

ANTI - BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

As a Catholic learning community, we place great value on the dignity of the human person. We endeavour to live the principle that all people are made in the image and likeness of God and as such deserve respect, compassion and care.

It is our School's vision to provide and nurture a caring and academic environment proclaiming the teachings of our faith, enabling individuals to make a positive contribution to an ever-changing society.

Our School's motto, "Act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8), is at the core of all we do and hope to achieve. It promotes a caring and supportive school community that is based on and reflects Gospel values of: dignity, respect, justice equity compassion, trust and courage.

Bullying, cyber-bullying (see below), harassment in the form of name calling or malicious gossip, aggression, exclusion, humiliation and violence work in direct opposition to these Gospel values, show very little regard for the dignity of the human person and as such are unacceptable. St Joseph's will not tolerate bullying and harassment in any form and students found to be bullying or harassing others will be promptly dealt with.

DEFINITIONS OF BULLYING

The Catholic Education Office's, Anti-Bullying Policy, launched in February, 2012, defines:

- 1) **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. (The National Safe Schools) Conflict between equals and single incidents are not defined as bullying, however, some of these incidents may require school intervention.
- 2) **Cyber-bullying** involves the use of any information and communication technology (facebook, Twitter, Instagram, snapchat, tumblr and other carriage services) involving deliberate, isolated or repeatedly hostile behaviour by an individual or group, that is intended to harm others or is undertaken recklessly, without concern for its impact on others.
A student who agrees with hostile and cruel comments made by some one else on social media, eg pressing the "Like" button, on Facebook, or those who contribute negatively to discussion about another person, is also guilty of cyber bullying.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I'M BEING BULLIED OR HARASSED?

- 1) The first step for any student who is suffering at the hands of a bully is to approach the student themselves and **politely inform** them that their actions cause offence and upset and if they don't **stop**, the behaviour will have to be reported to a teacher.
- 2) If the first step is impossible, or hasn't been successful, the student must report the bullying to a **teacher** or Year Coordinator, who will stop the bully at that time and will try to provide a safe environment. You can tell any teacher you feel comfortable with, preferably the teacher who is in the classroom at the time or on the playground when the incident happens.
The teacher will record the details of the incident using an Incident Report and/or the Alleged Bullying Action Tool as applicable. The teacher will then pass the details onto the **Year Coordinator**.
- 3) If the situation is not one of serious immediate danger, the students involved (victim and perpetrator) are interviewed by the **Year Coordinator**. If the case has involved cyber-bullying, it is advised that student/victim take screen shots of the offensive comments/pictures. The situation is discussed and an informal agreement is made so that bullying ceases. Parents of both the victim and perpetrator need to be notified by the Year Coordinator by phone and a record of the incident is included in the perpetrators file on Sentral (to watch for repeat offenders or the perpetrator moving to another victim).
- 4) In the event of the bullying persisting, despite step 3, the Year Coordinator will collect details of the incident again, via separate interviews, with those involved, and a meeting should be arranged with the

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Year Coordinator, **Pastoral Care Coordinator**, **Assistant Principal** and student/s concerned. Again, in the case of cyber-bullying, it is advised that screen shots be taken of the offensive comments/pictures. The meeting should determine an Anti-Bullying plan. Action may involve any or a few of the following: contract with disciplinary consequences attached, counselling, mentoring, conflict management, empathy and resilience building, child protection services and/or police liaison.

Disciplinary consequences may include afternoon community service, in-school exclusion or School suspension, depending on the situation and at the Assistant Principal's discretion.

All records and notes are placed in the perpetrator's student file on Sentral and letters will be sent to the victim's and perpetrator's parents. The situation is monitored and reviewed by the Pastoral Care Coordinator and the Year Coordinator. If the plan has been successful and the bullying ceases, the case is closed.

- 5) In the case of the bullying persisting or the bully moves to a different victim, the Year Coordinator collects Incident Reports and completes the Alleged Bullying Action Tool and refers the matter to the Assistant Principal.

The Assistant Principal issues consequences, records in Sentral, sends letters to parents and refers the offender to the Principal who will be informed and who, if deemed necessary, may inform the Catholic Education Office.