ANTI-BULLYING POLICY & PROCEDURES (INCLUSIVE OF CYBERBULLYING)

Santa Sophia's anti-bullying procedures align with CSPDL procedures.

Definition

Bullying - Bullying behaviour has three key features:
a) It is an intentional misuse of power,
b) It is ongoing and **repeated**, and
c) It involves behaviours that can cause harm.

School-related settings include school grounds, school-related activities and outside of school settings where there is a clear and close connection between the school and the conduct of students. This connection may exist in situations where Online Services and/or Digital Devices, including BYODs, are being used outside of school grounds where:

● there is discussion about school taking place outside of school hours;
● a student is wearing their school uniform but is not on school premises;
● interactions occur between students (including other CEDP students);
● students are online in digital classrooms, or
● where online behaviour between students has flow-on consequences at school and duty of care requires the school to respond once an incident is reported.

WHAT IS BULLYING?
- Bullying is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm.
- It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening. The imbalance of power can arise through a difference in age (chronological or developmental), size, social status, number of students involved or other reasons.
- Bullying can happen in person or online, (ie cyberbullying) via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). eg Facebook, X, Instagram etc., email, mobile phones, camera phones.
- Bullying behaviour can be verbal, non-verbal, physical, sexualised, discriminatory, inappropriate communication using technology and exclusionary.
- Bullying behaviour is repeated over a period of time, however, conflicts or fights between students and single incidents are not defined as bullying.
- Bullying can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and all forms of harassment including those based on gender, race, disability, sexual orientation or practice of religion.

Bullying behaviour is NOT:
- children not getting along well;
- a breakdown of a friendship;
- a situation of mutual conflict (e.g. disagreements);
- single episodes of nastiness;
- random acts of aggression, cruelty or intimidation;
- isolated incidents of conflict separated by many months or years does not constitute a pattern of bullying behaviour.

Whilst the behaviours above do not meet the definition of bullying, any poor or anti-social behaviour is unacceptable and will be responded to appropriately.

Bullying of any form, or for any reason, can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Bullying can happen anywhere: at school, travelling to and from school, in extra curricular activities or social events. Examples of bullying behaviour include:

- Verbal, e.g. repeated name calling, teasing, abuse, putdowns, sarcasm, insults, threats
- Physical, e.g. repeated hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting
- Social, e.g. repeated ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating, making inappropriate gestures
- Psychological, e.g. repeated spreading rumours, hostile looks, hiding or damaging possessions, malicious SMS and email messages, inappropriate use of camera phones, negatively targeting a person or group via social media.

Rationale

- Essential to the vision of Santa Sophia Catholic College is the creation and maintenance of a respectful, safe and supportive learning environment that promotes student wellbeing and enables the school to engage a diverse range of learners in an inclusive manner.
- The school culture promotes positive relationships that reflect the Gospel teachings. These teachings are a core aspect in the prevention of, and response to, incidents of bullying, including cyberbullying. Bullying and cyberbullying disregard core values of the Catholic faith such as love, Holy wisdom, hope, dignity, respect, justice, equity, compassion, trust and courage.
- Bullying can adversely affect all aspects of a child's development and wellbeing and is unacceptable.
- This policy and procedures is informed by the Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta Bullying of Students - Prevention and Response procedure and the Student Wellbeing policy which states When managing student behaviour and discipline, CSPD schools will always adhere to the principles of procedural fairness, including the right to be heard and the right to receive an unbiased decision.

Aims

- To actively teach students how to enact the values of our Catholic faith including dignity, respect, justice, equity, compassion, trust and courage by developing positive, respectful relationships as part of a holistic school approach to the prevention of bullying.
- To define within the school community what bullying is, why it is problematic and to have a clear process of how to respond if bullying behaviour is experienced or witnessed.
- To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up appropriately and that all involved parties are given the psychological and practical support required to reduce the likelihood of recurrence and to improve wellbeing and peer relationship.
- To seek parental and peer-group support and cooperation at all times.
- To ensure procedural fairness is followed in all incidents investigated

