DEALING WITH BULLYING, HARASSMENT, AGGRESSION AND VIOLENCE (STUDENTS) POLICY

Staff responsible:	Principal
Updated:	2017
Review:	2018
Related school documents:	**Exclusion of Students for Disciplinary Reasons**

1. Rationale

St Francis' School has a responsibility to provide an environment that promotes the dignity and respect of the person. Hence one of its aims is to encourage the development of positive relationships between students to reduce all forms of bullying, harassment, aggression and violence. St Francis' School will employ policies and practices that will endeavour to enhance the dignity of the human person.

Not only learning outcomes, physical health and emotional wellbeing can be adversely affected by bullying, harassment, aggression and violence, but also psychological and spiritual well being. Students who are bullied, subjected to aggression or harassed tend to have poorer health, lower self-esteem, more interpersonal difficulties, higher levels of loneliness, depression, suicidal ideation and increased anxiety. A higher likelihood of dislike of and want to avoid school may lead to higher absenteeism and lower academic competence. The effects of bullying can begin early in life and, for some, last a lifetime.

The Australian Government's National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF) adopts a whole school approach to safety and wellbeing. It provides a comprehensive range of evidence-informed practices to guide schools in preventing and responding to incidents of harassment, aggression, violence and bullying and to implement their responsibilities in relation to child protection issues.

The National Safe Schools Framework is based on the following overarching vision:
All Australian schools are safe, supportive and respectful teaching and learning communities that promote student wellbeing.

In the NSSF, a safe and supportive school is described in the following way:

In a safe and supportive school, the risk from all types of harm is minimised, diversity is valued and all members of the school community feel respected and included and can be confident that they will receive support in the face of any threats to their safety or wellbeing.

The Guiding Principles of the National Safe Schools framework

This Framework is underpinned by the following guiding principles that represent fundamental beliefs about safe, supportive and respectful school communities. These guiding principles emphasise the importance of student safety and wellbeing as a pre-requisite for effective learning in all school settings.

Australian schools:
- *affirm the rights of all members of the school community to feel safe and be safe at school*

- *acknowledge that being safe and supported at school is essential for student wellbeing and effective learning*

- *accept responsibility for developing and sustaining safe and supportive learning and teaching communities that also fulfil the school's child protection responsibilities*

- *encourage the active participation of all school community members in developing and maintaining a safe school community where diversity is valued*

- *actively support young people to develop understanding and skills to keep themselves and others safe*

- *commit to developing a safe school community through a whole-school and evidence-based approach*

The nine key elements that schools need to have in place to implement the NSSF are described in the Framework as:
1. *Leadership commitment to a safe school*

2. *A supportive and connected school culture*

3. *Policies and procedures*

4. *Professional learning*

5. *Positive behaviour management*

6. *Engagement, skill development and safe school curriculum*

7. *A focus on student wellbeing and student ownership*

8. *Early intervention and targeted support*

9. *Partnerships with families and community*

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, 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).

2. Definitions

Bullying is when, over a period of time, an individual or a group intentionally harm a person, who finds it hard to stop this behaviour from continuing.

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, electronic or cyber which may also apply to the following points)

- physical - hitting, tripping, punching, throwing objects, stealing

- social – ignoring, hiding, ostracizing

- psychological – stalking, threatening looks, spreading rumours, damaging possessions

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, 2003).

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3. Scope

This policy applies to all students enrolled at St Francis' School.

4. Principles

4.1 St Francis' School is a safe and supportive environment where the Guiding Principles and Key Elements of the National Safe Schools Framework are practiced in conjunction with the principles of the Circle of Courage and restorative practices to manage student behaviour.

4.2 St Francis' School owes a duty of care to its students.

4.3 St Francis' School provides a supportive environment which:
- acts to prevent instances of bullying, harassment, aggression and violence
- encourages socially appropriate behaviour using positive behaviour management and direct teaching of curriculum in areas such as interpersonal and self-management skills
- promotes respect for self and other
- develops physical/emotional well-being and resiliency
- develops interpersonal skills and positive mental health

4.4 Responding to bullying, harassment, aggression and violence requires quality leadership and role modelling to facilitate strategy implementation and sustained change, together with a whole community approach that is consistent with the School's Behaviour Mangement Framework, the School's Pastoral Care practices and the School's Vision and Principles, which partners with parents/guardians and other agencies.

