



# SACRED HEART SCHOOL MUNDARING

CECWA: Community 2D6

## DEALING WITH BULLYING, HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE POLICY (STUDENTS)

### 1. RATIONAL

Sacred Heart School has the responsibility to provide an educational environment that promotes the dignity and respect of the person, and therefore, aims to eliminate bullying, harassment and violence in all forms.

Learning outcomes, physical health, emotional, psychological and spiritual well being can be adversely affected by bullying, harassment and violence. Students who are bullied or harassed tend to have poorer health, lower self-esteem, more interpersonal difficulties, higher levels of loneliness, depression, suicidal ideation and increased anxiety. They are also more likely to have a dislike of, and want to avoid school, higher absenteeism and lower academic competence. The effects of bullying can begin early in life and, for some, last a lifetime.

**The National Safe Schools Framework's Vision is: 'All Australian schools are safe and supportive environments.'**

The aim of the Framework is to assist all school communities in building safe and supportive schools where:

- bullying, harassment and violence are minimised
- students receive support on issues related to child abuse and neglect

The framework is underpinned by a set of guiding principles and related key elements/approaches that schools can put in place to effectively provide a safe and supportive learning element.

### **The Eleven Guiding Principles for the Provision of a Safe and Supportive School Environment**

*These define how schools need to approach becoming safe and supportive environments. They make it clear that proactive, strategic leadership is critical, and that a whole school approach is needed. The ethos and environment of the school, the teaching and learning (for the whole school community), and partnerships with the community (families and other agencies) are complementary parts of the whole picture.*

Sacred Heart School:

- affirms the right of all school community members to feel safe at school
- promotes care, respect and cooperation, and value diversity
- implements policies, programs and processes to nurture a safe and supportive school environment

- recognises that quality leadership is an essential element that underpins the creation of a safe and supportive school environment
- develops and implements policies, programs and processes that engage the whole school community
- ensures that roles and responsibilities of all members of the school community in promoting a safe and supportive environment are explicit, clearly understood and disseminated
- recognises the critical importance of pre-service and ongoing professional development in creating a safe and supportive school environment
- has a responsibility to provide opportunities for students to learn through the formal curriculum the knowledge, skills and dispositions needed for positive relationships
- focuses on policies that are proactive and oriented towards prevention and intervention
- regularly monitor and evaluate their policies and programs so that evidence-based practice supports decisions and improvements
- takes action to protect children from all forms of abuse and neglect

**The six key elements that Sacred Heart School has in place to implement the NSSF are described in the Framework as:**

- school values, ethos, culture, structures and student welfare
- establishment of agreed policies, programs and procedures
- provision of education and training to school staff, students and parents
- managing incidents of abuse and victimisation
- providing support for students
- working closely with parents

## 2. DEFINITIONS

Bullying involves:

- a desire to hurt
- hurtful behaviour (physical, verbal or relational)
- an imbalance of power
- an unjust use of power
- typically repetition
- is experienced by the target of the aggression as oppressive, and by the perpetrator as enjoyable

Additionally, Bullying can be characterised as: causing distress, not only at the time of the attack but also by the threat of future attacks; and an imbalance of power (that is inappropriate and where there is an intention to hurt).

Bullying is a pattern of wilful, conscious behaviour intended to hurt, injure, upset, threaten or embarrass an individual or group emotionally or physically.

Bullying is a *repetitive* attack, which causes distress not only at the time of the attack, but also the threat of future attacks. It involves an *imbalance of power*.

Most bullying behaviour is covert - it takes place out of sight of adults. It can include incidents away from the school premises, which are school related.

Its nature may be:

- verbal - name-calling, put-downs, threats (spoken, written or electronic)
- physical - hitting, tripping, punching, biting, pushing, throwing objects, stealing
- social – ignoring, hiding, ostracising
- cyber – via text message, emails, Facebook and MySpace
- psychological – stalking, threatening looks, spreading rumours, damaging possessions<sup>2</sup>

Harassment is any unwanted, unwelcome or uninvited behaviour which makes a person feel humiliated, intimidated or offended. (Adapted from Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia Policy, Harassment in School, 1998). Harassment can be seen as one form of bullying.

