



Dealing with Bullying and Harassment (Students) Policy

Originally Released: 2002
Reviewed: 2004, 2006 2010,
2014, 2016, 2018
To be reviewed: 2020

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 and harassment in all forms.

Learning outcomes, physical health, emotional, psychological and spiritual well-being can be adversely affected by bullying and harassment.

DEFINITIONS

Bullying involves:

- a desire to hurt
- hurtful behaviour (physical, verbal or relational)
- an imbalance of power
- an unjust use of power
- repetitive (multiple times)
- is experienced by the target of the aggression as oppressive, and by the perpetrator as enjoyable. (Adapted from Rigby 2001)¹

Harassment is any unwanted, unwelcome or uninvited behaviour which makes a person feel humiliated, intimidated or offended. (Adapted from CEO Policy, Harassment in School, 1998). Harassment can be seen as one form of bullying. The terms are often used interchangeably.

Bullying can be characterized as:

- Repetitive, causing distress, not only at the time of the attack but also by the threat of future attacks
- 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 possessions (Mind Matters 2000).²
- Cyber Bullying
- Emotional

PRINCIPLES

1. St. Anthony's School owes a duty of care to their students.
2. St. Anthony's School provide supportive environments, which promote respect for self and others, physical/emotional well being and positive mental health. (Kidsmatter)
3. Dealing with bullying and harassment requires a whole school approach within the school's Pastoral Care Framework.
4. When bullying and harassment are ignored or overlooked, it serves to condone and reinforce the behaviour.

References

1. Rigby, K. (2001) "Stop the bullying. A Handbook for Schools," ACER, Australia
2. Curriculum Corporation (2000), "Mind Matters," Commonwealth of Australia.

What do we do to prevent bullying at St. Anthony's School?

As a learning community, we will not allow cases of bullying to go unchallenged

We will speak up, even at risk to ourselves.

This requires staff to:

- Be role models at all times
- Be observant for signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying
- Remove occasions for bullying by active supervision during yard duty
- Arrive at class on time
- Take steps to help victims and remove sources of distress without placing the victim at further risk
- Report suspected incidents to the child's teacher
- Advise Principal
- Advise School Social Worker
- Inform parents and liaise with them to support the child when necessary
- Educate parents and staff re: social media that's available

This requires students to:

- Offer friendship and support to the victims, encouraging them to seek help from an adult, family or senior student.
- If possible, intervene if and when safe while the bullying is happening by saying "leave him/her alone" or "cut it out"
- Report the incident to a teacher or parent as soon as you can. Don't be afraid to come forward as you can speak in privacy and your identity will be kept anonymous if you desire

Some examples of Bullying include:

- Any form of physical violence such as hitting, pushing or spitting on others
- Interfering with another person's property by stealing, hiding, damaging or destroying it
- Using offensive names, teasing or spreading rumours about others or their families
- Using put-downs, belittling another's abilities and achievements

- Writing offensive notes or graffiti about others (via emails, texts, Instagram etc.)
- Making degrading comments about another's culture, religious or social background
- Hurtfully excluding others from a group
- Making suggestive comments or other forms of sexual abuse
- Ridiculing another person's appearance
- Forcing others to act against their will

If children are bullied:

- they may feel frightened, unsafe, embarrassed, angry or unfairly treated
- their work, sleep and ability to concentrate may suffer
- their relationships with their family, teachers and friends may deteriorate
- they may feel confused and not know what to do about the problem
- their school work and school involvement may be affected

Signs that a Student is being Bullied

Signs that a student is being bullied are sometimes obvious and sometimes they remain hidden. This is characteristic of many forms of child abuse. Some possible indicators are:

Class/School Attendance

- Refusal or reluctance to attend school
- Lateness for school
- Reluctance to leave school at the end of the day
- Constant use of the library
- Regularly feeling unwell at school (e.g. stomach ache)

Academic

- Significant decrease in work output and standard of work diminishes
- Lacks concentration in class or on homework tasks
- Problems with retention and short-term memory

Physical

- Tiredness
- Bed wetting (especially younger children)
- Loss of appetite
- Unexplained bruises and injury
- Torn clothing
- Feeling unwell

Emotional

- Swings in mood (e.g. anger, teary)

Social (Cyberbullying – Social Media)

- Withdrawal from social activities with peers
- Withdrawal from extra-curricular activities

Other signs from home

- Requests to change transport arrangements to and from school
- Requests for extra money
- Taking and “losing” valuables from home
- Sudden reluctance to do things in the community, eg. Go to the shops, swimming pool etc

School's Response to Bullying

Different situations may require different strategies and consequences.

Possible Approaches/Consequences for bullying behaviour.

- “Inappropriate Behaviour Form” from child, explaining behaviour
- Counseling with class teacher using the Pikas Method of Shared Concern (see below)
- Withdrawal from school activities
- Professional support from Social Worker - Parent informed
- Principal Interview
- Policy work with Principal at ‘in-school detention’
- Parent / Principal / Teacher interview
- In-school suspension

The Pikas Method of Shared Concern

- A. Assure the student bullied that the incident will be dealt with.
- B. When the time becomes available teachers or administrators talk individually to bullying students first (7 minutes max.) To enlist their support for the students being bullied.
- C. Students who are bullied are talked to last (7 minutes max.)
- D. Okay, I'll see you next week to find out how you are getting on.
- E. Follow up meeting with students who have been bullying to discuss consequences (see above).
- F. Student who was bullied receives support and there may be a follow up with assertiveness training.

Documentation of issues pertaining to the above approaches/consequences should be placed on the student's record card.

St Anthony's is part of National Safe Schools Framework initiative and uses as its reference point the “Keeping Kids Safe” approach. An Anti-Bullying pamphlet has been issued to each family and to all new families when their enrolment is confirmed and the family begins school life at St Anthony's.