

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Preamble:

All members of the Catholic school community accept the responsibility to promote the development and maintenance of a school learning environment that is free from bullying and to undertake initiatives to prevent and eliminate such behaviour.

Rationale:

Our Lady's Catholic Primary School acknowledges that young people, who are involved in bullying behaviour, either as a bully or a target, are at higher risk of behavioural, emotional and academic problems. Ongoing bullying can seriously harm the health and wellbeing of the bullied person and the negative effects may be ongoing. It is important that our school community has a shared understanding of what bullying is, how it impacts on people and how bullying is responded to at Our Lady's Catholic Primary School. Research suggests that a school wide approach to address bullying is essential.

Description:

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. Cyber bullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies. Bullying has three defining characteristics:

- Imbalance of power (eg. physical strength, access to embarrassing information, popularity)
- Intent to hurt, embarrass or humiliate
- Repeated behaviour

Due to current social media focus the term bullying is often 'overused'. The following behaviours are not defined as bullying:

The National Centre against Bullying (2010) acknowledges that while the following behaviours are often upsetting to those involved, they do not constitute bullying:

- Arguments and disagreements
- Disliking someone
- One-off acts of social rejection
- One-off acts of meanness or spite
- Isolated incidents of aggression, intimidation or violence
- Rough play
- Taking someone's belongings without asking

Whilst these behaviours would not be considered as bullying (because they do not involve deliberate and repeated harm and/or a power imbalance) they will be addressed in the same way as other inappropriate student behaviours as defined by our school behaviour management policy and procedures.

Values:

Respect, compassion, justice, dignity, respect, tolerance and forgiveness.

Policy Statement:

Our Lady's Catholic Primary School does not tolerate bullying in any form. Everyone has the right to learn in a safe environment and to be treated with respect.

Implementation:

1. Our Lady's Catholic Primary School creates a caring, respectful, inclusive and supportive school culture where all students feel safe through the teaching of our school rules (be your best, be respectful, be safe) and the use of the 'Responsible Thinking Process' (basis of our behaviour management system).
2. The definition of bullying is clear and stated in this policy.
3. The processes for dealing with bullying behaviour are communicated to the school community through this policy, published in the Parent Handbook and available on the school website.
4. Procedural steps to respond appropriately to bullying incidents are clearly documented and roles and responsibilities of staff, students and parents/carers are defined.
5. Provide teaching and learning programs that promote personal development and address all forms of bullying through the teaching of language skills, social-cognitive abilities, social skills, assertiveness, coping strategies, group mechanisms, motives for bullying and being effective bystanders.
6. Provide professional development to assist school staff to understand the anti-bullying policy, implement teaching and learning programs and to provide support for students at high risk times and in high risk settings.
7. Consult students regularly to monitor and determine the types of bullying behaviour and in what school and social contexts bullying occurs.
8. Create physical environments in the school and staff supervision practices that limit the incidences of bullying.
9. Support and engage families by maintaining regular, clear communication.
10. Regularly reviewing and celebrating the effectiveness of school programs and procedures.

Reflection Material:

- Rockhampton Catholic Education Office Anti-Bullying Policy (2013/07)
- Queensland Government. (2010). *Working Together: A toolkit for effective school based action against bullying.*
- Queensland Government. (2010). *Working Together: A toolkit for parents to address bullying.*
- Queensland Government. *The Code of School Behaviour: Better Behaviour Better Learning.*
- National Centre Against Bullying <http://www.ncab.org.au/>

OUR LADY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL RESPONSE TO BULLYING

Here at Our Lady's Catholic Primary School we value and nurture each child as an individual. We believe each child is unique and special and endeavour to celebrate and support them in their education. Our Lady's Catholic Primary School is a place where children are encouraged to develop holistically – spiritually, academically, emotionally, socially, physically and culturally. This means teaching the students right from wrong and the difference between good choices and poor choices. Therefore our process for managing bullying at Our Lady's involves education, prevention, intervention, support, consequences and a change of behavior.

