Melbourne Archdiocese
Catholic Schools

St Catherine's Primary School Bullying Prevention Policy

(including cyberbullying)

Introduction

At St Catherine's the dignity of the human person is the foundation of all Catholic social teaching and is 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 school.

The prevention of and responses to incidents of bullying, inappropriate use of technology and disrespectful behaviour are more readily achieved in a caring and supportive school culture that promotes positive relationships and reflects Gospel values. Bullying, cyber-bullying, harassment, racism, aggression and violence are not tolerated or accepted in our school as they disregard core values of our faith, including dignity, respect, justice, equity, compassion, trust and courage.

Purpose

This policy:

- encourages a culture that is firm about unacceptable behaviour
- articulates how bullying is defined and addressed; including the means taken to prevent incidents and the response taken when an incident occurs
- supports the school's Mission and Vision Statement and guidelines of Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS)
- actively promotes bullying prevention messages, alerting students and staff of the need to be vigilant.

Scope

This policy applies to the principal, all staff and volunteers (staff), students and school community at regarding the prevention and response to incidents of bullying against students.

This policy includes bullying, abuse and harassment behaviours that are exhibited online. Cyberbullying can be an extension of in person (offline) bullying or can be isolated to the online world. Throughout this policy, the word 'bullying' encompasses the term cyberbullying as per the *Online Safety Act 2021* (Cth). Additional procedures and guidelines relevant to cyberbullying can be found in the MACS ICT Acceptable Usage Policy.

This policy applies to the school environment, including but not limited to the physical; the online; or virtual places, used during or outside school hours (as per the VRQA definition of school environment). In accordance with MO 1359, all forms of bullying, abuse and harassment of students in the school environment, on campus, online and in other locations (provided by the school) are considered relevant in this policy.

Principles

This policy is founded in the beliefs that:

- every person has the right to be treated respectfully and feel safe from any form of verbal, physical and emotional abuse
- all members of school community must be aware of the possibility of bullying and take action to prevent bullying if it is reasonably foreseeable.
- the school is committed to building and nurturing a community that values and respects diversity

- particular attention must be paid to vulnerable children, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with a disability, children who are unable to live at home, international students, and LGBTIQ+ students
- parents/guardians/carers play an important role in nurturing respectful behaviour the school community is involved in the actioning of school policies and procedures
- identification and reporting of unacceptable behaviour are essential to the effective implementation of this policy
- complainant(s) will be protected from further harm
- ICT systems are used ethically and responsibly in the school environment, and in a way that minimises the opportunity for students to be harmed
- all forms of communication are respectful and human dignity is valued
- regular monitoring of school policies and procedures is necessary, and improvements are made where appropriate.

Policy

The principal, all staff, volunteers, students and parents/guardians/carers at our school have responsibilities to behave appropriately and respectfully towards other members of the school community.

Our school leadership team must implement school-wide measures to educate and inform the school community to help prevent and respond to all forms of bullying, including a specific focus on an eSafety approach to the safe and respectful use of ICT and communication systems.

The principal and staff will implement a whole-school approach to the prevention of bullying and education of school community members.

All staff at our school will respond to all reported incidents of bullying, perceived or actual, sensitively, fairly and promptly.

All staff at our school will treat all members of the school community with dignity and respect and build respectful relationships that respond effectively and sensitively to the needs of each student.

Students at our school will demonstrate respectful behaviour towards all members of the school community.

Parents/guardians/carers at our school will demonstrate and model respectful behaviour towards all members of the school community. Our school will work in partnership with parents / guardians / carers in responding to incidents of bullying.

Definitions

Bullying

Repeated unreasonable behaviour directed towards a person that creates a risk to health and safety. It occurs when an individual or a group deliberately upsets or hurts another person, their property, reputation, or social acceptance on more than one occasion. (For more definitions for specific forms of bullying please see the Procedures document.)

