



Anti-bullying Policy

Purpose

St Joseph's Catholic College is an inclusive community where diversity is affirmed and individual differences are respected. Quality education is provided for all students to meet their learning needs in a safe, secure, ordered and supportive environment. All members of the college 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 care in which bullying is not tolerated.

Policy framework

At St Joseph's Catholic College we are called to establish relationships which are grounded in love, compassion, reconciliation and justice. In witnessing Christian values our community rejects ideas, beliefs and behaviours which marginalise or victimise people. The Anti-bullying Policy is part of a more comprehensive Pastoral Care and Student Wellbeing Policy and is informed by current research, Diocesan policy and the Australian Government's National Safe Schools Framework. It presents clear definitions of different types of bullying and details the procedures and strategies used by St Joseph's Catholic College to respond to bullying behaviours and to protect, support and educate all parties involved. Our community does not tolerate bullying.

Policy content

Aims

The anti-bullying policy aims to:

- develop the school community's understanding of bullying behaviours and an acceptance that bullying will not be tolerated
- increase the school community's awareness of the power of bystanders to change behaviours and attitudes and their responsibility in creating a safe and caring environment free from bullying
- provide strategies for parents, teachers and students to respond to bullying incidents

Policy principles

This policy is based on the following principles:

- Bullying in all its forms is never acceptable
- Creating an anti-bullying culture requires a whole school approach in which staff, students and parents work together
- Responses to allegations of bullying are based on procedural fairness and due process for all parties
- Students have the right to feel safe, to be treated with respect and dignity, to be included and to participate in quality learning
- Teachers have the right to teach in an environment free from bullying and harassment and to be treated with respect and dignity
- Support staff have the right to work in an environment free from bullying and harassment and to be treated with respect and dignity

Definition

Bullying occurs when the behaviours of one or more students cause harm, hurt or distress to another student or group of students. Bullying involves repeated and intentional behaviours directed towards a less powerful individual or group. 'The behaviour is experienced by the target as oppressive and by the perpetrator as enjoyable' (Rigby, 2002).

Bullying can involve all forms of harassment, for example:

- *Physical* - hitting, pushing, tripping, kicking, spitting or scratching
- *Verbal* - teasing, using offensive names, ridiculing, spreading rumours, name calling, abuse, putdowns, sarcasm, insults, threats, demanding money, expressing sexual comments
- *Non-verbal* - making inappropriate gestures, writing offensive notes or graffiti about others, using email, text messaging or social networking sites to hurt or humiliate
- *Exclusion* - deliberately excluding others from a group, refusing to sit next to another
- *Extortion* - threatening to or taking another's possessions, food, or money.
- *Property* - stealing, hiding or destroying property
- *Cyberbullying* - using electronic information and communication technologies (phone, text, email, social media platforms, chat, web pages etc.) to insult, hurt, intimidate, alienate, defame others
- *Psychological* - using intimidation, spreading rumours, defaming to make others afraid

The potential impact of bullying

Bullying has the potential to affect both the individual and the entire school community. Students who are bullied may:

- Develop feelings of negative self-worth, possibly leading to feelings of isolation and abnormal absenteeism
- Develop feelings of helplessness, feeling they ought to be able to do something about it but lack the confidence to take any remedial action
- Feel frightened for their safety
- Feel embarrassed, angry or unfairly treated
- Disconnect socially from peers
- Project anger onto others
- Suffer problems in concentration or in sleep
- Develop health problems associated with the emotional/psychological distress created by bullying
- Exhibit 'at-risk' behaviours, such as anxiety or depression
- Have long term problems in maintaining interpersonal relationships and in sustaining self esteem

Rights and responsibilities under this policy

All members of the college community have the right to:

- Learn, teach and work in an environment free from intimidation, humiliation and hurt
- Expect that the college will respond to all reports of bullying
- Support and guidance for the victim, bully and bystander to deal with bullying

School staff have a responsibility to:

- Respect and support students
- Model and promote appropriate respectful behaviour

- Understand the school and system policies relating to bullying, behaviour, responsible use of technology and pastoral care
- Respond in a timely manner to incidents of bullying according to the school's Anti-Bullying Guidelines
- Provide a safe and supportive learning environment.
- Provide curriculum and pedagogy that supports students to develop an understanding of bullying and its impact on individuals and the broader community.

