Rationale
Catholic schools have a 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.

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).

Its nature may be:
- verbal - name-calling, put-downs, threats (spoken, written or electronic)
- physical - hitting, tripping, punching, throwing objects, stealing
- social – ignoring, hiding, ostracizing
- psychological – stalking, threatening looks, spreading rumours, damaging possessions²

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).

Principles

1. Catholic schools are safe and supportive environments where the 11 principles and 6 key elements of the National Safe Schools Framework are practiced.

2. Catholic schools owe a duty of care to their students.

3. Catholic schools provide supportive environments which:
   • encourage socially appropriate behaviour using positive behaviour management
   • promote respect for self and other
   • develop physical/emotional well-being and resiliency
   • develop interpersonal skills and positive mental health

4. Dealing with bullying, harassment and violence requires quality leadership and role modelling to facilitate strategy implementation and sustained change, together with a whole-school community approach that is consistent with the Catholic Education Office of Western Australia’s Pastoral Care Framework, the school’s Pastoral Care practices and the school’s Evangelisation Plan.

5. Bullying, harassment and violence shall be dealt with. 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.

6. While the aim is to promote and encourage positive behaviour, school policy and procedures shall contain clear statements regarding the range of appropriate consequences that may be applicable for unacceptable behaviour. In looking at consequences relating to specific issues, consideration should be given to other circumstances which may have bearing such as family or Mental Health matters.

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

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

RIGHTS

• Every person at St Francis Xavier Primary has the right to be safe. Any person who bullies another is denying them that right. This means we have to think about others (not just ourselves) in the classroom and in the playground. The right to be safe means we have the responsibility to consider how we speak and act towards others. Bullying takes away a
person’s sense of security. The right to safety means that bullying of any kind is unacceptable.

• Every person has the right to be treated with respect and fairness. This means we show respect to other people, and their property, in the classroom and in the playground. The right to receive respect and fair treatment requires from us the responsibility to show manners and courtesy towards each others.

• Every person has the right to learn. This means we do not adversely affect the learning of another student.

At school it is everyone’s responsibility to take the necessary steps to stop bullying behaviour. The school will not tolerate any action that undermines a person’ right to feel safe, respected and to learn.

RESPONSIBILITIES
Staff, students and parents have the following responsibilities:

Leadership Team will:
• Support, protect, enact, maintain and review the bullying policy and procedures.

All staff will:
• Be familiar with the school’s bullying policy and procedures.

Teachers will:
• Be models of caring and tolerant behaviour;
• Listen to reports of bullying;
• Act upon these;
• Inform the leadership team;
• Endeavour to protect the person being bullied from further harm;
• Act to stop the behaviour recurring; and
• Record identified bullying incidents.

Students who are bullied need to:
• Communicate about it with a teacher, staff member, student of trust or their parents and give full details of the event.
• Write full details of the event and place it in the bullying box.

Student witnesses to bullying should:
• Intervene if they are able;
• Seek teacher assistance; and
• Document the incident if requested.

Parents should:
• Listen sympathetically to reports of bullying;
• Speak to classroom teacher (not the alleged student/s concerned); and
• Work with the school in seeking a permanent solution.

Parent witnesses should:
• Be limited to verbal intervention;
• Seek teacher assistance; and
• Document the incident if requested by school staff.
Procedures

1. St Francis Xavier’s Bullying and Harassment procedure has two aspects: the prevention of bullying and harassment, and the management of bullying and harassment incidents. Prevention strategies assist students to become resilient. The management strategy we apply is the Student Support and ‘Shared Concern’ approach. Although this approach is not based on sanctions or punishments, the school has a range of such measures available, up to and including suspension or exclusion which are in accord with our ‘School Code of Conduct’, and which may be used in response to bullying.

2. PREVENTION STRATEGIES:

• The Bullying and Harassment Policy is a major part within the St Francis Xavier Primary ‘School Code of Conduct’, which outlines the values and behaviour expected of all members of the school community. It was designed with input from staff, students and parents of the school. The ‘Code of Conduct’ is the basis of the Behaviour Management Plan throughout the school. It is regularly outlined and referred to by class teachers and is sent home twice a year to parents. The ‘Code of Conduct’ is displayed around the school.

• All staff are made aware of bullying issues, student attitudes, the need to take action and of their role in implementing the policy.

• The bullying policy is clearly articulated to staff, students and parents through the ‘School Code of Conduct’.

• Discuss the issue of bullying regularly at staff meetings and provide training to all staff.

• All staff to provide careful supervision.

• The school incorporates the teaching of the “Friendly Schools and Families” and “Keeping Safe Child Protection Curriculum” material in the Health Learning Area through all year levels. These materials develop the students’ awareness of bullying, strategies and responses to deal with bullying, relationship networks and protective behaviours.

• Cyber bullying and cyber safety is incorporated into ICT lessons.

• Class meetings held on a regular basis to discuss problem-solving measures. Focus on behaviour changes not punishment.

