

# Bullying Prevention Policy – Students

Audience: Whole School

## Rationale

Members of the St Paul's Anglican Grammar School community have the right to an environment in which they feel safe, happy and respected and which promotes learning, personal growth and positive self-esteem. The School is committed to providing this and each individual has the responsibility to ensure that this occurs.

All members of the school community (students, teaching and non-teaching staff, parents and visitors) have the right to feel safe and free from all forms of intimidation.

The purpose of this policy is:

- To reinforce within the school community what bullying is, and the fact that it is unacceptable.
- To help everyone within the school community to be alert to signs and evidence of bullying and to know that they have a responsibility to report it to staff whether as observer or victim.
- To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up appropriately and that support is given to both victims and bullies.
- To seek parental and peer-group support and co-operation at all times.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the School's Social Media Policy, Student Mobile Electronic Devices Policy, Junior School Cybersafety Guidelines, the Junior School Student Code of Conduct, the Student Discipline Guidelines and the Secondary School Student Acceptable Use of Digital Technologies Agreement.

## Definition of Bullying

Bullying occurs when one or more people deliberately and repeatedly upset or hurt another person, damage their property, reputation or social acceptance.

Bullying can take many forms:

- direct physical bullying involving behaviour such as hitting, tripping and pushing or damaging property.
- direct verbal bullying includes behaviour such as name-calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks.
- indirect bullying is harder to recognise and often takes place 'behind someone's back'. This type of bullying is designed to damage a person's reputation or cause humiliation. It includes behaviour such as lying and spreading rumours, playing nasty jokes, mimicking and encouraging social exclusion.

- cyberbullying is when technology (such as mobile phones, social networking sites and email) are used to create, display or send information or images which are used to harm or harass another person.

There are also many distressing behaviours that are **not** regarded as bullying, even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management. These can include:

- children not getting along well
- mutual conflict (conflict where both parties are responsible)
- social rejection or dislike
- single-episode acts of nastiness or meanness
- random acts of aggression and intimidation.

## Responsibilities of the School

At St Paul's, we want to create and maintain a community where all students are free to learn and achieve at the highest level, without interference from others, and where they are comfortable to be individuals and to be themselves.

Our School clearly recognises that bullying and harassment are unacceptable behaviours. At St Paul's:

- We encourage open communication and the sharing of concerns with parents.
- The emphasis is on educating the whole school community.
- We encourage all school community members to recognise and respond appropriately when bullying and/or harassment occurs.
- Offending individuals will be assisted to see value in changing their behaviour.
- Offending individuals will be asked to consider ways in which they could make restitution.
- Individuals who continue to offend will undergo further education and will be disciplined according to the Student Discipline Guidelines.
- All bullying claims will be managed by the School in an effort to ensure the welfare of the victim. Complainants cannot remain anonymous, if the School is to be able to act effectively to manage a complaint.

The School's policy recognises and supports the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*, which outlines the basic human rights of all Victorians, including the right to recognition and equality, freedom from discrimination, cultural rights and right to protection of families and children.

## Responsibilities of individuals

School staff have a responsibility to:

- Respect and support students
- Model and promote appropriate behaviour
- Have knowledge of the school policy relating to bullying behaviour
- Respond in a timely manner to incidents of bullying, according to the School's Bullying Processes, outlined below.
- Provide curriculum and pedagogy that supports students to develop an understanding of bullying and its impact on individuals and the broader community.

Students have a responsibility to:

- Behave appropriately, respecting individual differences and diversity
- Behave as responsible digital citizens
- Follow the School's Bullying Policy and Student Code of Conduct.
- Behave as responsible bystanders
- Report incidents of bullying, in line with the School's Bullying Policy.

Parents and caregivers have a responsibility to:

- Support their children to become responsible citizens and to develop responsible on-line behaviour
- Be aware of the School's Bullying Policy and assist their children in understanding bullying behaviour
- Support their children in developing positive responses to incidents of bullying consistent with the School's Bullying Policy
- Report incidents of school-related bullying behavior to the School
- Work collaboratively with the School to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur.

All members of the school community have a responsibility to:

- Model and promote positive relationships that respect and accept individual differences and diversity within the school community
- Support the School's Bullying Policy through words and actions
- Work collaboratively with the School to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur.

## Primary Prevention

The primary means of prevention of student bullying at St Paul's is through community education. This is achieved in the following ways:

- Professional development for staff relating to bullying, harassment and the strategies that counter-act them.
- Community awareness and input relating to bullying, its characteristics and the School's programs and response.
- To provide programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.
- Feedback from students will be sought regularly in order to monitor the School's culture with regard to bullying
- At the start of each year the School policy on bullying will be shared with the school community as a part of the Pastoral Care Program.

## Discipline Consequences

Early intervention and a restorative approach, rather than punishment, is the School's preferred approach; with an emphasis placed on recognising positive behaviour.

However, in the case of serious incidents, the level of remorse and previous behavioural history of the bully will affect the severity of the discipline. Discipline consequences for bullies may therefore involve:

- detention
- after school detention

- school suspension
- exclusion from class
- exclusion from yard
- formal apology
- expulsion.

There will also be:

- Ongoing monitoring of situations where bullying has been reported and identified.
- Ongoing counselling from appropriate sources for all parties where an incident of bullying has been identified.
- Public acknowledgement/rewards for positive behaviour and reinforcement of school policy.

## Process for dealing with Bullying Incidents – WJS & TJS

Children in the Junior School should feel safe, happy and respected in order to give them the opportunity to learn to the best of their ability.