Communication systems

Email, video conferencing, instant messaging (public or private), electronic bulletins/noticeboards, electronic discussion/news groups, weblogs (blogs), social and professional networking (e.g., use of Facebook, TikTok, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Twitter, in accordance with age restrictions) and any other material (video / image, etc) sent electronically.

ICT systems

Systems of technology that includes a variety of hardware and software, learning and digital technologies including but not limited to computers, devices, internet and network services, local and web-based applications, peripheral or external devices such as printers or USB storage,

telephones including mobile and VOIP, and all online services including social media and instant, direct or private messaging systems.

Harassment

Language or actions that are demeaning, offensive or intimidating to a person. It can take on many forms, including sexual harassment and disability harassment. While harassment may not always be considered bullying. It is inappropriate behaviour that is also not tolerated and must have consequences.

Record

A record is information in any format created, received and maintained as evidence of business activities and decisions. A record may be digital (such as an email, Word, Excel, PowerPoint or finalised and/or scanned PDF documents) or hardcopy (paper) format.

School environment

School environment means any of the following physical, online or virtual places, used during or outside school hours: a campus of the school; online or virtual school environments made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child or student (including email, intranet systems, software applications, collaboration tools, and online services); and other locations provided by the school or through a third-party provider for a child or student to use including, but not limited to, locations used for: camps; approved homestay accommodation; delivery of education and training such as registered training organisations, TAFEs, non-school senior secondary providers or another school; or sporting events, excursions, competitions or other events.

Related policies and resources

Supporting documents

Bullying Prevention Procedures – Template for Schools
Bullying Prevention Policy for MACS Schools

Related MACS policies

St Catherine's Complaints Handling Policy
Duty of Care Policy for MACS Schools
St Catherine'sEnrolment Policy
Pastoral Care of Students Policy
Student Behaviour Policy for MACS Schools
ICT Acceptable Usage Policy
Code of Conduct
Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Resources

Privacy Compliance Manual (2020). Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) (CEVN website)

Department of Education and Training (Vic). 2021. Bullying Prevention and Response Policy

Department of Education and Training (Vic). 2021. Cybersafety and Responsible Use of Digital Technologies

Department of Education and Training (Vic). 2020. Mobile Phones - Student Use.

Bully Stoppers – a resource containing information and advice for the school community, including students, parents and school staff.

Bullying. No Way! – a website for Australian schools, managed by the Safe and Supportive School Communities Working Group (SSSC) which has representatives from all states and territories, including the Catholic and independent schooling sectors.

eSmart – assists schools to develop a culture that promotes the safe, smart and responsible use of technology.

eSafety Commissioner – provides a range of up-to-date information and resources, coupled with a complaints system to assist children who experience serious cyberbullying and image-based abuse.

Australian Student Wellbeing Framework (2018)

Student Wellbeing Hub
Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV). (2018). Positive Behaviour Guidelines
Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV). Child Safety Commitment Statement
Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools. (2018). eXcel: Wellbeing for learning in Catholic school communities
Catholic Education Melbourne. (2017). Horizons of Hope: Vision and Context
Catholic Education Melbourne. (2017). Horizons of Hope: Wellbeing
Catholic Education Melbourne. (2017). Horizons of Hope: Learning Diversity
Catholic Education Melbourne. (2018). Identity and growth: A perspective for Catholic schools
Public Record Office Victoria Recordkeeping Standards

Legislation and standards

Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic.)
Ministerial Order 1359 – Child Safe Standards

Policy information table

Responsible director	Director, Learning and Regional Services
Policy owner	General Manager, Student Wellbeing
Approving authority	MACS Board
Assigned board committee	Child Safety and Risk Management
Approval date	October 2023
Risk rating	Extreme
Date of next review	April 2025
Publication details	CEVN, school website

POLICY DATABASE INFORMATION	
Assigned Framework	Care, Safety and Welfare of Students
Related documents	Refer to the list of supporting and related documents above
Superseded documents	Anti-bullying Policy (including cyberbullying) – v2.0 – 2022
New policy	