

# **Our Lady Star of the Sea School**



## ***Anti-Bullying Guidelines***

*Promoting Safety, Positive Behaviour and Social Inclusion*

**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.

**OUR MISSION STATEMENT**

At Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic School Terrigal, with Mary as our guiding light, we celebrate our Catholic identity and foster a sense of belonging in our community as we educate our children to grow in the love of Christ.

In partnership with families, we will:

Educate and nurture our children in the Catholic Faith and offer the experience of following Jesus.

Provide quality education which fosters a love of learning and inspires all children to reach their potential as members of the community.

Celebrate our Catholic identity with our Parish community.

Respect and value the uniqueness of every child in our school.

**OUR CORE VALUES**

We believe in RESPECT for Other, Selves and the Environment

We continue the MISSION of Jesus to bring the GOOD News to our school community and to share this with others.

We are a welcoming community where all can experience a sense of BELONGING.

We believe in a quality LEARNING environment where all children are confident and involved learners.

We are a Catholic community of FAITH where Jesus helps us to love one another.

**WHAT IS BULLYING?**

Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful, and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. Bullying can involve: humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and all forms of harassment including that based on sex, race, disability, sexual orientation or practice of religion. Bullying of any form, or for any reason, can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.

Cyber-bullying refers to bullying through the use of information and communication technologies by an individual or group that is intended to harm others, or is undertaken recklessly without

concern for its impact on others. Bullying can happen anywhere: at school, travelling to and from school, in sporting teams, or in the workplace. Bullying behaviour can be:

- **verbal:** eg name calling, teasing, abuse, putdowns, sarcasm, insults, threats
- **physical:** eg hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting
- **social:** eg ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating, making inappropriate gestures
- **psychological:** eg spreading rumours, hiding or damaging possessions, malicious SMS and email messages, inappropriate use of communication technology/mobile devices.

Conflict or fights between equals and single incidents are not defined as bullying. Bullying behaviour is not:

- children not getting along well
- a situation of mutual conflict such as, teasing or disagreement
- single episodes of hurtful words or actions, or random acts of aggression or intimidation.

(Adapted from: National Safe Schools Framework (2011) and DEC NSW Website)

### **OUR SCHOOL APPROACH TO PREVENTING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR**

Our school has a three tiered approach to preventing bullying behaviour. This approach provides for differences in student responsiveness due to the variations in an individual's risk and protective factors (i.e. self-management and social skill competence). It also includes a shared responsibility with staff, parents/caregivers and the wider community in working together to teach, foster, promote and encourage positive respectful behaviour.

Our three tiered approach to preventing bullying behaviour includes:

- Prevention (Tier 1)
- Early Intervention (Tier 2)
- Specialised Intervention (Tier 3)

#### Prevention (Tier 1)

Tier 1 prevention programs are intended to support the vast majority of students, and also to identify students who require more specialised assistance (Tier 2 and Tier 3). All students and staff are explicitly taught about behaving in a safe, respectful and responsible way. The emphasis is on educating students, staff and parents/caregivers about bullying prevention and management, and encouraging positive social skills, resilience and character traits. The school currently targets Term 3 each year (Weeks 1 to 5) for specific whole school approach in anti-bullying education. Classroom and school-wide strategies are employed during, but not limited to this time. We seek to build capacity in the children to understand and respond to bullying appropriately.

#### Whole School Positive Behaviour Approaches

Our school uses a whole-school positive behaviour approach to prevent bullying such as; promoting a safe and supportive learning environment, school-wide rules and consequences, teacher professional learning, a curriculum focused on social and emotional learning (SEL), conflict resolution training, parent/caregiver education and engagement, and individual counselling. Teaching students the social and emotional learning (SEL) skills (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationships, and responsible decision-making) are essential foundational competencies that students need in order to prevent and to respond to bullying.

Our school prevention strategies include:

- promotion of the Diocesan Anti-bullying Policy and school guidelines, including on the school website
- promotion of safe, positive school communities through the implementation of policies/frameworks such as, pastoral care, behaviour support, and KidsMatter
- promotion of safe respectful learner messages in all aspects of school life: assemblies, year meetings, newsletters and in classrooms
- professional development for staff
- parent and community education relating to bullying: policies and procedures (Appendix B)
  - provision of programs that promote SEL skills such as resilience, assertiveness, conflict resolution, problem solving, 'be an upstander not a bystander' and Bullying No Way day
- classroom teachers clarify the guidelines on bullying with students each year (Appendix B)
- curriculum includes anti-bullying messages and strategies, embedded in KLAs, through wellbeing programs eg. PDHPE, Religious Education and Pastoral Care
- Student Representative Council (SRC), peer support leaders promote "No Put Downs" and "Hands Off" messages
- Vigilant classroom, playground and transition supervision

Curriculum Strategies

Prevention programs are delivered as part of the curriculum across KLAs and through Pastoral Care and wellbeing programs. Specifically, students learn about matters related to bullying in PDHPE from Years K-6, such as, positive respectful relationships, negative impacts of violence and aggression, effects on mental health, help seeking skills, resilience, the role of the upstander, conflict resolution, effective communication, cyber-safety, belonging and connectedness, risk and protective factors. Our KidsMatter framework encompasses much of this and is a reference point with other strategies for students.