4.5 Bullying, harassment, aggression and violence may occur outside of the school. When these behaviours impact on a student's learning and behaviour in the school, action will be taken to support the continued wellbeing of those involved.

4.6 All bullying, harassment, aggression and violence shall be responded to. When bullying, harassment, aggression 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.

4.7 While the aim is to promote and encourage positive behaviour, school policy and procedures 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 will be given to other circumstances which may have bearing such as family or mental health matters.

4.8 All parties to incidents of bullying, harassment, aggression and violence are entitled to appropriate support.

5   Procedures

5.1 The School's policy on bullying, harassment, aggression and violence is based on a comprehensive risk and needs assessment, which includes:

5.1.1 that the school shall not tolerate bullying, harassment, aggression and violence and which encourages all members of the school community to take a pro-active stance that promotes safety and wellbeing

5.1.2 that the school recognises that bullying is, when, over a period of time, an individual or a group intentionally target a person in a negative way, who then finds it hard to stop this behaviour from continuing.

Additionally, bullying causes distress, not only at the time of the attack but also by the threat of future attacks.

There is an intention to hurt. Its nature may be:
- verbal   in the form of name-calling, put-downs, threats (spoken, written, electronic or cyber   which may also apply to the following points)
- physical by hitting, tripping, punching, throwing objects, stealing

- social by obviously ignoring, hiding, ostracizing
- psychological by engaging in stalking, threatening looks, spreading rumours, damaging possessions

Harassment is any unwanted, unwelcome or uninvited behaviour which makes a person feel humiliated, intimidated or offended. Harassment can be seen as one form of bullying.

5.1.3 that the school recognises the need to promote cybersafety to avoid cyberbullying, cyberharassment and sexting

5.1.4 that the school affirms the rights of all members of the school community to feel safe and be safe at school and off school grounds that involve or affect students and staff

5.1.5 strategies and responses (including curricula, programs and pedagogy and, where School resources are limited, forming partnerships with parents, families and the wider community) to address:
- the development of supportive environments, positive relationships and student connectedness to the Institute
- social decision making and empowerment of students
- skills in conflict resolution
- promotion of tolerance and understanding, the encouragement of inclusion and the celebration of difference
- acceptance of difference, and, a culture of cooperation, empathy and respect
- the resolution of bullying incidents involving those who bully or aggress and those who are bullied or subject to aggression and which includes the early and appropriate involvement of parents
- the support and restoration to wellbeing of students who have been harmed by hurtful behaviour. This includes working with parents and families to assist in retaining a connectedness to the Institute and facilitating reintegration in those whose attendance may have lapsed as a consequence of bullying, harassment, aggression or violence
- the amelioration of the behaviour and attitudes of students who bully
- the pro-active engagement of bystanders to discourage bullying behaviour
- the broader needs of the community
- the prevailing attitudes within the Institute including the 'culture' of the Institute to promote safety and wellbeing
- teaching and learning programs to support the strategies and promote good citizenship skills in students, staff and parents

5.1.6 school support systems that promote positive social health, mental health, safety and wellbeing

5.1.7 reporting, recording and data collection procedures to be used when investigating incidents, as a basis to facilitate evaluation and justify any modification to approach, and to inform prevention and management activities

5.1.8 a case management model to be used when bullying, harassment, aggression or violent behaviours persist

5.1.9 a statement on appropriate confidentiality

5.2 The policy shall be developed using a broad consultative and educative process

involving students, staff, parents and families. The completed policy should refer to any other relevant policies or procedures and should be disseminated and promoted to the Institute community.

5.3 The school shall provide professional development and appropriate resourcing to meet the needs of the staff in implementing the policy.

5.4 The policy developed shall be monitored and regularly reviewed. A recommended period is every 3 years or immediately following any incident that raises issues in respect to policy and practice.

6   References
CEWA Policy Statement 2-D6 Dealing with Bullying, Harassment, Aggression and Violence (Students)