BULLYING & CYBERBULLYING PREVENTION AND RESPONSE PROCEDURE

Updated 2023

1.0   Rationale

Our Lady of the Way School is a welcoming and inclusive Catholic Community. The school is committed to developing an educational and organisational culture based on mutual trust and respect that assists people to recognise and develop their personal capabilities.

Any type of bullying/cyberbullying is contrary to Gospel values and our Vision Statement. To be inviting, inclusive and just is to ensure that we work to promote the common good in our school.

All children have a right to an education that is free from discrimination, harassment and bullying. Students who are the targets of persistent bullying can suffer long-term psychological, social and developmental damage that can continue into their adult years.

Violence, bullying and harassment affect everyone, not just the targets of bullies and the perpetrators themselves. It also affects those who witness the violence and aggression that is often associated with bullying and the distress and powerlessness of the victim or victims.

Staff at Our Lady of the Way School are committed to developing and implementing policies, procedures and practices that protect students from bullying and cyberbullying behaviours and creating an educational community that is proactive in the promotion of positive behaviours by all students.

2.0   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.

- Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert).

- 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 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.

3.0   The Impact of Bullying

Bullying behaviour stops an individual from feeling comfortable in a school's shared environment. Bullying behaviour can also adversely affect the long-term emotional and social development of the bully. Bullying impacts on the school community as a whole.

Individual students who are bullied may:
- begin to feel worthless and develop poor self-esteem and self-worth;
- experience feelings of isolation and distress in the school environment;
- feel scared and anxious about their personal safety;
- develop emotional and/or psychological problems;
- develop long-term problems in establishing friendships and connections with their peers;
- develop learning and academic delay or difficulties
- become angry and resentful as a result of their ongoing distress and social isolation.
- A bullying culture in a school may result in:
- the development of a school atmosphere of distrust and fear;
- an increase in the number and severity of violent and aggressive acts by students;
- the development of a frustrated and resentful parent community;
- an increase in feelings of powerlessness by significant numbers of students, teachers and parents.

4.0   Roles and Responsibilities

Staff are responsible for:
- Familiarising themselves with the CSPD and school based policies and procedures for preventing and responding to bullying and cyberbullying.

- Promoting positive behaviours with students.
- Ensuring that students have the opportunity to learn appropriate social skills and responsible behaviours through explicit teaching of these behaviours.
- Teaching students to identify, report and respond to instances of bullying.
- Notifying the Principal or their delegate of bullying and ensuring that bullying behaviour is addressed according to CSPD and school procedures.
- Ensuring parents are provided with the appropriate CSPD Bullying Parent Fact Sheet to support their child in the event of a bullying incident (Appendix 1).
- Documenting allegations, investigations, and outcomes.

Students are responsible for:

- Enacting the school's Positive Behaviour Support for Learning expectations.
- Engaging in learning about bullying behaviours and positive responses.
- Reporting incidents of bullying behaviours they witness.
- Modelling effective bystander behaviour.
- Follow all PBS4L and student specific behaviour plans developed by the school to support positive behaviour.

Parents are responsible for:

- Notifying the school if they think their child or another child is experiencing bullying
- Modelling positive social behaviour and relationships in interactions with the school community, including interactions with teachers, other parents and students
- Working collaboratively with the school to promote positive relationships and appropriate behaviour
- Familiarising themselves with the school's Positive Behaviour and Support for Learning framework and Bullying & Cyberbullying Policies and assisting their child in understanding bullying behaviour
- Working with the school to resolve bullying when it occurs

The Principal is responsible for:
- Promoting a positive school climate through the consistent implementation of Positive Behaviour Support for Learning procedures and practices
- Ensuring the school has appropriate policies, training and procedures in place to create and maintain a safe and supportive school environment
- Maintaining partnership with parents and carers in the prevention and appropriate response to bullying behaviours
- Ensuring staff receive regular and ongoing professional learning to prevent, identify and respond to bullying
- Ensuring parents and carers receive regular advice about CSPD and school based anti-bullying and cyberbullying policies and procedures.
- Ensuring parents are provided with the appropriate CSPD Bullying Parent Fact Sheet to support their child in the event of a bullying incident (Appendix 1).
- Responding in a timely fashion to allegations of bullying
- Ensuring the consequences of bullying and cyberbullying include opportunities for students to learn more appropriate social skills.