Implementation

Primary Prevention

- Included in our policy is the CSPD Action Plan that details the strategies implemented by the school to reduce student bullying behaviour.
- Primary prevention includes actively teaching all students about what a positive, respectful relationship looks like, feels like and sounds like, as well as helping students understand the impact of bullying. Students will also be taught what to do when experiencing or observing a disrespectful interaction and how to report this

and how the school will respond. These preventative strategies are taught primarily through the following programs and initiatives within the school curriculum:
- Formation (Religion)
- PDHPE
- Positive Behaviour Support for Learning (PBS4L)

- Fortnightly timetabled wellbeing lessons where students are taught evidence based Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) using a structured online program called "Open Parachute".
- Professional development for staff relating to bullying, cyber bullying, harassment and proven countermeasures.
- Community awareness and input relating to bullying, its characteristics and the school's responses, complemented by clear processes for reporting suspected bullying.
- The provision of teaching that promotes inclusiveness, resilience, helpful and caring peer behaviours, positive social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving will form an integral part of our PBS4L, PDHPE and Formation curriculum. In particular, assertiveness and bystander training that build skills in students to challenge and/or report unacceptable behaviour will be central to our teaching and learning.
- Electives and structured activities may be available to students at recess and lunch breaks to provide students with alternative forms of interacting and connecting with peers.
- Cybersafety awareness programs and cybersafe behaviours will be provided to parents/carers and students
- Police Youth Liaison officers will provide information sessions annually to all secondary students around bullying behaviours and cybersafety
- All students are provided with individual and confidential computer and network passwords. Student activity on the school's computer equipment and network may be tracked as per ICT policy.
- Firewalls installed to eliminate outside traffic into the school's network.
- Student use of mobile phones at school is restricted as stated in the Santa Sophia mobile phone policy.

Responses to Bullying Allegations

- Parents/carers are encouraged to contact the school if they have concerns about their child and students are encouraged to directly speak to a teacher about any concerns they have experienced or witnessed.
- All instances of suspected bullying reported to general staff must then be reported to a nominated leadership staff member (Head of School, Assistant Principal or Wellbeing Leader) who must investigate and respond to the bullying allegations.
- Procedural fairness must be followed and a bullying allegation is to be addressed and responded to in a timely manner.
- School responses to bullying will be consistent and aligned to the Wellbeing and Pastoral Care policy and the CSPD Student Wellbeing policy
- The process the school will follow is:
  - Receive an allegation of bullying from child, teacher, parent/carer or other person;
  - The nominated staff member (Head of School, Assistant Principal or Wellbeing Leader) ensures the allegation is documented using the relevant Compass Chronicle.
  - The nominated staff member assesses/investigates the allegation to determine if it meets the definition of bullying, and if so, assesses the severity and the frequency of the bullying. This assessment will determine the response.
  - Parents/carers are to be contacted if their child is alleged to have been bullied or experienced serious inappropriate behaviour, or if their child appears to have behaved inappropriately or has allegedly bullied someone else.
  - The nominated staff member, in consultation with the parents/carers of the student engaged in bullying, will develop and implement a behaviour management plan to support the student in more positive and safe behaviours.
  - The nominated staff member will communicate the behaviour management plan to relevant staff members, whilst protecting the privacy of the students involved.
  - Consequences should ensure that the student(s) is taught more positive and appropriate social skills and behaviours. This should be part of an ongoing support or management plan for the student(s). The nominated staff member will provide appropriate and ongoing support to the students involved. This may include counselling or Bullying Prevention and Response.
  - Consequences need to be proportional and may include a verbal apology, writing a letter of apology, loss of privileges, re-teaching of expectations, social skill training (e.g., conflict resolution training,

- problem solving etc), internal / external suspension. Any consequence will always include that the student(s) is taught more positive and appropriate social skills and behaviours
  - Serious and ongoing bullying behaviour will necessitate a suspension from school following the [Suspension, Transfer and Exclusion Procedures](). Upon re-entry to the school, the student will engage in a restorative process.
  - The nominated staff member assesses who else needs to be notified of the bullying (for example, other staff members or external agencies (e.g., Police, Family and Community Services) in accordance with mandatory reporting guidelines. This notification should be documented.
  - The nominated staff member facilitates appropriate and ongoing support to the recipient of the bullying behaviour. This may include counselling or ongoing engagement with a particular teacher to conduct regular check ins, the teaching of social skills such as assertiveness training, what to do when experiencing disrespect, how to access help etc. The scope of this support will be dependent on the situation
  - The nominated staff member monitors the situation and follows up with all parties, including witnesses. This monitoring and follow up must be documented.