Being proactive in the area of preventing bullying is important and our initiatives include:

- Restorative practices
- Circle time
- Educating students as to what bullying is and isn't
- Presentations for positive behaviour in Assembly
- An orientation programme at start of the year, run by the Head of School, includes an emphasis on the Junior School Code of Conduct
- Specific cybersafety sessions including signing of guidelines re school expectations
- Kismatter framework activities and initiatives (including the Bounce Back program)
- Buddy systems
- Lunchtime clubs
- Relationship mapping and the subsequent follow up of potential issues regarding students with relevant staff and a School Chaplain (Years 3 – 6)
- An e-Smart button on MyStPaul's for students to report bullying.

It is important to note that all staff have a responsibility to monitor expected standards of behaviour and must take an active role in implementing these discipline guidelines. The preferred option in all cases is to avoid an unnecessary escalation of sanctions.

### **Steps for intervening in bullying situations**

If an incidence of bullying is identified, or brought to the School's attention by other members of the community, the following action will be taken.

Initially, the classroom teacher will endeavour to deal with the situation. If necessary, the relevant Team Leader will then become involved and the Deputy and Head of School will be advised and involved as necessary.

The relevant staff will:

1. Talk to the alleged bully and the victim separately to gather further information and ascertain the circumstances. Staff should take clear notes regarding the information gleaned. If more than one student is involved in bullying behaviour, staff are advised to speak to each student separately, in quick succession.
2. Remind the alleged bully about school and classroom rules, reiterate what behaviour is expected, and discuss sanctions that may be imposed for future bullying behaviour.
3. Reassure the victim that everything possible will be done to prevent a recurrence.
4. Follow the Restorative Practice model of resolution.
5. Make other students aware of the consequences of bullying behaviour. Reiterate the school's policy of zero tolerance toward bullying.
6. Phone the parents of both the bully and the victim. Design a plan of action and keep relevant staff and parents informed.
7. Continue to closely monitor the situation.
8. Follow up with phone calls to parents regarding the situation.

Where an incident of bullying is being investigated the classroom teacher should:

- Formally document the incident/s in a Record of Contact (ROC)
- refer the incident to the appropriate Team Leader or Deputy Head of Junior School (Pastoral Care) if required
- refer more serious matters directly to the Head of Junior School (The Principal **will** be briefed on serious incidents – as required).

Any matters referred to the Principal (and in their absence the Deputy Principal) are considered serious either in nature or due to their repeated occurrence. The Principal is the final point of reference for disciplinary matters.

The School reserves the right to assess each incident on its merits and to refer any incident to the most appropriate level.

## Process for dealing with Bullying Incidents – WSS & TSS

St Paul's Secondary Campuses undertake a number of measures in an attempt to prevent unrest and bullying and seek to resolve any reported incidents where a child does not feel safe, happy or respected in our care in a confidential, considerate and timely manner.

Our initiatives in this regard are as follows:

- Each child is known by their:
  - Mentor Teacher
  - Head of Year
  - Head of School
  - Classroom teachers
- Mentors meet weekly with their Head of Year
- Heads of Year meet fortnightly with the Head of School
- Classroom teachers are required to report any incidents or unusual behaviour to mentor teachers or Head of Year immediately via email, phone or conversation.

- Head of Year and Head of School consult Relationship Mapping Data in an attempt to identify students at risk early and intervene discreetly to ensure the wellbeing of each child.
- Students are encouraged to seek assistance immediately if they feel unhappy at school and they are aware of those to whom they can report this unhappiness. A number of staff members are available for each year level so students have some choice in those to whom they feel comfortable speaking.
- Head of School identifies trends or data patterns provided in the ILEAD Survey in order to respond to areas of concern.
- The eSmart Program focuses on educating the whole school community on technological and cyber issues. Students also have access to an eSmart reporting button on My St Paul's where they can report their feelings electronically if they are not comfortable with face to face contact.
- Chaplains, Counsellors and Psychologists are available casually and by appointment to support students in both a one-on-one and group settings, as required.
- Structured activities are available to students during lunch breaks.
- Guest speakers are used to engage and educate students on issues of bullying and victimisation.
- The Pastoral Care Curriculum addresses issues of bullying and promoting social inclusion.
- The Student Representative Council is an initiative where students can speak with student and school leaders and highlight issues so the school can respond to them.

### **Steps for intervening in bullying situations**

If an incidence of bullying is identified or brought to the School's attention by another member/s of the community, the following steps are taken:

1. The Head of Year / Mentor lead the investigation and initial consultation.
2. The victim is addressed and given the opportunity to speak about their experience. Counselling / support is offered.
3. The victim is given an opportunity to indicate how the staff member can raise it with the alleged bully.
4. The victim's parents are contacted to note the discussion and the planned course of action.
5. The alleged bully is addressed and a series of guiding questions are asked to clarify interactions with the other student and have them consider how certain actions/comments might impact the other student. The alleged bully is offered counselling / support.
  - a. If the alleged bully remains adamant that no bullying is taking place, the staff member notes that the alleged victim will be consulted now and in the future to make sure that all interactions are positive between the students.
6. The alleged bully is guided towards a resolution or action to restore the relationship. The restoration may include a mediated discussion between victim and bully, if the victim feels it could be effective.
7. The alleged bully's parents are called – before the student returns home – to give an outline of how events unfolded and to offer an opportunity to discuss matters further the next day, after they have consulted their son/daughter.

8. Consequences will be determined by the Head of Year – often in consultation with the Head of School – and could range from a detention to an after school detention. In serious cases, parents will be asked to join staff for a meeting.
9. Repeat incidents will result in meetings with parents, internal suspension or external suspension, in consultation with the Deputy Principal and Principal.

## Version 3

Date Created: 7/04/2014

Created By: SYD

Date to be Reviewed: 23/04/2016

Date Reviewed: 12/03/2015

Reviewed By: SYD