Education:

It is important for students, staff and parents/carers to understand what bullying is and the impact bullying has on others. It is imperative that the Our Lady's Catholic Primary School community know that bullying will not be accepted at our school and how bullying will be responded to.

At Our Lady's Catholic Primary School we use the following educational strategies:

- Responsible Thinking Process (part of our behavior management policy)
- Formal and informal lessons in classrooms
- Making Jesus Real program
- Adopt-a-cop presentations on bullying/cyber-bullying
- Displaying anti-bullying posters around the school grounds
- Identifying three trusted adults
- Daniel Morcombe safety curriculum

Prevention:

Effective social skills and positive relationships act to prevent bullying. At Our Lady's Catholic Primary School we promote effective social skills and positive relationships by:

- Referring to virtues: the gifts of character
- Teaching our school rules (be your best, be respectful, be safe) and referring to these on a daily basis
- Making Jesus Real program – acknowledging how we can be more like Jesus
- Making Jesus Real awards
- Student of the Week awards
- Social stories in the classroom to teach and model for the children
- Buddy groups – older students working with younger students
- Lunch Club – supported play in the Library
- Learning Support provides programs for students experiencing difficulties to develop social skills and develop positive relationships.

Responding:

Reports of bullying will be investigated and acted upon. Responses to bullying will involve support and disciplinary measures.

At Our Lady's Catholic Primary School we support targets/victims of bullying by:

- Informing and involving parents/carers in the process
- Providing support networks
- Ensuring that the victim/target has a 'safe person'
- Encouraging and supporting the reporting of bullying behaviours
- Maintaining confidentiality
- Building confidence and self-esteem

At Our Lady's Catholic Primary School we support perpetrators of bullying by: (The following may also be used to support bystanders)

- Informing and involving parents/carers in the process
- Educating students about acceptable and non-acceptable behaviours
- Assisting students to understand the effect of bullying behaviours
- Maintaining confidentiality
- Providing support networks
- Developing a play contract specific to the child

At Our Lady's Catholic Primary School the consequences for bullying might include:

- Removal from class or play
- Restricted or modified play conditions
- Formal apology (where and when appropriate)
- Exclusion from the classroom for a period of time
- Exclusion from school for a period of time
- Informal involvement of Police through our school Adopt-a-Cop
- In severe cases formal reporting to the Police and Child Safety agencies
- Counselling through outside agencies
- In the case of items being stolen or damaged, parents may be required to replace them

Please note:

- Following an incident of bullying, the students involved (victim and perpetrator) will undergo a process of healing and each case is unique. As a Catholic School we believe in forgiveness and that every child deserves a chance to learn for their mistakes and change their behavior.
- Bullying does not mean that the perpetrator is a 'bad person', but rather that they are making some poor choices which affect others and come with a series of consequences.
- Bystanding involves watching while others are being bullied or treated badly by others and not taking any action to prevent the bullying from occurring. In many cases there will be consequences for bystanders if they are found to enable or encourage bullying behaviour.

Key: ● Parent actions ● Principal or APRE actions ● Teacher actions
 ● Working together ● Moving forward

Reporting & Monitoring:

At Our Lady's Catholic Primary School all reports of bullying are taken seriously. Students and parents/carers should report bullying in the following ways:



Important Information:

- Parents/carers should not try to sort an issue out independently by contacting parents of another student. Report to the nominated people as outlined in this policy.
- Parents should trust that when the school informs them that a reported incident on bullying is 'undergoing the process' that the procedures and consequences outlined in this policy are being followed and that the problem is in the process of resolution, with the best interests of all parties in consideration.
- Confidentiality is important and it is for this reason that details of how the school is managing the case of a particular student will not be discussed with parents or friends of another student.
- Decisions and consequences are made at the discretion of the Principal.

Glossary of Terms:

APRE Assistant Principal Religious Education