

St Mary's Primary School Bellingen

Anti-Bullying Policy

Statement of school policy

At St Mary's Primary school the dignity of the human person is the foundation of all Catholic social teaching and intrinsic to our education ministry. Consequently, the principle that the person is made in the image and likeness of God, is central to the mission of our parish school. This policy identifies the interconnectedness of the characteristics of quality Catholic learning and teaching and is intended to value, respect and promote the self-esteem and dignity of each student. The school will actively promote anti-bullying messages alerting students and staff of the need to be vigilant.

Scope of the policy

It is essential that we create and maintain a respectful, safe and supportive learning environment that promotes student wellbeing and enables the school to engage a diverse range of learners including those with a disability.

This Anti-Bullying policy supports the school's Mission and Vision Statements and Catholic Education in the Diocese of Lismore, Foundational Beliefs and Practices-*The Essential Framework*.

The Diocesan approved poster resource is included in this policy, Nine Elements for a Parish School Approach to Wellbeing and is based on the National Safe Schools Framework. This poster helps to locate bullying issues within a wider pastoral care context.

This policy covers the bullying of students with disabilities. Disabled children and young people enrolled at St Mary's school need:

- To know they have the right to be safe from bullying. They need to know what bullying is, how to keep safe and what to do if adults do not do enough to stop the bullying
- To be involved in the development and review of school anti-bullying policies
- All children and young people need to know what to do to help stop a disabled child or disabled young person being bullied

At St Mary's school we expect that learning technologies are used ethically and responsibly in the school environment, so that communication is respectful and human dignity valued. The prevention of and responses to incidents of bullying, inappropriate use of technology and disrespectful behaviour is more readily achieved in a caring and supportive school culture that promotes positive relationships and reflects Gospel values. Bullying, cyber-bullying, harassment, aggression and violence disregard core values of our faith including dignity, respect, justice, equity, compassion, trust and courage. Importantly, such actions can adversely affect the wellbeing of our students and are therefore unacceptable.

All members of this school community are expected to prevent and challenge such actions in order to build respectful relationships that respond effectively and sensitively to the needs of each student.

Context

At St Mary's school we define bullying as:

A pattern of repeated physical, verbal, psychological or social aggression that is directed towards a specific student by someone with more power and is intended to cause harm, distress and/or create fear. Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term physical and psychological effects on those involved, including bystanders.

Bullying may be carried out overtly (e.g. face – to – face) or covertly (e.g. through repeated social exclusion or via technology). It is a sub-category of aggression and is different to, but also related to, harassment and violence. It is not the same as conflict or social dislike even though, in some cases, the outcome of both can be bullying.

The different types of bullying identified by the National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF) include:

Face-to-face bullying (sometimes referred to as direct bullying) involves physical actions such as punching or kicking or overt verbal actions such as name-calling and insulting.

Covert bullying (sometimes referred to as indirect bullying) is a subtle type of non-physical bullying which isn't easily seen by others and is conducted out of sight, and often unacknowledged by adults.

Cyber-bullying occurs through the use of information or communication technologies such as Instant Messaging, text messages, email and social networking sites. Cyber-bullying 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. It has many similarities with offline bullying but it differs in that the student(s) who is/are bullying can be anonymous, it can reach a wide audience and the sent or uploaded material can be difficult to remove.

Most students who cyber bully also bully off-line. It is now recognised that many forms of covert bullying appear to have significant potential for serious harm.

This definition refers to the use of digital technologies which are very much a part of life and learning, because they offer such a wide range of tools and platforms for social and educational engagement. However, the risks of the digital environment must be acknowledged and constantly addressed. Being cyber safe and acting ethically when using electronic communications is the responsibility of all members of this school community.

At St Mary's school a conflict between equals and single incidents are not defined as bullying although, of course, such incidents will require intervention by the school and are treated as serious.

Duty of Care at St Mary's school

Staff at this school must be aware of the possibility of bullying and take action to prevent bullying if it is reasonably foreseeable.

The school will take reasonable actions to develop plans and implement programs aimed at deterring bullying activities. At St Mary's school the following anti-bullying plans and programs

are mandatory: Positive Behaviour Support, Bullying No Way, Make Jesus Real and PDHPE Units.

Our Duty of Care means this Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures is disseminated as appropriate to members of the school community in both digital form on our web and in hard copy school policy documents.

