



St Michael's
Lutheran Primary School

Anti-Bullying Policy

April 2007
Reviewed Feb. 2012

Rationale

Our vision is to provide quality education within a community where God's word is central. Where all students are open to the influence of the Holy Spirit, faith is nurtured, Christian values are espoused and practised and all students have a love for learning.

Each person is recognised as a unique child of God bringing special qualities and gifts to share and so we all have a right to be respected and a responsibility to respect each other. All members of our community are committed to ensuring a safe and supportive environment, which promotes personal growth and fosters positive self-esteem for all. We aim to maintain a setting in which everyone feels valued and respected and where individual differences are appreciated, understood and accepted.

Therefore, we do not tolerate bullying or harassment in any form. Harassment is any unwanted, unwelcome, or uninvited behaviour, which makes a person feel humiliated or offended. Harassment can be seen as one form of bullying. The terms are often used interchangeably.

Definition

Bullying is:

- *repeated behaviour*
- *conducted by a seemingly more powerful person or a group*
- *against someone seemingly less powerful,*
- *behaviour which intimidates, hurts, embarrasses or upsets.*

Bullying includes the following but is not limited to:

- ***Verbal:*** *name calling, put-downs, nasty rumours, insults, degrading comments about ethnicity, religion, gender or social standing, ridiculing, or demanding threats. (also including cyber messages: SMS, email, phone and internet chat-rooms)*
- ***Physical:*** *hitting, kicking, pinching, punching, slapping, pushing, spitting, biting, scratching damaging, hiding, throwing or taking property, intimidating facial expressions and body language, rude gestures.*
- ***Social:*** *exclusion, offensive notes or graffiti, forcing others to act against their will, or trying to get other students to not like someone.*

Objectives

The objectives of our whole-school anti-bullying policy are to:

- raise awareness among staff, students and parents about bullying,
- actively counter bullying at the school,
- provide strategies to resolve conflict and respect differences,
- create a school environment where all students, staff and parents feel safe and welcome
- create a climate where it is okay to talk about bullying and ask for help,
- promote resilience, positive self-esteem and confidence and
- identify and address the stimuli or risk factors for the continuation of bullying by individuals.

Rights and Responsibilities

Rights:

- Every person has the right to feel safe. Any person who bullies another is denying them that right. This means we have to think about others (not just ourselves) in the classroom and in the playground. We all have a responsibility to consider how we speak and act towards others. Bullying takes away a person's sense of security. The right to safety means that any bullying of any kind is unacceptable.
- Every person has the right to be treated with respect and fairness. This means we show respect to other people and their property, show good manners and courtesy towards each other in the class and in the playground.
- Every person has the right to learn. This means we do not adversely affect the learning of another student.

Responsibilities:

At school it is everyone's responsibility to take the necessary steps to stop bullying behaviour. The school will not tolerate any action that undermines a person's right to feel safe, respected and to learn. All incidents are to be documented by a member of the Leadership team or Community Carer, which will be stored centrally and accessed by staff only.

Staff, students and parents have the following responsibilities:

The Leadership Team will:

- Support, promote, enact, maintain and review the anti-bullying policy and procedures biannually.

All staff will:

- Be familiar with and supportive of the school's anti-bullying policy and procedures.

Teachers will:

- Be models of caring and tolerant behaviour,
- Listen to reports of bullying,
- Act upon reports of bullying by:
 - Protecting the person being bullied from further harm,
 - Acting to stop the behaviour recurring.
- Provide opportunities and support for students involved to restore damaged relationships.

Students who are bullied will:

- Communicate that they are feeling upset with the behaviour,
- Ask for help from a staff member or a student they trust, or their parents.

Students who bully will:

- Be accountable for their behaviours,
- Work with school personnel and if appropriate the victim/s,
- Be provided with support and assistance to practise alternative behaviours.

Student witnesses to bullying will:

- Intervene if they are able,
- Ask for help from a teacher.

