

Anti-Bullying Policy



*St Francis of Assisi
Primary School*



Anti-Bullying Policy

Rationale

At St Francis of Assisi Primary School our Pastoral Care and Student Behaviour Management Policy is founded on the following beliefs which we all share.

- Every person is an individual and should be treated as such
- Every person is entitled to respect and dignity
- Every child should know that he or she is loved and cared for under all circumstances
- Every child is growing and striving for perfection, following the model of Jesus and our patron saint, St Francis of Assisi.

St Francis of Assisi seeks to be a place of acceptance, affirmation and justice. We believe that bullying strikes at the very basis of these values and prevents students from reaching for excellence in every dimension of their lives. Students are entitled to receive their education free from humiliation, harassment, oppression and abuse.

Bullying affects everyone, not just the bullies and the victims. It also affects those other people who may witness violence, intimidation and the distress of the victim. The latter may especially affect family relationships. Bullying can also damage the atmosphere of a class and even the climate of a school.

In accordance with these beliefs, we at St Francis of Assisi Primary School do not tolerate bullying of any child by another child or a group of students. We insist that natural justice and due process be extended to both the victim and the bully.

Aim

The St Francis of Assisi Primary School Anti Bullying Policy is intended to:

- provide a safe, happy, positive learning environment for the students and staff
- create a supportive climate for victims
- provide a basis for working with the bully to modify future behaviour.

'We all have a right to feel safe all the time.

Nothing is so bad that we cannot tell someone about it.'



Definition

Bullying is the misuse of power, position and privilege. It is done to intimidate, coerce, to engender fear and to control. Bullying can take a number of forms: physical, verbal, emotional, racist or sexual. Bullying consists of repetitive and persistent behaviours of an ongoing nature that are used to upset or hurt another person. Bullying can be systematic (involving a method or plan) and refer to a range of behaviours over time. Bullying results in risks to health and safety including risks to a person's emotional, mental and physical health.

We believe that for an incident to be classified as bullying, three factors normally need to be involved:

- an imbalance of power (a group of students against a single child; an older child against a younger child; a physically stronger child against a weaker one);
- the behaviour is intentional in a premeditated sense; and
- the behaviour is usually, but not always, repeated.

Allegations of bullying are investigated and analysed according to the circumstances for each individual case.

Examples of Bullying include:

- Any form of repeated physical violence such as hitting, punching or kicking others.
- Interfering with another's property by stealing, hiding, damaging or destroying it.
- Using offensive names or spreading rumours about others and their families.
- Using put downs, belittling others' abilities and achievements.
- Writing offensive notes about others. This includes writing offensive words.
- Using ICT and/or social media to spread rumours about others, or to threaten others.
- Hurtfully excluding others from a group.



- Using intimidation in order to force others to act against their will.
- A group of students, operating as a unit, verbally or physically harassing another student.
- This behaviour might not need to be repeated to be considered an example of bullying.

Implementation

A Whole School Approach

Research has shown that a reduction in school violence and bullying occurs when a whole school approach is adopted. A whole school approach provides a prepared and supportive foundation so the challenges can be more effectively met and is align with our School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) framework. It encompasses both prevention and response. With adequate prevention strategies in place the need for intervention is often reduced.

Prevention

Teachers, parents and students themselves can all take actions that assist in preventing or 'heading off' potential incidents of bullying.

Teachers

Teachers are positive role models. They have a duty of care to do their best to make sure students are safe. They model inclusiveness, compassion, respect and good conflict-resolution skills. They play a major part in ensuring that classrooms are environments in which the harassment of others is discouraged and collaborative, respectful interactions between colleagues and students are encouraged.

Playground

Teachers are aware of the need to look for signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying by actively patrolling areas during playground duty. Teachers report supervision concerns and address issues as they arise engaging in restorative justice practices. Teachers need to ensure they arrive to class lines on time.



Many incidents of verbal or physical abuse take place in the few minutes at the end of lunch or recess, before classes begin formally. Arriving promptly at class lines reduces the likelihood for tensions to escalate towards an unfortunate outcome. It is a teacher's responsibility to assume duty of care promptly after supervision ends at recess or lunch.