Bullying and harassment are often thought of separately; however, both involve a more powerful person or group oppressing a less powerful person or group, often on the grounds of 'difference'. These differences can be related to culture, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, sexual orientation, ability or disability, religion, body size and physical appearance, personality, age, marital status, parenting status or economic status. (Bullying. No Way! Website cited in the National Safe Schools Framework [NSSF], 2003).

Unlike bullying and harassment, violence is not necessarily associated with an imbalance of power. It can occur between people of equal power. It implies extreme forcefulness, usually (but not always) of a physical kind. (Rigby, cited in the NSSF, 2003).

Sacred Heart School recognises bullying occurs in all school communities and therefore, has the responsibility of duty of care to all our students by:

- providing a supportive environment, which promotes respect for self and others, physical/emotional well-being and positive mental health,
- dealing with bullying, harassment and violence using a whole school approach within the school's Pastoral Care Policy, Code of Ethical Conduct, The Eleven Guiding Principles of the NSSF and the Student Management Policy, and
- investigating as soon as practicable, known bullying, harassment or violent issues.

### 3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Catholic schools in Western Australia.

### 4. PRINCIPLES

Sacred Heart School is a safe and supportive environments where the 11 Principles and 6 key Elements of the National Safe Schools Framework are practised.

Sacred Heart School owes a duty of care to our students.

Sacred Heart School provides a supportive environment which:

- encourages socially appropriate behaviour using positive behaviour management

- promotes respect for self and others
- develops physical/emotional well-being and resiliency
- develops interpersonal skills and positive mental health

The Leadership Team facilitates the implementation of revised strategies for our Dealing with Bullying, Harassment and Violence Policy including the Blue and Red Card Individual Plans. Parents and staff work together in a whole-school community approach that is consistent with the Catholic Education Office of Western Australia's Pastoral Care Framework and Sacred Heart School's Pastoral Care practices and Evangelisation Plan.

At Sacred Heart School we promptly deal with bullying, harassment and violent issues. When bullying, harassment and violence are ignored or overlooked, it serves to condone or reinforce the behaviour. Bystanders, (those who observe bullying) can encourage or assist those who bully simply by doing nothing.

While the aim is to promote and encourage positive behavior our school policy and procedures contain clear statements regarding the range of appropriate consequences that will be applied for unacceptable behaviour. In looking at consequences relating to specific issues we will consider other circumstances which may have bearing such as family or mental health matters.

All parties involved in incidents of Bullying, Harassment and Violence are entitled to appropriate support.

## 5. PROCEDURES

- At the commencement of each year the Dealing with Bullying, Harassment and Violence Policy (Students) will be sent home via email to every family and staff member.
- In the event of an incident the staff member on duty or the teacher in the classroom will record the incident involving bullying, harassment or violence using the **Reporting of an Incident by Teachers Form**.
- A **Blue Card** (refer to Parent Notification of an Incident of Bullying, Harassment or Violence) will be implemented immediately for any child who displays such behaviour. A member of the Leadership Team will interview the child which will include the following elements during the meeting:
  - the student is given the opportunity to tell his/her story,
  - during the discussion the student is encouraged to talk about his/her feelings, leading towards what appropriate actions they should have taken,
  - recommend strategies to be discussed and support for the student to be put in place to encourage positive behaviour, and
  - when necessary bystanders are interviewed to confirm the child's story and actions.

A member of the Leadership Team will complete the necessary paperwork for the Blue Card.

Parents are notified and the appropriate paperwork sent home to both the perpetrator's parents and the victim's parents.

- The Red Card (Refer to Individual Behaviour Management Plan) will be implemented for any child who displays disrespect to a staff member or students. The staff member who witnesses such behaviour will complete the necessary paperwork for the Red Card.

