



Student Duty of Care

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy and Procedures

Policy Introduction

We are committed to meeting our Student Duty of Care obligations.

Purpose

This Policy describes CESL's strategies to prevent children and young persons from bullying other children and young persons, and how incidents of bullying are to be managed.

Scope

This Policy applies to all staff, volunteers and contractors at the school.

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff must:

- model appropriate behaviour at all times
- deal with all reported and observed incidents of bullying in accordance with this Policy
- ensure that any incident of bullying that they observe or is reported to them, is recorded appropriately

- be vigilant in monitoring children and young persons that have been identified as either persistent bullies or victims
- acknowledge the right of parents/carers to speak with the school if they believe their child is being bullied.

Policy Statement

St Mary's School, Echuca recognises its duty to children and young persons to provide a safe and positive learning environment where individual differences and diversity within the school are respected and accepted.

Bullying is not tolerated at St Mary's School, Echuca.

It is our policy that:

- bullying is managed through a “whole-of-school community” approach involving children and young persons, staff and parents/carers
- bullying prevention strategies are implemented within the school on a continuous basis with a focus on teaching age-appropriate skills and strategies to empower staff, children and young persons and parents/carers to recognise bullying and respond appropriately
- bullying response strategies are tailored to the circumstances of each incident
- staff establish positive role models emphasising our no-bullying culture
- bullying prevention and intervention strategies are reviewed on an annual basis against best practice.

Procedures

Bullying Prevention Strategies

St Mary's School, Echuca recognises that the implementation of whole-school prevention strategies is the most effective way of eliminating, or at least minimising incidents of bullying within our community.

The following initiatives form part of our overall bullying prevention strategy and our strategy to create a “no-bullying” culture within the school:

Bullying Prevention Strategies

The school recognises that the implementation of whole-School prevention strategies is the most effective way of eliminating, or at least minimising incidents of bullying within our community.

The following initiatives form part of our overall bullying prevention strategy and our strategy to create a “no-bullying” culture within the School:

- a structured curriculum that provides age-appropriate information and skills relating to bullying (including cyberbullying) and bullying prevention, to children and young persons over the course of the academic year
- education, training and professional development of staff in bullying prevention and response strategies
- regular provision of information to parents/carers, to raise awareness of bullying as a School community issue to equip them to recognise signs of bullying, as well as to provide them with clear paths for raising any concerns they may have relating to bullying directly with the School
- promotion of a supportive environment that encourages the development of positive relationships and communication between staff, children and young persons and parents/carers
- promotion of responsible bystander behaviour amongst children and young persons, staff and parents/carers
- reporting of incidents of alleged bullying by children and young persons, bystanders, parents/carers and staff are encouraged
- regular risk assessments of bullying within the School are undertaken by surveying children and young persons to identify bullying issues that may ordinarily go unnoticed by staff
- records of reported bullying incidents are maintained and analysed, in order to identify persistent bullies and/or victims and to implement targeted prevention strategies where appropriate
- anti-bullying posters are displayed strategically within the School
- promotion of children and young people awareness and a “no-bullying” environment by participating in events such as the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence.

Reporting Bullying

Children and Young Persons and their parents/carers are sometimes reluctant to pursue bullying incidents, for fear that it will only make matters worse.

A key part of the school's bullying prevention and intervention strategy is to encourage reporting of bullying incidents as well providing assurance to children and young persons who experience

bullying (and parents/carers) that:

- bullying is not tolerated within the school
- their concerns will be taken seriously
- the school has a clear strategy for dealing with bullying issues.

Bullying incidents can be advised to the school verbally (or in writing) through any of the following avenues:

- informing a trusted teacher
- informing the school counsellor
- informing a student's year level coordinator or equivalent
- informing the Deputy Principal or the Principal.

Responding to Bullying

Bullying behaviours vary enormously in their extent and intent and, as a consequence, each incident needs to be dealt with on its facts.

In all circumstances the school:

- takes bullying incidents seriously
- provides assurance to the victim that they are not at fault and their confidentiality will be respected
- takes time to properly investigate the facts including discussing the incident with the victim, the bully and any bystanders
- takes time to understand the concerns of individuals involved
- maintains records of reported bullying incidents
- will escalate its response when dealing with persistent bullies and/or severe incidents.

Actions that may be taken when responding to bullying include:

- notification of/consultation with parents/carers
- offering counselling to persistent bullies/victims
- implementing effective follow up strategies
- disciplinary action, at the Principal/Responsible person's discretion, including suspension and expulsion of persistent bullies, or in cases of severe incidents.

Implementation

This Policy is implemented through a combination of:

- staff training
- children and young person and parent/carer education and information
- effective incident reporting procedures
- effective management of bullying incidents when reported
- the creation of a “no-bullying” culture within the school community
- effective record keeping procedures
- initiation of corrective actions where necessary.

Breach

Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action.

Definitions

Bullying

Bullying is the repeated and intentional behaviour of causing fear, distress or harm towards another person that involves an imbalance of power. It can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and harassment. In any bullying incident there are likely to be three parties involved: the bully, the person being bullied, and bystanders.

Bullying can take many forms including:

- **Physical bullying** which involves physical actions such as hitting, pushing, obstructing or using an object to hurt or intimidate someone. Damaging, stealing or hiding personal belongings is also a form of physical bullying.
- **Psychological bullying** which is when words or actions are used to cause psychological harm. Examples of psychological bullying include name calling, teasing or making fun of someone because of their actions, appearance, physical characteristics or cultural background.
- **Indirect bullying** which is when deliberate acts of exclusion or spreading of untrue stories are used to hurt or intimidate someone.
- **Cyberbullying** which is the ongoing abuse of power to threaten or harm another person using technology. Cyberbullying can occur in chat rooms, on social networking sites, through emails or on mobile phones.

What Is not Bullying

There are many negative situations which, whilst being potentially distressing for children and young persons, are not bullying. These include:

- **Mutual Conflict Situations** which arise where there is disagreement between children and young persons but not an imbalance of power. Mutual conflict situations need to be closely monitored as they may evolve into a bullying situation
- **One-Off Acts** (of aggression or meanness) including single incidents of loss of temper, shouting or swearing do not normally constitute bullying.

Signs of Bullying

Major behavioural changes in a children and young person may be indicative of bullying. Such behavioural changes may include:

- crying at night and having nightmares
- refusing to talk when asked “What’s wrong?”
- having unexplained bruises, cuts or scratches
- an unwillingness or refusal to go to school
- feeling ill in the mornings
- a decline in quality of school work
- becoming withdrawn and lacking confidence
- beginning to bully siblings
- acting unreasonably.

Parents/carers are encouraged to recognise signs of bullying and notify the school through a trusted staff member immediately (such as a class teacher or counsellor), if they suspect their child is a victim of bullying.

Policy Administration

This policy is scheduled for review 3 yearly or more frequently where appropriate. All policies have been reviewed and approved by the relevant Executive Leadership Team member.

Reviewed date: 2025