Classrooms

The Staff at St Francis of Assisi will review at the start of each year the school rules and review 'Protective behaviours'. Included within this program are lessons that skill children in identifying bullying, reporting bullying, resilience and dealing with bullying when confronted. Strategies to solve conflict situations are explored, including role playing scenarios that might be considered examples of bullying. Students will be taught the 'Three Steps' approach to dealing with an unwanted situation, which comprises of 'Talk', 'Walk' & 'Tell'.

Teachers will encourage students to follow these steps on the playground as a first attempt to deal with an unwanted situation.

Talk: 'Do not XXX to me. I don't like it. It makes me feel XXXX when you say that to me.'

Walk: Students walk away from the offending party and say, 'I have asked you to stop XXX. I don't like it. I am now going to tell an adult.'

Tell: The student informs a teacher of what has happened.

Note: this strategy applies to low level behaviour (i.e. a student taking, as a one-off occasion, another child's ruler). Any act of actual physical violence, is to be dealt with immediately by telling a teacher. Students are NOT to employ the Talk, Walk & Tell strategy in situations that involve violence. They are to seek immediate help from a teacher.



Examples of School Anti-bullying Practices

At St Francis of Assisi, we emphasise the positive and encourage right relationships among students through participation in the following practices:

- PD/H/PE Curriculum including Protective Behaviours
- Rule Reminders/Role playing situations
- Unacceptable Behaviours Procedure
- Increased staff awareness of potential 'trouble spots'
- Extra supervision if required
- Police 'Kenny Koala' Visits
- Contact with parents/carers
- Year/class meetings
- Observing early warning signs of distress
- Behaviour modification plans eg Communication books
- Access to the Counsellor
- Empowering all students (often the bystanders) to prevent bullying behaviours occurring
- Whole school focus
- Religious Education lessons
- Values Education
- Liturgies/Masses
- Assemblies/Prayer Assemblies
- Social skills teaching
- Life Education lessons / Centacare sessions/Seasons for Growth
- Children negotiate class rules and consequences at the beginning of the year in line with the school wide positive behaviour practice and often remind students of rules.



Parents

As in all matters of school life, parents are invaluable in the assistance they can give teachers to prevent bullying from taking place. Consequently, parents are informed at the beginning of each year about the school's anti-bullying policy. They are informed of warning signs that may indicate that their child is being bullied, or is doing the bullying.

Parents are encouraged to contact the school immediately if they think that their child is the victim or perpetrator of bullying.

At St Francis of Assisi we want all our students to develop, maintain and enjoy positive and respectful relationships at play, school and home. Bullying incidents can occur at all ages and in all situations. Therefore it is part of the role of parents as co-educators to try to prepare their children to deal with potential conflicts.

They should encourage their child/ren to:

- believe in themselves
- be assertive
- be resilient and bounce back from social difficulties which can occur in all group situations.

Students

Students are encouraged to manage themselves and their relationships. Therefore they require opportunities to practise and develop skills that enhance resilience, in particular negotiation, conflict resolution, problem solving, communication and help-seeking. Students are encouraged to inform adults when they are being bullied or see a bullying incident.

They are actively encouraged to practise the following behaviours:

- 'I' Statements – useful to show feelings towards bullies
- Avoiding places where bullying might take place
- Seeking out friends



- Being assertive
- Using a really strong, loud voice
- Being confident
- Putting on a brave front
- Discussing issue with a teacher
- Talking to friends
- Talking to parents or carers

If a bully does not have a supportive audience, often he/she either will not proceed with his/her plan or will be swayed by the actions of the bystanders. All students need to be trained to recognise a bullying act and to immediately get assistance for the victim. Their actions may involve:

- warning the potential victim of an impending bullying incident
- staying with the potential victim
- verbally supporting the potential victim
- leaving the incident to find an adult.

Students will explore themes in Religious Education Programs and make connections between the values of St Francis of Assisi and our Catholic faith and the way in which we treat others at school and in the wider community.

Students are also reminded of the term 'no put downs'. This includes any verbal comments designed to put down or humiliate the victim. Calling the victim names, swearing at the victim, using threatening language and using language in order to ostracise or exclude, all come under the heading of 'no put downs'.