- Duty staff will monitor children who have been identified with social or behavioural issues at recess and lunch times and comments written on the **Social/Emotional Form** in the Observation Files in the Teaching Block and Early Childhood Centre.
- Parents are notified by the classroom teacher of a pattern of inappropriate behaviour and an interview will be arranged at a suitable time to discuss the modification of behaviour strategies to prevent the child escalating to bullying, harassment and violent behaviour.

Interview with Parents and Teacher and Leadership Team Member for Blue Card incidents:

- all parties involved will be encouraged to work collaboratively to address the child's inappropriate behaviour, and offer positive strategies the child will use in taking control of his/her own behaviour so as to become more self disciplined.
  - the teacher, parents and the member of the Leadership Team will also make an appropriate decision regarding any further disciplinary action that may be necessary.
  - The minutes of the meeting will be recorded on the Parent/Teacher Interview Form.
- Copies of all documentation of any meetings between the parties involved are to be kept in the locked student's file in the classroom.
  - The child who had bullying behaviours aimed at them, bystanders and the child displaying bullying behaviours will all receive appropriate counselling from the Social Worker if necessary, a teacher or a member of the Leadership Team, following the **Bullying Procedures Flow Chart**. The child who the bullying behaviour was aimed at, will then be carefully monitored and supported in the classroom and in play areas. Any case of retaliation against a student for reporting bullying will be treated with the utmost severity. The parents of the victim will be notified of the incident. A **Student First Aid Treatment Form or Parent Notification for General Unwellness and/or Minor Injuries** will be sent home with the child.
  - If the bullying is of a persistent nature staff will discuss with the Principal and follow the procedures in the **Referral to Social Worker Flow Chart**. All parties will be interviewed and the incidents recorded by a member of the Leadership Team.
  - The four major parties involved in the prevention of, and in dealing with cases of bullying, harassment or violence within the school (the Leadership Team, staff, students and parents) are to be made aware of their roles and responsibilities through:
    - Newsletters and notes sent home and to school through the Communication Books,
    - meetings with the classroom teacher,
    - classroom programs and appropriate duty of care carried out by all staff according to our Code of Ethical Conduct
    - whole school addresses by the Principal or a member of the Leadership Team at assemblies and other times as needed, and
    - staff meetings and professional development opportunities.
  - In the management of sensitive information appropriate measures of confidentiality will be taken by those staff members involved in dealing with bullying, harassment or violent behaviour so as to protect the rights of both parties. In particular, there is a need to ensure that the child who had bullying behaviours directed at them does not become exposed to worse, or more frequent bullying behaviour, as a result of any incident already reported.

- Sacred Heart School shall provide professional development to meet the needs of the staff in implementing this policy. Members of staff are also responsible to research current practice about what is effective when dealing with bullying, harassment and violence.
- Sacred Heart School will also provide, when possible, information for parents on important issues surrounding bullying, harassment and violence.
- This policy shall be monitored and reviewed every three years or immediately following any incident that raises issues in respect to policy and practice.

## 6. REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup>Rigby, K (2001). Stop the Bullying. A Handbook for Schools. ACER, Australia

<sup>2</sup>Curriculum Corporation (2000), Mind Matters, Commonwealth of Australia

National Safe Schools Framework (2003) Curriculum Corporation

## 7. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia Policy 2-C4 Harassment, Discrimination and Bullying

Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia Policy 2-D3 Child Abuse

Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia Policy 2-D8 Management of Confidential Information in Schools

Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia Policy 2-D7 Exclusion of Students for Disciplinary Reasons

Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, Framework for the Development of Pastoral Care in Catholic Schools (2007)

Framework for Schools Dealing with Bullying Available on request:

- sample School-based Policy on Bullying and Harassment. Available on request. Note that given the school-specific nature of these issues, this is not a pro-forma policy
- friendly Schools and Families (Acerpress)
- The National Safe Schools Framework

## 8. REVIEW HISTORY

Year of Review:	Reviewed by:	Amendments/Review
2002	Staff & Parents	Originally Released
2005	Staff & Parents	Reviewed
2009	Staff & Parents	Reviewed
2010	Staff & Parents	Reformatted
2011	Staff & Parents	

## 9. NEXT REVIEW

Year: 2013

School Community