

St John's Lutheran School, Kingaroy

Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment Statement and Procedures

PURPOSE OF THE STATEMENT

St John's is implementing this policy to ensure that staff, students, parents and other members of the school community feel safe from bullying or harassment in all its forms. The policy sets out the requirements for dealing with bullying or harassment.

The basic beliefs underlying the policy are:

1. Every individual has value in a community.
2. Every individual has the right to feel safe from bullying or harassment in all its forms.
3. Every conflict can be resolved. Persons aggrieved and those against whom bullying or harassment is alleged both need help to solve conflict.
4. Every individual in a community is responsible for the safety of other individuals in that community.
5. Every individual in a community is responsible for ensuring that other individuals in that community can reach their potential in a supportive and non-threatening environment.

Scope

This policy applies to employees, volunteers, parents/carers/students, and people visiting the school site.

Responsibility

Principal

Point of Contact

School Contact Officer – Assistant to the Principal

DEFINITIONS

“Bullying is repeated oppression, psychological or physical, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person and occurs when someone, or a group of people, upset or create a risk to another person's health and safety, or their property, reputation or social acceptance.”

There are three broad categories of bullying.

- **Direct physical bullying** e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.
- **Direct verbal bullying** e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.
- **Indirect bullying** - This form of bullying is harder to recognise and often carried out behind the bullied victim's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Indirect bullying includes:
 - lying and spreading rumours
 - playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
 - provoking a food-allergic reaction
 - mimicking
 - encouraging others to socially exclude someone
 - damaging someone's social reputation and social acceptance
 - cyber-bullying, which involves the use of email, text messages or chat rooms to humiliate and distress.

Cyber-bullying, or e-bullying, is a reasonably recent type of bullying which involves the use of information and communication technologies such as email, (mobile) phone and text messages, instant messaging (SMS), chat rooms and video internet sites e.g. YouTube. It can be particularly harmful because it can happen anywhere and at any time. Those who are the subject of cyber-bullying have no place where they feel safe. If the bullying is of a serious and threatening nature, then obviously it becomes a legal issue and those who feel aggrieved should seek advice by reporting the matter to the police.

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If bullying amounts to harm as referred to in the school's Child Protection Policy, then the matter must be dealt with under the Child Protection Policy.

What bullying is *not*

Bullying is not:

- **Mutual conflict** where there is an argument or disagreement between persons but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the problem. However, unresolved mutual conflict may develop into a bullying situation.
- **Reasonable management action taken in a reasonable way** by a person's employer in connection with the person's employment.
- **Social rejection or dislike** – It is not feasible to think that every person or student must like every other person or student. A student refusing to play with a particular child, or, for example, not inviting them to a birthday party is not bullying, provided social rejection is not directed towards someone specific and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.
- **Single-episode acts of nastiness or meanness, or random acts of aggression or intimidation.** The difference is that bullying is, by definition, action that happens on **more than one occasion**. However, since schools have a duty of care to provide staff, students and other school community members with a safe and supportive environment, single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression should not be ignored or condoned.

Harassment is any type of unwelcome and unsolicited behavior that can be reasonably expected to cause a person to feel threatened, intimidated, humiliated, offended or unable to cope with their work environment. The test is whether a reasonable person, given all the circumstances, would have anticipated that the behavior would be found offensive, threatening, humiliating, intimidating or offensive.

Harassment can include, for example:

- Displaying offensive pictures or sending by email images and messages that are sexually explicit or based on disability or race.
- Derogatory and unwelcome comments about a person's private life or physical appearance.
- Practical jokes.
- Personal effects or work equipment being removed or damaged.
- Gossip, rumours and innuendo.
- Isolation and segregation.

POLICY

The policy of the St John's Lutheran School is to take a proactive approach to bullying and harassment by establishing processes to educate and inform staff, students and other school community members about bullying and harassment and procedures to follow in the event that a person is being bullied or harassed.

All staff, students, parents and other school community members upon entry to the St John's Lutheran School and all on-going students will be educated about the College's anti-bullying (including cyber-bullying) and anti-harassment guidelines.

If you feel that you have been the subject of bullying or harassment, you should contact the School's nominated Contact Officer who will provide you with advice as to the options available to have your concerns addressed.

False and/or malicious complaints may lead to legal action being taken against a complainant.

With regard to staff, disciplinary action may be taken against anyone who bullies or harasses a co-worker, student, parent or other school community member and may involve a formal warning, counselling, demotion or dismissal, depending on the circumstances.

With regard to students, disciplinary action as per the School's Behaviour Management policies may be taken against a student who bullies or harasses another student, staff member, parent or other school community member.

With regard to parents and other school community members, termination of the enrolment contract or other contract or arrangement between the parents/ other school community member and the School may result in the event a parent or other school community member bullies or harasses another parent, student, staff member or other school community member.

School and Staff Responsibilities

The school will:

- Ensure all staff members are familiar with this policy and provide appropriate professional development on a regular basis, including at the time of induction of new staff members.
- Ensure that all accessible areas of the school are appropriately patrolled.

Staff members will:

- Watch for early signs of distress in students, other staff or school community members. This could be evident in any aspect of school life.
- Ensure they are familiar with this policy.
- Where bullying or harassment is observed, if possible and appropriate, intervene immediately to stop the bullying.
- Offer the victim immediate support.
- Educate all students with regard to their responsibilities as bystanders to a bullying or harassment incident.
- Ensure they do not model bullying or harassing behaviour in interactions they have with students, parents, other staff members or members of the school community.

Student Responsibilities

Students should:

- Report all incidents of bullying or harassment to a trusted senior student, teacher or year level co-ordinator or other staff member.
- Actively support students they know are being bullied or harassed.
- Refuse to become involved in bullying or harassment, including as a bystander.

Parent and Other School Community Member Responsibilities

Parents and Other School Community Members should:

- Watch for early signs of distress in students, parents, staff or other school community members. This could be evident in any aspect of school life.
- Ensure they are familiar with the terms of this policy.
- Offer the person the subject of the bullying and/or harassment immediate support and help.
- Ensure they do not model bullying or harassing behaviour in interactions they have with the school staff, administration, other students or school community members.

In particular for parents:

- watch for signs of distress in their child, such as, unwillingness to attend school, a pattern of headaches or stomach aches, equipment that has gone missing, request for extra pocket money, damaged clothing or bruising. Early contact is essential at this point.
- Take an active interest in their child's social life.
- Report to the school's Contact Person or any other member of school staff if they know, or think, their child is being bullied.
- Keep a written record if the bullying persists: Who, What, Where and When?
- Advise their child to tell a trusted teacher.
- Tell their child that there is nothing wrong with them.
- NOT encourage their child to hit back or respond verbally.

POLICY RELEASE DETAILS

Date of Policy

28th April 2014

Approved by Board

28th April 2014

Review Date

As required / Annual