If a serious criminal offence has been identified we will report this to the police. This is the principal's responsibility. Teachers are to contact the principal immediately when conduct such as stalking, destruction of property, threats to inflict serious injury and/or kill, physical and sexual assault, offensive behaviour, discrimination, cyber stalking, defamation, breach of privacy, hacking, sexting and creating or possessing and/or disseminating child pornography are brought to their attention. .

Teachers must be aware that in many instances, cyber-bullying can constitute criminal conduct, especially when the behaviour is seriously threatening, harassing or intimidating. Cyber bullying and highly inappropriate use of technology could include: child pornography, fraud, impersonation, or sending words or images that cause offence, distress, menace or threaten.

Our Duty of Care with bullying and related matters may in certain circumstances extend past the school hours of instruction. If unacceptable behaviour occurs that has a close nexus with the school or with the wellbeing of a child educated at the school but occurs outside school hours, off-site or through the use of a student's personal mobile devices and/or computer, we may still have an obligation to respond.

Therefore at St Mary's school if staff become aware of such a circumstance they are obliged to bring the matter to the attention of the principal.

At St Mary's school we

- Use an Anti-Bullying Response Pathway when we become aware of incidents. The Pathway assists with a regulated and thorough response. (Appendix A)
 - Will implement an anti-Bullying Action Plan as part of the Response Pathway. (Appendix B)
 - Will keep a written record of any bullying investigation. (Appendix C sample)
 - Want students, staff and parent/carers to report bullying and cyber-bullying to the class teacher or directly to the principal.
 - Will investigate complaints of bullying and cyber-bullying in a manner that respects the dignity and privacy of those involved.
 - Will appoint a nominated person to co-ordinate strategies for the resolution of specific bullying incidents reported in this school.
 - Will notify parent/carers of bullying incidents involving your children.
 - Will notify the Police Youth Liaison Officer if the bullying situation has involved violence, threat of harm or alleged criminal conduct.
 - Will maintain records of bullying incidents and related interventions in accordance with the Catholic Schools Office Compliance manual. At our school this written record is maintained by the Principal and Assistant Principal in Schoolworx/Welfare Notes. As a staff we will review the record at regular intervals to see if any patterns are emerging.
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- Will survey students at least once a year on various matters and include questions about bullying, cyber bullying, safety and wellbeing.
- Will regularly review and evaluate this anti-bullying policy and the responsible use of technology procedures to ensure they are working effectively. (Appendix D)
- Will involve parents in this review through communication at Parent Forum and Parents and Friends Association meetings.
- Will purchase Anti-Bullying resources and support material for students, staff and parents and ensure easy access to this material for all staff, parents and students.

Responsibilities: Staff

Staff at St Mary's school aim to treat all members of the school community with dignity and respect and:

- Implement the student anti-bullying and responsible use of technology procedures by responding promptly and appropriately to reported incidents of bullying.
- Support the student anti-bullying and responsible use of technology procedures through positive modelling and the promotion of appropriate behaviour.
- Access professional learning to support appropriate anti-bullying responses which could include cyber safety, restorative justice practices, mediation and developing social skills in students. Such opportunities are made available to staff on the same basis as other professional learning.
- Support all aspects of related school policies.
- Remain vigilant in how students are using technology.
- Embed critical thinking, values clarification, respectful relationships and developing empathy into our teaching practice.
- Respond to bullying and cyber-bullying concerns by providing age appropriate guidance and boundaries so that students can learn to self-regulate.

Responsibilities: Students

Students have responsibilities as well. The staff at St Mary's school will encourage and support students to:

- Follow the anti-bullying and responsible use of technology procedures. Assist students from Years 5 to 12 to understand what their signature means on use of technology documents.
 - Immediately seek help from a trusted adult if they are aware of or involved in a bullying or cyber-bullying incident.
 - Seek support if bullied and refrain from retaliating in any bullying incident.
 - Understand that any social networking site that identifies the school by name or image or implication is part of the school environment.
 - In age appropriate circumstances the student should keep evidence of alleged bullying and produce it on request (for example phone text messages).
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Responsibilities: Parent/Carers

Parent/carers have responsibilities as well. At St Mary's school we will:

- Ensure parents understand the School Enrolment Application Form inclusions on anti-bullying by discussing this in relevant parent forums.
- Request that parents notify the school promptly of all bullying situations involving their children.
- Remind parents about the need to reinforce the school messages in the proper use of technology to help children grow into ethical and responsible digital citizens.
- Encourage parents to report serious matters of out-of-school hours bullying and cyber-bullying to the Police or other appropriate authority (such as the Internet Service Provider) and, as relevant, to the school.
- Ask parents to contact the school immediately through the class teacher or directly through the principal if they know of any bullying incident.