Pastoral Care and Wellbeing Strategies

A range of anti-bullying initiatives are embedded into our school pastoral care and wellbeing plan, such as:

- Whole school approach each year as a specific focus in Term 3.
- Bully Upstander sessions with a focus on reporting bullying, and the importance of the upstander in stopping bullying.
- Whole school Incursion or Focus Day from which parents and teachers can draw strategies. (Usually part of the Term 3 focus).
- Public recognition, awards and rewards for positive behaviour
- Peer Support program
- Rock and Water program in Year 5.
- SRC led initiatives
- Transition support for students such as, Kindergarten, Grade Handover discussions and Year 6 to Year 7.

Early Intervention (Tier 2)

Early intervention is critical to responding effectively to bullying. Tier 2 students whose behaviours do not respond to Tier 1 supports are provided with additional preventative learning opportunities, including:

- more targeted social skills instruction
- increased adult monitoring and positive attention
- specific and regular daily feedback on their behavioural progress
- additional academic supports if required.

## Consequences

The management of bullying incidents will be in accordance with the Diocesan Anti-bullying Policy, the Behaviour Support Policy and school anti-bullying and behaviour support guidelines. The consequences for behaviour violations around bullying should include some form of relationship restoration or remediation that helps students understand the incident and develop pro-social behaviour.

The implementation of these guidelines is supervised by the Principal and delegate and includes:

- Once identified, each bully, victim and witness, will be spoken with, and all incidents of bullying will be investigated and documented as required by school leadership personnel.
- Both the bully and victim may be offered counselling, depending on the nature of the incident and person(s) involved
- Parents/caregivers should be contacted in cases of continued bullying and restorative support offered. This may include consequences where deemed appropriate.
- Consequences for students will be individually-based, and may involve:
  - Social skills support
  - Reinforcement of positive behaviours
  - Class/Year meetings
  - Support structures eg. Check in Check Out, Mentor
  - Ongoing monitoring of identified bullies and victim
  - Rewards for positive behaviour
  - Withdrawal of privileges
  - Community service
  - Exclusion from playground
  - In-school suspension
  - School suspension
  - Counselling support.

## Specialised Intervention (Tier 3)

Tier 3 students whose behaviours do not respond to Tier I and II supports are provided with intensive preventative strategies, including:

- individualised academic and/or behaviour intervention planning. This will include a monitoring and evaluative phase for parents and school.
- more comprehensive, student-centered and case management/wrap-around processes
- school-family-community mental health supports as required.

## Our School's Response

Bullying may be reported:

- In person by a student to a teacher
- By a parent via phone, email (via school-based email protocols), or in person
- By a teacher to another teacher such as, the class teacher, the Pastoral Care Coordinator, the AP or the Principal.

## Recording Incidents of Bullying

All incidents of bullying that have been reported will be recorded on a confidential database accessed by school leaders, and relevant staff notified. The report will include the type of bullying, number of incidents and the action taken by staff. This information will form the basis of data collection for the review of bullying in the school by the Leadership Team. General behaviour and bullying reports will be monitored and reviewed by the School Leaders.

### Evidence Based Responses

Our school uses a range of evidence based methods to respond to bullying as outlined below. Methods of intervention will vary according to the incident and persons involved.

- Restorative Justice practice
- Ongoing monitoring with built in supports and accountabilities
- Individual Behaviour Plans
- Formal communication processes
- Counselling referral

### Referral and the School Counsellor

Students will be referred to the AP or Principal and/or the School Counsellor for support, depending on the nature of the incident and person(s) involved. Contact the school if you require school counselling support for your child or young person. For high risk cases a referral can be made to the CSO Wellbeing or Child Protection Teams for additional support.

### Communication with Parents/Caregivers

Classroom teachers will make initial contact with parents/caregivers as required in a timely manner for matters deemed appropriate at an early stage. For severe or repeated matters, the Principal or Assistant Principal will make contact. The communication will focus on what the school can do and what the family can do to support the child or young person. When required the family may be referred to community agency/personnel for support.

Preventing and responding to bullying is a shared responsibility of all staff, students, parents/caregivers and members of the wider school community.

### Incidents involving Assault, Threats, Intimidation, or Harassment

Staff are to report these types of incidents to the Principal or AP. They will assess the situation where a decision will be made of the appropriate action to be taken. Reports will be made to the Police Youth Liaison Officer, Local Area Command and the CSO as required.

### Reporting to the CSO Child Protection or Wellbeing Team

Staff are to report concerns of child wellbeing to the Principal, AP. The Principal in consultation with the AP and/or Counsellor will assess the situation and a decision will be made on the appropriate action to be taken and if a referral is warranted to the CSO.

### Complaints Handling Policy

The Principal deals with formal complaints by following the procedures outlined in the Diocesan Complaints Handling Policy. Parents/caregivers can contact the Catholic Schools Office, Diocese of Broken Bay if dissatisfied with the school's response