ANTI-BULLYING POLICY
FOR
OUR LADY OF STAR OF THE SEA TERRIGAL

March 2015
Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School Policy Against Bullying

Purpose

At Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School, we believe that all members of the community have the right to a learning and work environment free from intimidation, humiliation and hurt. We all share a responsibility to foster, promote and restore right relationships. We believe that bullying is unacceptable and we [students, staff and parents] all share a responsibility for preventing it.

This policy builds on the school's Pastoral Care and Behaviour Management Policies to provide clear procedures and strategies to prevent, reduce and respond to bullying.

Policy Framework

Flowing from the Christian vision expressed in the Diocesan Pastoral Care Policy, we are called to establish relationships which are grounded in love, compassion, reconciliation and justice. In witnessing Christian values we reject ideas, beliefs and behaviours which marginalise or victimise people.

Definition

Whilst there is no universally accepted definition of bullying, there is general consensus that bullying behaviour:
- is deliberate and often repeated
- intends to cause fear, distress, hurt or harm to another
- is action by a more powerful individual or group over a less powerful individual or group

Bullying takes many forms, all of which will cause distress. Examples of bullying include:

- **Physical** - hitting, pushing, tripping, kicking, spitting on others etc
- **Verbal** - teasing, using offensive names, ridiculing, spreading rumours etc
- **Non-Verbal** - writing offensive notes or graffiti about others, using e-mail, text messaging and social media to hurt others, rude gestures etc
- **Exclusion** - deliberately excluding others from group, refusing to sit next to someone etc
- **Extortion** - threatening to take someone's possessions, food or money etc
- **Property** - stealing, hiding, damaging or destroying property etc
- **Cyber** - any form of bullying which is carried out through electronic means such as mobile phones, email, chat room, social networking, ‘sms’, web page etc

How do we prevent bullying at Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School?

We believe based on research that prevention strategies through education that involve the whole school community [students, staff and parents] are more likely to reduce bullying. Therefore, at Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School we recognise that we all share the responsibility to prevent bullying. The Catholic Worldview which represents the antithesis of bullying will be taught explicitly, continually modelled, clearly demonstrated and generously affirmed across all facets of school life.
At Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School we adopt the following strategies to prevent bullying:

- Explicit teaching of positive behaviours embedded within the curriculum addressing positive relationships, conflict resolution, resilience, bystander action etc
  - The school has adopted the Restorative Justice approach to behaviour management. This approach focuses on the children recognising their behaviour choices and reconciling with those they have hurt or upset.
  - Each fortnight the school has a school wide behaviour focus that is explicitly taught in classrooms
  - For several weeks each year the school focuses on anti-bullying by highlighting within the school community the current school procedures that are in place and successful strategies the students can use. This is usually held in the first half of Term 2 and involves students, staff and parents in a range of opportunities and initiatives.
  - Each grade completes at least one unit of work each year from the PDHPE curriculum that focuses on how to develop positive personal relationships and teach strategies to combat bullying.

- Regularly recognising and acknowledging students who demonstrate appropriate behaviours that promote and restore right relationships
  - Each week children from each class are recognised for their efforts to make our school a better place through their good behaviour. A Kid’s Matter Award is awarded for good behaviour usually in line with the fortnightly school wide behaviour focus. A Christian Citizen Award is given to children that display good Christian values.

- Vigilant classroom, playground and transition supervision
  - Teachers actively supervise children at all times. Teachers rostered onto supervisory duties for the day and turn up promptly to duty. Teachers patrol the designated area of supervision and will keep an eye on playground ‘hotspots’ – toilets, stairs, canteen area and play equipment and visit these areas regularly throughout their supervision duty.

- Provision of safe and structured playground spaces and activities at break times
  - The children have access to equipment at each break time. The playground has been divided into specific play spaces for each stage group. A variety of activities are available at break times including handball, basketball, soccer and other team ball sports.
  - The school also provides some quieter spaces for children to sit and talk, reflect and pray or play board and card games.

At Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School students are encouraged to:

- take some positive action to stop the bullying if they observe an incident
- report the bullying incident to a teacher as soon as possible
- make it clear to their peers that bullying is not accepted

At Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School, staff are expected to:

- take some positive action to stop the bullying when they observe an incident
- pass on information about any reported or observed bullying behaviours to the Principal / Assistant Principal / Classroom Teacher/ for further action
- Proactively teach strategies that increase awareness and responses to bullying for all students.

At Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School, parents are encouraged to:

- listen to their child and encourage their child to speak to their teacher / or the teacher on duty at school
- contact the school if they have a concern and speak to the teacher in the first instance, or if necessary the Principal or Assistant Principal if appropriate.

How do we respond to bullying at Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School?

Bullying is viewed as a major breach of the school rules and behavioural expectations and therefore follow up action will align with our School’s Behaviour Management and Student Discipline Policy.
Any reports of bullying will be investigated and appropriate action will be taken promptly. The response to bullying will include some or all of the following:

1. guidance and other support for the recipient of the bullying (eg re-skilling and re-teaching of strategies, resilience and social skills, counselling, conflict management skills, social networking etc)

2. guidance and support for ‘bystanders’, ‘supporters’ and witnesses of the bullying (eg intervention strategies etc) age appropriate and consistent sanctions for the student who bullied

3. interventions and support for the student who bullied included in a Behaviour Support Plan (eg specific interventions developed to reduce the bullying behaviour, teaching of replacement behaviours, reinforcers etc)

4. where appropriate informing parents as stated in the policy and involving them in any action and follow up

5. In responding to bullying complaints there are occasions to discern whether incidents are in fact bullying in nature – or a grievance where in appropriate behaviours have taken place. Whilst neither has a place in the school, there are incidences where bullying hasn’t really been occurring. In such circumstances, the school works with all parties, including the parents to support. This includes awareness raising of the nature of incidents and whether this should be interpreted as bullying behaviour.

Procedures for investigating bullying and follow up

In discerning appropriate responses to bullying, school leaders need to balance the collective welfare of the school community with the individual needs of the student.

- Preliminary interview(s) will be conducted to ascertain the specific nature of the bullying. These interviews should be with individuals initially (ie student being bullied, students witnessing bullying, student engaging in bullying behaviour, staff etc)

- The initial interviews should focus on the safety of individuals. This should include:
  - a clear statement on the consequences if the bullying continues or if there are any reprisals as a result of the reporting of the incident
  - immediate preventative actions that will be implemented to avoid further incidents.

- Decisions will be made as to the level of severity of the incident and whether the parents of those involved need to be informed.

- Follow up interviews should focus on appropriate strategies to assist and support all involved within a Behaviour Support Plan. This Plan will specifically identify the inappropriate behaviours, name the replacement behaviours, outline strategies to support the replacement behaviours and reinforcers (both negative and positive) when behaviours occur.

- A record of the separate interviews should be kept.

- Regular monitoring and follow up with the students involved is necessary. (for example daily, prior to and after break times etc)

- Review of the Behaviour Support Plan will take place to modify strategies and supports.
• Any further recurrence of bullying may result in an issue of warning re suspension and could lead to the implementation of suspension procedures and, if necessary, removal of the student from the school through:
  - Suspension pending negotiated transfer,
  - Negotiated transfer or
  - Expulsion

POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed not less frequently than once every three years.

POLICY DATES

Date of completion of formulation and adoption: March 2015
Date of next review: March 2018

authorised by

Robert Peers
School Principal