• Teachers to be assisted in difficult cases by leadership team and school psychologist.

• “Friendly School” noticeboard displaying information promoting anti-bullying message, including children’s work, posters, information, etc.

• Parent information about bullying and how to help their children in the newsletter and pamphlets in front office. School is a member of the Parenting Ideas – parents have access to the website, as well as articles put in the newsletter and posters around the school.

• Reward positive action and appropriate behaviour:
  - Playground award – Raffle tickets given to students for showing kindness, fair play and appropriate behaviour in the playground. Drawn each Friday. Student selects from box of prizes.
- Merit Certificates – teacher’s awards presented at Friday assemblies for students who have achieved great results or applied effort to improve results in the classroom.
- Aussie of the Month award – presented to a senior and a junior student at Friday assemblies recognising personal endeavours and contribution to the school community.
- Class reward systems
- Inform the students about opportunities for incidents to be reported confidentially in a verbal or written form to staff, the Principal, parents and student leaders. Make “Bullying Box” available to students.
- Whole school faction activity afternoons held twice a term. Students from Yr 1 - 6 gather in their faction groups and do team building activities. Students from different year levels buddy up and work together.
- New students arriving later in the school year to be advised of the policy.
- Schoolyard Strategies:
  - Eating, sitting and no play areas clearly defined, especially those out of sight of teachers.
  - More play direction, ideas given for games – Yr 6 council to co-ordinate games during lunchtime.
  - Yr 6 playground buddies on the junior oval for students to go to if they need help.
  - Teachers reinforce positives with raffle tickets. Listen to grievances and take appropriate action.
  - Play equipment, sport equipment available to each class to use on the playground.
  - Students assemble in undercover area for short assembly and prayer at conclusion of playtime to counter bullying in line.
  - Lunchtime activities organised regularly – board games, chess etc. Each year level timetabled to use the Library throughout the week at playtime.
  - Follow the school’s BMP policy – more serious offences sent to member of leadership team to deal with. Minor offences – time out. All offences are written in playground file by staff on duty and file is checked weekly by leadership team and repeated offenders dealt with.
- Induction of new staff and students:
  - Class teachers to introduce new students to the ‘Code of Conduct’ and ‘Code of Conduct’ sent home to parents.
  - Members of the class to buddy up with new student and show them around the school.
  - Administration staff to discuss program with new staff and make policy accessible.

3. Management of Bullying Incidents

- All parties are expected to treat each other with respect and dignity, and ensure the confidentiality of any issues that may arise.
- Attend to reported instances of bullying behaviour.
- Treat information regarding bullying confidentially.

**ACTION**
- Protect the bullied child from further harm.
- Write down name/s of the bullied child, who reported the incident and the bystander/s.

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**St Francis Xavier Primary School Policy Statement**
- Interview the bullied child to find out what happened.
- Suggest strategies that the bullied student might use to avoid being bullied in the future.
- Individually interview the bystander/s using the Shared Concern Approach. Discuss strategies these students might use to avoid bullying in the future.
- Record what happened on the bullying incident form.
- Send a copy of the form to a member of the leadership team.
- Monitor the situation over the following few days.
- Where necessary, speak to class without using any names, circle time, small group meetings, class meeting box.
- Where appropriate and using discretion, work with parents of the bullied child to assist their child to avoid being bullied in the future. Keep them informed about progress and the measures taken.
- If necessary, where appropriate and using discretion, inform the parents of the child bullying and work with them to establish joint strategies for behaviour modification.

**RESPONSES TO BULLYING INCIDENTS** The Pikas Method of Shared Concern

- Assure the student bullied that the incident will be dealt with.
- When the time becomes available teachers or leadership team talk individually to bullying students first (around 10min maximum).
- Students who are bullied are talked to last (around 10 min maximum).
- Okay, I’ll see you next week to find out how you are getting on.
- Follow up meeting with students who have been bullying.
- Student who was bullied receives support and there may be a follow up with assertiveness training.

**CHALLENGING INCIDENTS – PHYSICAL VIOLENCE OR INTIMIDATION**

- Immediate notification of assistance from a leadership team member or colleague.
- Move student onlookers away.
- Separate students with minimal physical contact.
- Apply Behaviour Management Plan (BMP) guidelines.
- Apply shared concern – students involved in the incident are questioned separately.
- Report of incident to be written up.

**CHALLENGING STUDENTS**

- Collaborative case management of students with persistent aggression or continued victimisation. Develop a collaborative action plan with specified outcomes (school psych, apply a case manager teacher).
- Problem-solving strategies for dealing with disclosures, social skills training.
- Use of sanctions in BMP policy for violent incidents.
References


2 Curriculum Corporation (2000), Mind Matters, Commonwealth of Australia


Friendly Schools and Families Framework (Acerpress)

Related Documents

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)

Friendly Schools and Families Framework

National Safe Schools Framework

St Francis Xavier Primary School Behaviour Management Plan

Bullying Incident Report Form