- The school will teach students the importance of appropriately reporting incidents of inappropriate behaviour involving themselves or others in a timely way.
- Positive recognition for upstanding witness behaviour and positive peer support as per the PBS4L school framework will be implemented
- Active encouragement of all appropriate attempts to resolve problems positively will occur as observed.
- Ongoing monitoring of interactions between affected students following an allegation should occur as well as separate checking in with each student individually as a follow up to review student perceptions of the issues.
- There will be regular communication through the whole process with the parents/carers whose children are involved
- Parents/carers or community members who bully or harass or abuse staff will be provided with official warnings, and if necessary referred to the police, and/or have Trespass restrictions placed upon them by the principal.

Off School Premises and Out-of-School Hours Incidents
The duty of care owed to students is not limited to incidents that occur on school property, during school hours or at school or CEDP events.
Whenever the school has knowledge of harm or potential harm suffered by a student due to the acts of another student, the school is obliged to act to protect the student. The test that is applied in these circumstances is "Could the school have been reasonably expected to have acted in the interests of the young person with the information they had that there was harm or the risk of harm?".

Procedural Fairness
Procedural fairness and the principles of natural justice are an integral part of the anti-bullying policy at Santa Sophia Catholic College and requires that a person be given the opportunity to respond to allegations, which may negatively impact that person. The school's commitment to natural justice will be implemented by following procedural fairness in situations when decisions may be taken, which could have a detrimental effect on the rights, interests or legitimate expectations of a person.

Procedural fairness requires that when informing a person of concerns, complaints or allegations about him or her, the person is:
- informed of concerns or allegations being made – this means that the person will be informed of the content of the concern at a point in time when it is clear what the issues are, and who needs to respond to them
- treated impartially – this means that interventions or investigations are conducted impartially, and decisions are made without bias
- given the opportunity to respond – this means that where a concern is raised which may have a detrimental effect on the person the person will normally be given an opportunity to respond
- informed of the complaints process and the review process which may be followed.

Other key aspects of procedural fairness are:
- timeliness - this means the issue must be raised with the person within a reasonable time and outcomes reached as soon as reasonably practicable

- records of process must be maintained
- an investigation will provide all involved parties the opportunity to respond

Evaluation

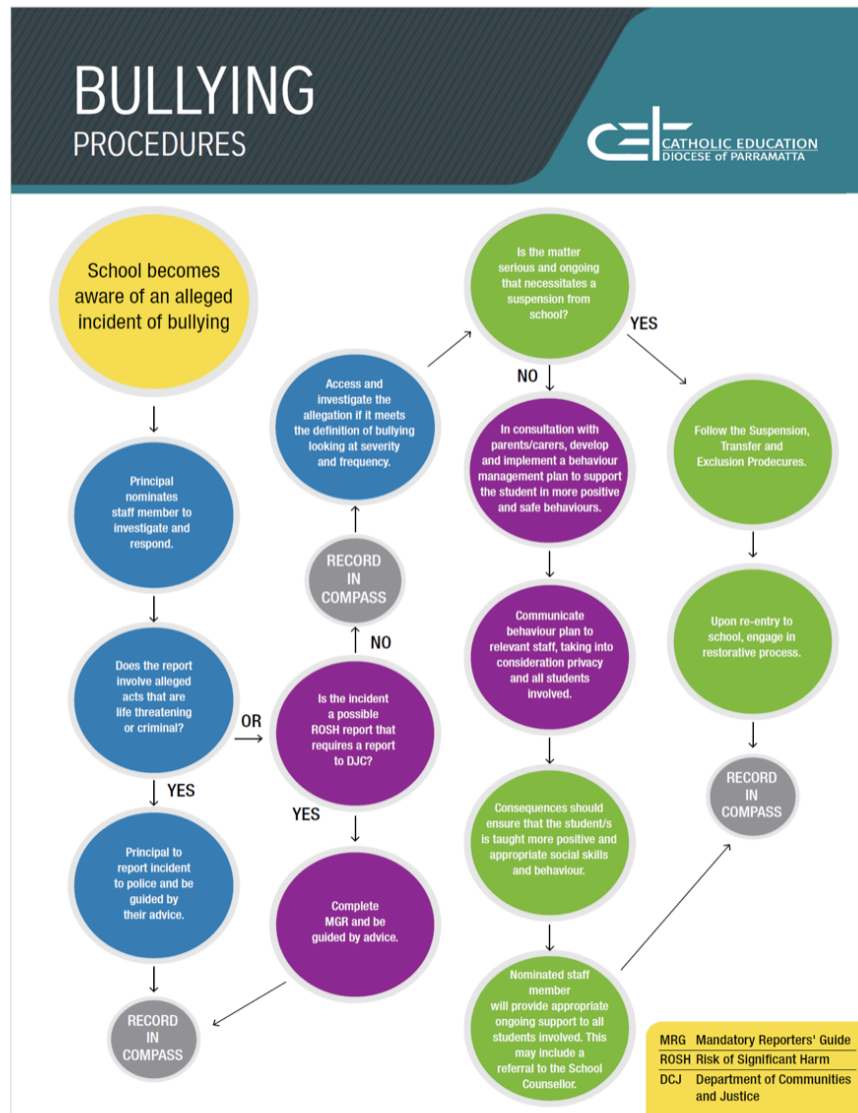This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's review cycle.