School Counsellor

He/she is also available to assist with developing the skills outlined above.

Steps to counter bullying: Management measures

St Francis of Assisi caters for over 450 students in the age range of 5 – 12 years. As a consequence there are a multitude of student interactions each day. The vast



majority of these interactions are positive and harmonious; inevitably some will be negative.

Negative peer interactions (usually not bullying)

Some negative interactions that can occur among students are minor and require little or no intervention by an adult. Beyond this, some of the students are apt on occasions to express their feelings about another child or their unhappiness with an action directed against them. Often this can involve a physical reaction. While incidents of these kinds involve inappropriate behaviour and directly break school/class rules regularly discussed with students, they do not usually amount to bullying if there is no imbalance of power; the incident is a response to a 'one off' set of circumstances, and no pre-meditated malice or intent is established.

Incidents involving careless through to inappropriate behaviour will attract some type of reconciliation which will vary according to the seriousness of the individual incident. (Refer Student Management Procedures).

St Francis of Assisi Primary School prides itself on healthy & positive relationships. This reflects the school's Catholic ethos and spirituality and the belief that all people are sacred. In this light, the Bullying Policy seeks to restore relationships that are damaged by bullying. St Francis of Assisi undertakes a restorative approach to incidents of bullying. However, in the event that an incident of bullying is found to have taken place, there are also consequences for the student using inappropriate behaviour. These consequences may include the student addressing ways that he/she can mend the relationship. Depending upon the frequency and seriousness of the bullying, consequences may also include the student being excluded from the playground for a period of time.

Playground Incidents

Any acts of physical or verbal abuse or violence (verbal violence here means swearing at a child or calling him/her a name) that take place on the playground will result in the student being sent to 'Think Time'. The 'Think Time' teacher will deal



with the situation accordingly, as per the *St Francis of Assisi Student Behaviour Management Policy*. He/she will determine if the incident is a 'one off' incident or part of a wider pattern of repeated abuse (i.e. bullying).

If the incident is determined to be a case of bullying, follow the steps listed in this policy. (see Steps to Manage Bullying)

Classroom Incidents

Classroom incidents of poor behaviour are dealt with by the class teacher (see *Student Management Policy*). Any incidents that involve violence of any description directed from one student to another, while still being dealt with by the class teacher, are also recorded as per the *Student Management Policy*. The classroom teacher, having dealt with the incident as per the *Student Management Policy*, also records the incident on a 'Think Time' form. If the teacher believes this is a bullying incident, they are to report this to the Assistant principal.

Steps to Manage Bullying

If the Assistant Principal/Principal in consultation with the School Leadership Team determines that an act of bullying has taken place, the following steps are followed:

Clarification

1. The alleged victim is interviewed separately. The interview is recorded in written form. Students are provided a copy of the written record and have a chance to make changes or additions.
2. The student/s alleged to having been engaged in bullying behaviours are interviewed. If there is more than one student involved, they are interviewed separately. The interview is recorded in written form. Students are provided a copy of the written record and have a chance to make changes or additions.
3. Consultation with all parents occurs at this stage. It is important that the parents' perspective is heard and acted upon.



Consequences

1. The student who has acted inappropriately has a lunchtime 'Think-Time' (if he/she has not already spent lunchtime at 'Think-Time').
2. The parents of all parties are contacted by a member of the Leadership Team.
3. A restorative approach is adopted where appropriate. St Francis of Assisi Primary School values right relationships and consequently time is made available for the student and victim to mend the relationship if it is determined that such a process is in the best interest of all parties. However, this takes place within a context that values above all else, the feelings and sensitivities of the victim. The possibility of a meeting only takes place if the parents of the victim, the Principal and the Assistant Principal believe that the victim is ready to meet the student who has acted inappropriately. Any attempt to bring the victim and student together only takes place with both sets of parents understanding the process that is taking place. The student who has acted inappropriately is encouraged to take the initiative in developing solutions to mend the relationship.
4. If bullying occurs again between the same parties then steps 1 – 3 are followed. In addition: parents are contacted again and discussion ensues pertaining to consequences and behaviour, such as the following:
 - (i) If the bullying has taken place on the playground, the student will be excluded from the playground at recess & lunch for a period of no longer than 5 school days.
 - (ii) If the bullying has taken place in the classroom, the student will be withdrawn from class for an In-School suspension for a period of time.
5. Parents of the student who has acted inappropriately are asked to meet with Assistant Principal and Principal.
6. The parents will be asked if the student can see the Counsellor (if not already involved).