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A: Anti-Bullying Response All Schools

Appendix B: School Anti-Bullying Action Plan

Appendix C: Bullying Record Keeping and Investigation

Appendix D: Policy Review Tool

Appendix E: Nine Elements for a Parish School approach to Wellbeing

Appendix A
Anti-Bullying Response Pathway

Suggested pathway, schools can modify to suit without changing the intent

1. Policy Access and awareness

Policy on the schools website; articles and resources on bullying made available through newsletter and other means.

2. Initial disclosure made, first response

School becomes aware of an incident involving possible bullying. Physical contact stopped (if this involves physical action). Safe environment established for the victim.

3. Life threatening incident or Risk of Significant Harm involved?

Yes Go to Point 6 below
No Go to Point 4 below

4. Information gathered on Bullying Record Keeping and Investigation form

Completed by staff member - copy to principal. Pay attention to repeated offences, intent to harm, imbalance of power.

5. Is this bullying?

Yes Go to Point 6 below
No Go to behaviour management as per school policy

6. Informing appropriate personnel

Principal informs relevant staff (teacher, leadership team etc).

7. Formal information gathering

Principal or delegate collects statements from interviews. Investigation Form contains advice.

8. Case Management instituted by principal ('nominated person')

Anti-bullying plan adopted (see Appendix B). Principal and senior staff agree on a written anti-bullying action plan to stop the bullying. Includes support for the victim. Parents of victim involved. In secondary schools the Pastoral Care Coordinator or Year Coordinator will be involved and may be the 'nominated person'.

9. Situation monitored

'Nominated person' reports as required in the anti-bullying action plan to principal or delegate.

10. Review of plan's effectiveness

Has the plan and the actions stopped the bullying?

Yes All records retained, monitoring continues at a lower level.

No Matter referred to the school's Education Consultant. Education Consultant discusses response with Assistant Director – Education Services. School principal involved. Plan may be modified, additional support may be offered, suspension and or expulsion may be considered or police may be involved.

Appendix B

St Mary's School Anti-Bullying Action Plan - Headings

- Specific to each situation or person.
 - Based on addressing issues identified in the Investigation Form.
 - Includes parent involvement and agreement, signatures required.
 - Role of the 'Nominated Person' clearly outlined. Their role in monitoring, assisting and addressing the bullying clearly listed in the plan.
 - Roles of supporting staff clearly outlined.
 - Various support measures for victim listed (counselling, peer support, teacher contact, safe zones etc).
 - Monitoring mechanisms outlined.
 - Sanctions and restrictions for the perpetrator(s) listed.
 - Strategies for the bully listed (behaviour plan, assistance with empathy, counselling, family support, lunch restrictions etc)
 - Class teacher or Year Coordinator's supporting role.
 - First and second review points (actual date) indicated. Convened by the 'Nominated Person'.
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Appendix C

Bullying Record Keeping and Investigation Tool

Sample, schools may use other record keeping formats as long as this information is covered on the form. Regard this form as a minimum standard.

Bullying is a serious offence and is not acceptable in our school. All school employees are required to report alleged violations and every act of bullying will be duly investigated, and parents/carers informed.

Directions:

The Bullying Record Keeping and Investigation Tool is to be used when an alleged bullying incident is reported. This document is to be confidentially maintained in accordance with the National Catholic Education Commission and National Council of Independent Schools' Associations Privacy Compliance Manual, December 2011. Upon completion, the Bullying Record Keeping and Investigation Tool is to be filed in the appropriate student records and the incident entered into the *electronic database*.

School: _____

Investigating Teacher: _____

Name / Homeroom of Students Involved: _____

Date/Time of Incident: _____

Was the incident life threatening or was the target a high-risk concern?

If Yes, immediately inform the principal, and as appropriate:

Seek medical assistance	Inform parent/carers	Contact the police and/or school liaison police	Inform the Child Protection Helpline	Inform the Assistant Director, School Resources Services, CSO
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If the incident is not life threatening or the child is not a high-risk concern, continue completing this document.

If additional sheets are necessary, print the appropriate sections and attach to this form.