Parents will:

- Listen sympathetically to reports of bullying,
- Speak to relevant school personnel (not the alleged student/s or parents concerned),
- Work with the school in seeking a solution and
- Be involved in formal restorative conferences should the school deem this appropriate.

Parent witnesses will:

- Be limited to intervention where appropriate,
- Seek teacher assistance and
- Support the student being bullied.

Management and Prevention of Bullying Incidents

Management:

The management strategy we apply is the "**Restorative Justice**" approach. Although this approach is not based on sanctions or punishments, the school has a range of such measures available, up to and including suspension or exclusion which are in accord with our **Behaviour Management Policy** and which may be used in response to bullying.

All parties are expected to treat each other with respect and dignity, and ensure the confidentiality of any issues that may arise.

Teachers' responsibilities:

- Teachers to be familiar with the school's anti-bullying policy and procedures.
- The non-acceptance of bullying is to be discussed in class, making students aware of their rights and responsibilities with regard to the **Anti-Bullying Policy**.
- Continue teaching strategies (R-7) using common language to develop resilience to bullying, using resources agreed upon. (i.e. to be incorporated into the first Unit of Inquiry each year)
- Attend to reported instances of bullying behaviour.
- Treat information regarding bullying confidentially.

Action to reported bullying:

- Endeavour to protect all children and staff from further harm.
- Interview all involved people to ascertain their version of what happened in a manner that is safe and confidential.
- Implement Restorative approaches at the earliest stage of the continuum as is appropriate. This will involve the negotiation and input of students directly involved – the recipient of the inappropriate behaviour and the perpetrator. This may result in outcomes/consequences for the wrongdoer and future directional guidance for all involved.
- Provide support and provision of services as necessary to follow through on outcomes for all involved persons. This will include either immediate and/or subsequent opportunities for relationships to be restored.
- Record notes on the incident and file accordingly.
- Monitor the agreed outcomes of the situation.
- Where necessary, speak to the class regarding the incident/s and including them as appropriate.
- Where appropriate and using discretion, work with parents of the affected children to address issues that have been identified.

Challenging incidents - physical violence or intimidation:

- Immediate call for assistance from a member of the Leadership team or other staff with walkie talkie or seek help if required from other staff on duty – or send a messenger.
- Move student onlookers away.
- Separate students with minimal physical contact.
- Apply the Restorative Justice approach by conducting a formal conference.
- Apply **Behaviour Management Policy** guidelines.

Prevention

Prevention programs/strategies include the following but are not limited to:

- Discuss the issue of bullying regularly at staff meetings and provide training to all staff, help staff be aware of bullying issues, student attitudes, the need to take action and of their role in implementing the policy.
- Class meetings to discuss problem-solving measures. Focus on restoring relationships and repairing damage with negotiated consequences rather than punishment.
- Preventative social skills training - (e.g. playing games well, giving and receiving compliments, taking risks and joining in, cooperating and respecting other people's decisions.)
- Self-protective behaviours - ignoring verbal put downs, enlisting adult or peer support,
- learn assertive responses, walking away, helping others being bullied. Change the "don't do" culture.
- Model and teach students to value and respect others.
- Preventative support systems - peer support (such as House Captains, School Captains, and SRC) to assist in making the school safer by reporting bullying incidents and assisting students who may be targets of bullying.
- Teach bystander students to challenge bullying. Provide safe places, buddies and a Restorative Justice Program.
- Whole class workshops on Restorative Justice/parent workshops
- Intensive small group work, by the Community Carer, for students who bully (conflict resolution, anger management) and students who are bullied (assertiveness training and self-protective behaviours).
- Teachers to be assisted by a member of the Leadership team and/or Community Carer.
- Rewarding positive action and appropriate behavior.

Induction of new students and new staff

- Class teachers to introduce new students to the desired outcomes and the prevention programs.
- Teachers to practise regular restorative actions in their classroom, introducing new students to the ideas as appropriate.
- Principal to discuss restorative actions with new staff.