Students have a responsibility to:

- Act appropriately, respecting individual differences and diversity
- Act as responsible digital citizens and responsible users of ICT
- Follow the school anti-bullying guidelines
- Act as a responsible 'upstander' rather than a bystander
- Report incidents of bullying
- Seek support if bullied and refrain from retaliating in any bullying incident.

Parent/carers have responsibility to:

- Treat all members of the school community with dignity and respect
- Be aware of the school anti-bullying guidelines.
- Support their children to understand bullying behaviour, to become responsible citizens and to develop responsible online behaviour
- Support their children in developing positive responses to incidents of bullying
- Report incidents of bullying according to the school anti-bullying guidelines
- Work collaboratively and calmly with the school to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur.

All members of the college community have the responsibility to:

- Model respectful and caring behaviours in the Josephite tradition and build relationships with others based on gospel values
- Model the college values of justice, hope, compassion, and respect in all relationships
- Provide learning experiences that encourage students to develop tolerance, respect and an appreciation of the value of difference and diversity
- Reinforce the message that bullying in all its forms is not accepted or tolerated
- Intervene and provide support when bullying behaviours are evident or suspected
- Report all incidences of bullying

Strategies to prevent bullying at St Joseph's Catholic College

- Staff model respectful and cooperative relationships and embrace diversity
- Staff ensure students are affirmed and the value of respect is promoted through daily routines
- Year 7 – 10 Pastoral Care and Student Wellbeing Program includes several units related to peer relationships, resolving conflict, building connections and the different forms of bullying, including cyberbullying and its impacts
- Consult with the NSW School Liaison Police about bullying issues and include their presentations on cyberbullying and digital footprint in the Year 7 – 10 Pastoral Care and Student Wellbeing Program
- Key Learning Areas such as Religious Education, English and PDHPE present units on bullying and on the elements of and strategies for creating respectful relationships and positive friendships
- Year 10 Drama students script and present an annual 'bullying play' to students in local diocesan primary schools
- Communication through *Joey's Journal* to raise and maintain awareness and connectedness in promoting positive relationships
- Collect and analyse data from annual surveys of students and teachers on the types, prevalence and location of bullying, the effectiveness of processes in place for dealing with reports of bullying and the efficacy of the program units and student leadership strategies currently applied to reduce bullying
- The Pastoral Team and School Counsellor work with students identified as bullies and parents when appropriate to support behaviour change
- The Pastoral Team and School Counsellor work with students identified as victims and parents when appropriate to develop effective response and coping strategies and to support these students in developing their resilience
- The Pastoral Team work with bystanders to equip them with the understanding and skills to become up-standers who will always take a stand against bullying and support the victim
- Findings from current research and media articles about bullying are provided to staff to enhance understanding of types, impacts and strategies for managing bullying in schools
- Vertically structured house system fosters connections between students of all ages and supports a culture older students caring for and modelling to younger students
- Peer Mentor program that develops leadership skills in Year 10 students and supports Year 7 students into the Joey's community

Process for dealing with reports of bullying under this policy

- Allegations of bullying are referred to the Year Leader (YL) of the student being bullied or the Leader of Student Wellbeing (LoSW).
- YL and LoSW meet with the student being bullied and discuss and document options for dealing with the report. The nature, extent and duration of the alleged bullying are carefully considered.
- If the bullying is considered low level the student may choose to deal with the issue herself with the support of others so strategies are discussed. The student's decision is documented. The student may choose to speak with the School Counsellor. YL informs parents and clearly explains that the student has chosen to self-manage the issue with support. Parents are encouraged to monitor and report any concerns they have. YL monitors progress.
- Records of incidents of bullying and interventions are kept systematically by the college. These incidents are communicated to relevant staff, maintaining confidentiality as appropriate.
- If the student requests assistance to deal with the initial report or if the bullying behaviour continues despite the student's attempts to self-manage the situation, the YL and/or the LoSW are guided by the *No Blame* approach in responding to the incident in the first instance. The *No Blame* approach is summarised in Appendix 1.
- When the *No Blame* approach is not appropriate for responding to the alleged bullying or if bullying behaviours continue despite attempts to stop it under *No Blame*, the YL and LoSW directly intervene by meeting with the alleged bully to develop her understanding of the impact of her behaviour and discuss how and why it must change and possible consequences if that does not happen. This process is summarised in Appendix 2.