Where did the incident occur? Please circle:

On bus/transport	In playground	In classroom	Outside school	Other
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Who reported the alleged incident? Please circle:

The alleged victim(s)	Other student(s)	Parent/carer	Member of staff	Member of wider school community	Other
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Describe the incident:

Identify the nature of the alleged bullying incident: Please circle:

Written

eg graffiti, notes, letters, writing on books, written threats, ridicule through drawings etc

Social

eg lying, spreading rumours, playing a nasty joke, mimicking and deliberate exclusion etc

Verbal

eg name calling, insults, threats, severe sarcasm, abusive comments, racist remarks etc

Physical

eg pushing, shoving, fighting, tripping, hitting, poking, spitting etc

Cyber

eg using technology such as email, mobile phones, chat rooms, social networking sites etc to verbally, socially or psychologically bully

Psychological bullying

eg intimidation, manipulation and stalking

Damage to property

eg theft of bags, clothes, money, property, tearing clothes, ripping books etc

Accessory

A person who is able to help the target, who joins the bullying either willingly or inadvertently

Bystander

Encouraging others to bully or deliberately witnessing bullying without taking affirmative action

Is there evidence of an imbalance of power in this incident through either: Please circle:

Academic ability	Age	Social status	Strength	Size	Other
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Is there evidence that this behaviour was deliberate or planned?

According to the alleged target has he/she experienced other or repeated incidences of bullying from the alleged perpetrator? (If yes, please give dates, who was involved, outcomes).

Does the alleged target fear for their safety or for their property?

What evidence supports the allegation (physical, material, digital)?

Is there concern the alleged incident may have been influenced by any of the following?
Please circle:

Race/culture	Disability	Gender	Socio-economic status	Other
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Is there any relevant background/history to this alleged incident?

What effect is the situation having on the alleged target's wellbeing including self-esteem, physical health, relationships with peers, ability to learn, absenteeism etc?

Were there any witnesses to this incident: (Identify student names and homerooms)

Description of the incident, according to the witness:

Did this student play an active role in the incident?

Indicate other investigative procedures carried out. Please circle:

Interviewed parents of
alleged target(s)
Date/Time:

Interviewed parents of
alleged perpetrators(s)
Date/time:

Interviewed parents of
witnesses/bystanders/accessories
Date/time:

Annotations on interview with parents:

After investigation, was the allegation of bullying confirmed?

Yes / No

If **'No'**, please sign below and place a copy of this document into student(s) file and refer to schools' Behaviour Management Policy as required.

If **'Yes'**, please sign below, place copy of this document into student(s) file and refer incident to the Year Coordinator, Principal or Principal's delegate.

Signed: Date:

Where will this incident report be filed for future reference?
File placement:

Appendix D
Policy Review Tool

Plan/Policy:
Reviewed by:
Date:

KEY QUESTIONS	RESPONSES	ACTIONS
Has the plan/policy clearly identified the issue it will address?		
Does the plan/policy clearly state procedures for how to respond to the issue?		
How have the plan/policy and procedures been widely disseminated to all members of the school community?		
Have there been any recent changes to Church documents affecting the plan/policy?		
Have there been any recent changes to Federal and/or State legislation affecting the plan/policy?		
Which key diocesan policies, strategies and priorities are relevant to and have been consulted within the plan/policy?		
How does the policy/plan reflect the vision and mission of our school?		
Is there recent and relevant research affecting the plan/policy that needs to be included?		

KEY QUESTIONS	RESPONSES	ACTIONS
What current data has been collected to inform the plan/policy?		
Have there been any significant events within the school affecting the plan/policy since the last review?		
Have there been any significant changes to the student population affecting plan/policy since the last review?		
What are the key trends that affect this school community?		
How does the plan/policy take into account the views of the people it will affect?		
How have new staff been informed of this plan/policy?		
When will the plan/policy be next reviewed?		

Appendix E

nine elements for a parish school approach to wellbeing



Worship:	Community:	Service:	Witness:	Evangelisation:
the authentic identity of the parish school is most fully shown when it celebrates the Eucharist gathered around the altar of its parish church	'...for where two or three are gathered in my name I am there among them.' Matthew 18:20	'I am among you as the one who serves.' Luke 2:27	the witness of early Christians to the love of Christ, shown in their love for the poor, their care for the weak and respect for human life was evident to all	the call to faith and discipleship should flow through every aspect of life in the parish school

The person of Jesus Christ stands at the heart of Catholic Education. The Apostle's Creed is the faithful summary of our common and life-giving faith.

Supporting the Foundational Beliefs and Practices – the Essential Framework

References: - Creating a Future Full of Hope - A Statement of Strategic Intent for Catholic Education in the Diocese of Lismore 2010-2014 - National Safe schools Framework