Supporting parents/carers when bullying is reported

PARENTS/CARERS MAY RESPOND IN A VARIETY OF WAYS TO THEIR CONCERNS ABOUT THEIR CHILD BEING BULLIED. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE VALIDATE THEIR FEELINGS, REMAIN OPEN AND CALM AND COMMIT TO REASONABLE ACTION.

STEP	EXAMPLE OF RESPONSE
1 Listen, agree where you can and check your understanding	'So you're saying that Peter has been called names and pushed around for several weeks, and he has not wanted to go to school. I'm very sorry to hear this. You must be so worried for him.'
2 Acknowledge the issue is important and offer assistance	'Andrea, thank you for telling me about this. I agree Peter should feel safe at school and I will do what I can to make sure he feels confident to come to school.'
3 Make a plan to keep the student safe while you find out what is happening	'We need to find out what is happening. In the meantime, we need to make sure Peter feels safe and happy in the playground. Are you okay for me to talk with Peter and his teachers to work out a plan?'
4 Identify any way the parent can help	'Please continue to get Peter to school each day, even if he is reluctant, and remind him to follow the plan he works out with me for break times.'
5 Explain further steps	'I will need to inform the principal of your concern. We will work out how best to find out what has been going on.'
6 Plan to meet again	'Let's meet next week to see how things are going. In the meantime, please let me know of any further incidents.'

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BULLYING
PROCEDURES

CATHOLIC EDUCATION
DIOCESE of PARRAMATTA

School becomes aware of an alleged incident of bullying

Principal nominates staff member to investigate and respond.

Does the report involve alleged acts that are life threatening or criminal?

OR

YES

Principal to report incident to police and be guided by their advice.

RECORD IN COMPASS

Is the incident a possible ROSH report that requires a report to DJC?

YES

Complete MGR and be guided by advice.

Access and investigate the allegation if it meets the definition of bullying looking at severity and frequency.

RECORD IN COMPASS

NO

Is the matter serious and ongoing that necessitates a suspension from school?

NO

YES

In consultation with parents/carers, develop and implement a behaviour management plan to support the student in more positive and safe behaviours.

Follow the Suspension, Transfer and Exclusion Prodecures.

Communicate behaviour plan to relevant staff, taking into consideration privacy and all students involved.

Upon re-entry to school, engage in restorative process.

Consequences should ensure that the student/s is taught more positive and appropriate social skills and behaviour.

RECORD IN COMPASS

Nominated staff member will provide appropriate ongoing support to all students involved. This may include a referral to the School Counsellor.

MRG	Mandatory Reporters' Guide
ROSH	Risk of Significant Harm
DCJ	Department of Communities and Justice

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