



ANTIBULLYING POLICY

Rationale

“ We recognise the unique qualities of each person in our school and strive to create an environment that has a sense of security, happiness and well-being.”

Vision Statement 1998

Aims

St. Columba’s School aims to promote positive interpersonal relations between all members of the school community that fosters growth in responsibility and self-respect, and specifically, aims to prevent bullying and harassment at school. The absence of bullying is essential in providing a safe, secure and happy learning environment for all members of the St. Columba’s school community.

This policy document defines what is meant by bullying and describes how the school proposes to prevent and deal with bullying. The strategies outlined and common procedures in place, ensure the rights, safety and well being of each individual in the school community – students, teachers and parents/guardians.

Guidelines for Implementation

At St. Columba’s we believe that bullying is **repeated** physical, verbal or emotional victimisation that is targeted at an individual by another individual or group with the **intention to damage** them or their reputation. Bullying is not the same thing as conflict, violence or disagreement, although it may involve all of these.

Types of bullying include:

Verbal	Name calling, teasing, ridicule, threats
Physical	Hitting, punching, kicking, damage to property
Emotional	Stares, looks, gestures
Exclusion	Leaving someone out, walking away
Coercion	Blackmailing, forcing someone against their will, removal of property
Gender/sexual	Opposite sex teasing, unwanted advances
Technology/Cyber	Phone calling, text messaging, e-mailing, tampering with passwords, putting images and text about another person on facebook or other social networking sites

Common elements in bullying are:-

- A desire to inflict hurt.
- That desire is expressed as a verbal, physical or written action.
- The action is hurtful and plays upon the victim’s vulnerability.
- There is power inequality between the bully and victim.
- The bully’s actions are not justified, although the bully may try to present an argument of justification.
- The actions or bullying behaviour are repeated and targeted deliberately.
- There is evident enjoyment felt by the bully.

Bullying can occur from student to student, student to teacher, teacher to student, teacher to teacher, parent to student, parent to teacher or parent to parent. Bullying among any of these groups at St. Columba's is not acceptable.

Bullying behaviours can range from repeated petty 'bossiness' to severe repeated verbal or physical violence over time. In dealing with bullying it is important that the remedial actions taken be guided by the severity of the offending behaviour. It is noted that in the most extreme cases legal action by the victim or police may result.

Implementation: Objectives

We believe that everyone has the right to:

- Feel safe
- Be safe
- To teach
- To learn
- To be respected

Therefore we endorse an anti-bullying code.

- Everyone in our school has the right to feel safe and be safe.
- Our school is a NO BULLYING ZONE
- Respect the right of the teacher to teach and the right of students to learn.
- Observe school, classroom and playground rules.
- Respect the belongings of others.
- Respect each others' personal space.
- Use language that is respectful.
- Not stand by and watch as another person is bullied, and not do anything to prevent it
- We have a right to D.O.B. (**Don't Obey Bullies**)
- Students can take action. Telling is being responsible.
- Bullying is dealt with seriously.

Actions

This policy presents both preventative and remedial actions for addressing bullying.

Prevention

St. Columba's has and continues to develop a culture that deters bullying at school. Positive behaviour is reinforced through the use of praise, class points, awards etc. Specific programs that develop positive social skills and resilience include:

- Bounce Back
- Circle Time
- Drug Education
- Healthy Relationships
- Assertive Discipline

Remedial Action

Where the school staff become aware of a possible case of bullying, either through a report or direct observation, the following steps will be taken as soon as possible.

- a) The appropriate teacher will investigate the incident to determine the circumstances involved. This investigation generally will involve discussion with the victim, bully, other students who may have witnessed the incident(s), and the parents of the victim and bully where the matter is considered to be sufficiently serious.
- b) Where it is clear from the initial investigation that a case of bullying has occurred the Deputy Principal or Principal will meet with both the victim and bully (and when appropriate,

respective parents) to discuss steps required to address the problem. Depending on the circumstances a joint meeting with both parties, or separate meetings may be held.

- c) The situation will be monitored with the parents and other teachers and follow up action taken as required.
- d) If, despite meetings held with the bully and with the parents, bullying behaviours continue, then this will result in the bully being isolated from other children or in most severe cases suspended from school.

Meeting with Victim

- Discuss the problem
 - Give support and reassurance
 - Ask what is required
 - Seek permission to take agreed action
 - Agree on a date for review of progress
1. Provide immediate protection.
 2. If appropriate implement a buddy program.
 3. Provide social skill training complemented by a self-esteem program for the victim. Key areas to cover in the program are:
 - Awareness of own feelings, emotions and those of other people.
 - How to be positive about oneself without boasting.
 - How to work co-operatively with other people.
 - How to make and maintain friendships.
 - How to deal with conflict
 - How to stand up for oneself.
 4. Provide assertive training which includes the following:
 - Positive ignoring.
 - Strong body language, say “NO” like you mean it.
 - Ask an adult for support.
 - Broken record: “ I don’t like it when you …” (repeat several times to the bully maintaining a similar tone)
 - Fogging: “maybe’, ‘so’, ‘could be’ (but not providing the bully with bait)
 - Positive self talk and creative visualisation (the child makes a positive self image in their mind of the incident while saying in the mind ‘I’m OK, I can handle this.”
 - Finding an exit (being assertive doesn’t always mean confronting the bully).

Meeting with Bully(ies)

- Put the problem on the table
 - Stress the behaviour and its effects, not on people involved (no blame)
 - Stress that it is their power and their responsibility to change negative behaviour.
 - Brainstorm workable ideas and solutions (write them down)
 - Avoid getting into a cause and effect phase eg ‘he hit me”
 - Emphasise that they are responsible for their own behaviour.
 - Agree on action to be taken to address the problem.
 - A behaviour modification contract will be implemented
 - Agree on a date for review of progress.
1. A social skills program may also need to be implemented to teach positive behaviours. Skills that may be focused on include:
 - Awareness of one’s feelings and the feelings of other people.
 - How to feel positive about oneself without asserting control and power over other people.
 - How to work co-operatively with other people.
 - How to use positive body language.

- How to establish and maintain friendships in a positive manner.
- How to distinguish between aggressive and assertive behaviour.

2. Where appropriate, an anger management program may be implemented.

In the case of very young children, Prep to Year 2, bullying behaviour may occur, but the intention cannot be clear. The above process will be put into place in a modified way depending on the circumstances of the events.

A written record of reported and investigated cases of bullying shall be kept at the school.

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the schools cyclical review process.

Policy ratified by School Educational Board: 07/05/2014

Next review date: 2016

Person responsible: Principal and Administration Officer