Related legislation, policies, guidelines and support documents

- SJCC Positive Behaviour for Learning and Teaching Guidelines
- SJCC Pastoral Care and Student Wellbeing Policy
- SJCC Anti-bullying Policy
- SJCC Cybersafety Guidelines
- SJCC Mobile Phone Use Policy
- SJCC Pastoral Care and Student Wellbeing Program
- Pastoral Care and Wellbeing Framework for Learning - DSS
- The nine elements of the National Safe Schools Framework 2010
- *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986 (Comm.)*
- *Telecommunications Act 1991 (Comm.)*
- *Enhancing Online Safety for Children Act 2015 (Comm.)*
- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)*
- *Children (Criminal Proceedings) Act 1987(NSW)*
- *Young Offenders Act 1997 (NSW)*
- *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)*
- *Pastoral Care Policy for Diocesan Systemic Schools*
- *Anti-Harassment Policy for Diocesan Systemic Schools*
- *Cybersafety Guidelines for Schools DBB*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Policy for Diocesan Systemic Schools*
- *Acceptable Use Policy for Internet/Intranet and Network Services for Diocesan Systemic Schools*

Appendix 1: **No Blame** method of dealing with bullying

The *No Blame* approach involves:

- Parents of the student bullied being notified and provided with a clear explanation of the *No Blame* approach.
- YL/LoSW interviews witnesses/bystanders who are aware of the bullying. All interviews are documented. Interviews may include the alleged bully but this student is not identified at this stage.

The situation is explained in the following terms -

'..... has been experiencing bullying; I/we think you (students present) may be aware this is happening. We hope you can help us resolve the issue and help

.....'

- YL/LoSW does not attribute blame but states that she knows that the group can do something about the situation and help change the behaviour of others so that is not subjected to this behaviour.
- YL/LoSW encourages the students to develop a picture of how the bullying is being experienced by the target. This process uses the majority of the group to promote the empathy which the bully generally lacks.
- YL/LoSW encourages the students to suggest ways for the target to feel safer and happier. A plan of action is agreed upon.
- YL/LoSW ends the meeting by passing over the responsibility to the group and arranges to meet with them again (about a week) to see how things are going.
- YL informs the victim that strategies are in place and that her peers will support her and the situation will be monitored. She is encouraged to inform the YL if bullying persists or resumes.
- YL/LoSW monitors and schedules a follow-up meeting approximately two weeks later.

Appendix 2: *Direct intervention* – YL and LoSW meeting with bullying

This approach is used when *No Blame* is inappropriate and/or bullying persists despite previous efforts at intervention. The LoSW keeps the Assistant Principal (AP) informed of direct interventions which follow these steps:

- LoSW and YL interview the alleged bully/bullies with the YL and present their understanding of the alleged repeated behaviour that constitutes bullying. The meeting is fully documented.
- The alleged bully/bullies are provided with the opportunity to respond.
- Strategies to change behaviour and cease bullying are discussed and agreed to by the alleged bully/bullies. The bully/bullies may be required to sign an undertaking of behaviour changes she/they have agreed to
- The LoSW and YL clearly outline the consequences if the bullying behaviour persists and inform the student(s) that parents will be informed about this interview
Consequences/sanctions can include:
 - (i) lunch detention
 - (ii) withdrawal from the grounds at recess and lunch
- The LoSW/YL informs the parents of the bully/bullies about the allegation, interview, sanctions and the possible consequences if the bullying behaviour persists.

If the bullying behaviour continues and the situation fails to improve, LoSW meets with the AP and provides copies of all documents and notes related to the incident. The AP and LoSW:

- Interview the alleged bully/bullies
- Invite parents to a formal interview to discuss their daughter's behaviour and strategies to encourage a change in that behaviour
- Consequences are clearly explained to parents. Continuing to bully the student involved in this case or reports of bullying other students will result in a meeting with the Principal. Parents are advised that suspension, negotiated transfer and expulsion from school are possible sanctions for serious and persistent bullying.