7. At the discretion of the Principal, and after consultation with the Catholic Education Office, the student may be suspended from school. Any action that goes further than a suspension will take place under the conditions set out in the St Francis of Assisi Student Behaviour Management Policy.

8. The Principal, Assistant Principal and classroom teacher will design a plan of positive action and this will be monitored daily.

Victim

1. Parents are informed of the situation and kept informed of steps taken by the school.
2. The victim meets with the student who has acted inappropriately. A restorative approach is taken with the all parties with the emphasis on mending the relationship. This only takes place if the parents of the student, the Principal and the Assistant Principal believe that the victim is ready to meet with the student. Any such meeting only takes place after both sets of parents have been informed.
3. The victim is encouraged to develop strategies that rely on assertive behaviour. A support network of friends is developed for the victim.
4. Class teacher, Coordinator and the Assistant Principal monitor the situation regularly.
5. Parents are kept informed at all times of the process.
6. A dialogue book may be kept by the victim to record incidents over the ensuing weeks.
7. A follow up interview will take place after two weeks with parents and victim.

Passive Participants

1. Discuss expectations e.g. reporting to teacher etc.
2. Invite them to be part of the victim's support group (if appropriate).



Cyber Bullying

Purpose:

Cyber bullying occurs in on-line environments where there are no responsible adults present therefore it is important that young people are taught to independently prevent cyber bullying and to address the underlying issues. Curriculum programs incorporating social skills and values education, direct teaching of "netiquette," and implementation of policies in Protective Behaviours, Internet Use, Mobile Phones and Pastoral Care all attempt to address issues that may arise related to cyber bullying.

Policy:

Bullying in all forms, including cyber-bullying, is unacceptable. In addition, cyberbullying is an offence, as electronically communicated threats are crimes.

All students are to comply with St Francis of Assisi's Student Guide For Internet Use
This includes:

- Spreading rumours or false information about others.
- Sending rude, harassing or threatening messages.
- Creating websites that ridicule, humiliate or intimidate others.
- Posting on websites or disseminating embarrassing or inappropriate pictures or images of others.
- Never revealing personal passwords to anyone, including friends.

Definitions:

Cyber-bullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies, mediums such as mobile phone text messages, emails, phone calls, internet chat rooms, instant messaging and the latest trend social networking websites such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat etc. Victims can be reached anytime and anyplace.



Procedures:

1. All computer and online access at school is to occur under teacher supervision.
2. Students are to be made aware of school policy regarding information and communication technologies, including explicit teaching of “netiquette,” and mobile phone use.
3. Student access to inappropriate sites is to be restricted, and monitored by the school’s Information Technology Coordinator.
4. Student non-compliance may include such consequences as suspension of Internet access and computer accounts, and/or confiscation of mobile phones.
5. Parents are to be informed.
6. Further action is at the discretion of the Principal.

References

<http://www.michaelcarr-gregg.com.au/>

McGrath, H & Noble, T; Bullying Solutions, N.S.W., Pearson Education, 2006.

Related Policies

- Child Protection Policies CE
- Complaints Policy CE
- Pastoral Care Policy CE
- Supervision of Students Policy CE
- Discipline Policy CE
- Restraint of Students Policy CE
- Sexual Harassment Policy CE
- Suspension of Students Policy CE
- Exclusion or Expulsion Policy CE
- Mandatory Reporting
- Crisis Management Policy
- Staff Administration Handbook
- Student Welfare and Management Policy



**Together we are Peacemakers who
grow and learn in the footsteps of Jesus**

Anti-Bullying Policy

- Codes of Conduct for members of the school community Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Mobile Phone Use Policy
- Internet Use Policy
- Excursion Policy

Approved by: St Francis of Assisi Primary School Community Council

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