](http://www.bullyingnoway.gov.au)

Parents Helpline: 13 22 89

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/parentline.aspx?Redirect=1>

<https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/WhatIsBullying/DefinitionOfBullying>

## **EVALUATION**

Ratified by Leadership Team March 2017

*St Joseph's is committed to the protection of children in line with the Victorian Government Child Safety reforms.*

*St Joseph's School aspires to live the values of Jesus within a welcoming Catholic community that celebrates and integrates faith, life, learning and culture; empowering our students to live together harmoniously in an ever changing world.*