5.0   Prevention

To prevent bullying at Our Lady of the Way, a holistic school based pastoral care approach is used including the following strategies:
- the consistent use of the whole school Positive Behaviour Support for Learning framework to promote a positive school climate where staff, students, parents and carers know the school's expectations and subsequent responses for inappropriate behaviour choices.
- ongoing tracking and monitoring of student behaviour to identify patterns and possible instances of bullying behaviour.
- the implementation of the annual, Bullying Prevention Action Plan to ensure an ongoing focus on prevention strategies for the whole community.
- PDHPE programmes K-6 that ensure the teaching of all essential 'learn about' and 'learn to' units of work that may relate to bullying behaviours.
- regular professional learning opportunities for all staff to prevent and respond to incidents of bullying.
- ongoing education opportunities for parents / carers in regards to bullying and cyberbullying behaviours and preventative / responsive processes.
- regular monitoring and evaluation of the school's anti-bullying & cyberbullying policies and procedures.

6.0   Responses to Bullying or Cyberbullying

- Complaints concerning bullying must be responded to (see appendix 1) and investigated in a timely manner that respects the dignity and the privacy of those involved, must be consistent and aligned to the Procedural Fairness Guidelines.

- Procedural Fairness; The school will ensure that procedural fairness applies in dealing with any incidents of bullying. Appropriate and timely support, management and resolution of reported incidents of bullying will be offered to all persons involved in these incidents.

- CSPD Bullying Procedures flowchart found in the CSPD, Bullying of Students – Prevention and Response Procedure Appendix 2 will be utilised when managing an alleged incidence of bullying (Appendix 2).
  - The school response to an allegation of bullying;
    - Received notification from child, teacher, parent, carer that bullying has occurred
    - Principal or nominated delegate to document the notification using the relevant Compass Chronicle
    - Principal or nominated delegate to investigate/assess the notification to determine if it meets the definition of bullying, and if so, assess the severity and the frequency of the bullying. This assessment will determine the response
    - Nominated delegates will collaborate with the Principal and or other members of the school Leadership Team to establish responses including consequences for the student/s involved and additional support for the victim

- Serious and ongoing bullying behaviour will necessitate a suspension from school following the CSPD Suspension, Transfer and Exclusion Procedures. Upon re-entry to the school, the student will engage in a restorative process
- Appropriate consequences for bullying behaviour will be applied
- The nominated delegate, 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
- Nominated delegates will communicate the behaviour management plan to relevant staff members, whilst protecting the privacy of the students involved.
  - Principal or nominated delegate assesses who else needs to be notified of the bullying. This notification should be documented.
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  - Principal or nominated delegate provides appropriate and ongoing support to the students involved. This may include counselling or ongoing engagement with a particular teacher. The scope of this support will be dependent on the situation.
    - 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).
  - Principal or nominated delegate monitors the situation and follows up with all parties including witnesses. This monitoring and follow up must be documented.

- For the purpose of this procedure, the term nominated staff refers to any staff member who has been authorised by the principal to investigate or respond to bullying allegations. This may be the Principal, Assistant Principal, Religious Education Coordinator, Instructional Leader.
- If the incident involves alleged acts that are life-threatening or criminal, the school must contact the police and be guided by their instructions and advice.
- When the school believes there may be a risk of significant harm, the school must complete the Mandatory Reporters' Guide and follow the outcome.
- The Police Youth Liaison Officer may need to be advised if the bullying behaviour involves violence or serious threats of harm or alleged criminal conduct. Local Police Stations.

7.0   Off School Premises and Out of School Incidents

- Duty of care is extended to students when they are out of school. Staff are expected to respond to allegations of bullying / cyberbullying where there is knowledge of potential or actual harm to a student.
- The test to apply 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 risk of harm?".

8.0   Documentation

- The Principal and nominated delegate must ensure that the appropriate documentation of notifications and response to bullying is maintained using the relevant Compass Chronicle (Behaviour 2.03 Bullying).
- Documentation should include all responsive strategies including
  - Behaviour Management Plan
  - Consequences
  - Additional supports

8.0   CSDP Policies

The following CSPD policies can be found on OSCAR in Policy Central:
- Bullying of Students – Prevention and Response Procedure
- Wellbeing Policy 2022
- Safeguarding Procedures
- Code of Conduct
- Procedural Fairness Guidelines
- Student Use of Digital Devices and Online Service Policy (External - with Online Service Agreement)
- Suspension, Transfer and Exclusion Procedures
- Weapons Procedures

9.0   Budget
A budget is available for the ongoing professional development of staff and for the purchasing of resources.

10.0   Evaluation
The Principal, with delegated responsibility to the Leadership Team is responsible for the planning, implementation and review of this policy.

Appendix 1

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.'

Appendix 2

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?

YES

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

RECORD IN COMPASS

OR

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

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

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

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

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

YES

Follow the Suspension, Transfer and Exclusion Prodecures.

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

RECORD IN COMPASS

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