



## **POLICY – Anti-Bullying**

### **Policy Statement**

St Paul's College is committed to ensuring that members of our community are provided with a safe, positive, and inclusive environment that values and respects the God-given uniqueness of each person.

### **Rationale**

As a Lutheran College, we believe that God has created each person as a unique individual with distinctive characteristics, gifts and abilities, strengths, and weaknesses. Acts 10:34 states that 'God does not show favouritism' and Mark 12:31 commands us to 'Love your neighbour as yourself'. We also acknowledge that relationships can break down and students need guidance and education to understand how their behaviour can impact others. Our approach is to be preventative and proactive, developing restorative practices to help students be in respectful relationships with their peers and maintain a positive, caring, and inclusive environment. We acknowledge that there are times when unacceptable student behaviours become repeated over time and that our approach to this repeated behaviour requires significant consequences in response.

### **Responsibilities/Relationships**

Related Policies and Procedures	Student Health Policy Wellbeing and Boarding procedure documentations as relevant Child Protection Policy Grievance Policy and Procedures
Legislation	NSW Ombudsman Act 1974 No 68 Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 No 157 Disability Discrimination Act 1992 Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) Act 1986 Racial Discrimination Act 1975 Racial Hatred Act 1995 Sex Discrimination Act 1984.
Key Relationships/People	Executive Team and Manager, Executive Services Wellbeing Team Boarding Team

### **Definitions**

A student is being bullied or victimised when they are exposed repeatedly and over time to negative actions on the part of one or more other students. (Olweus 1993).

Bullying is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationship through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who are unable to stop it from happening

### **Examples of Bullying**

Bullying may include: -

- hurting physically
- damaging/stealing belongings
- name calling, insults, spreading rumours, giving nasty look
- drawing attention to one's weaknesses
- excluding people from activities
- deliberately ignoring someone
- playing practical jokes
- getting others to join in the harmful behaviour
- sending offensive phone or electronic messages
- Offensive graffiti
- making untoward advances, sexual jokes, commenting on sexual orientation

*It is important to realise that for Bullying to exist, incidents must take place REPEATEDLY over time. A one-off disagreement or teasing does not constitute Bullying.*

### **Strategies to counter bullying behaviour**

The College has instituted a range of strategies to counter harassment and bullying. These strategies are based on the following principles:

- Every member of the College has the right to be treated with dignity and respect and to enjoy positive relationships with all members of the College community
- All members of the College community have the right to expect to be able to learn and teach in a safe and caring environment that promotes the virtues of self-worth and personal growth
- Not everyone will be liked by everyone else, but everyone can and should respect each other's personality differences and be polite and kind
- Any behaviour which stops an individual from feeling comfortable in this shared environment may be a form of bullying or harassment and is not condoned
- We cannot assume that there will not be instances of bullying or harassment wherever children and young people gather
- Children and young people therefore need to be taught not to tease, intimidate, harass, insult, spread rumours, exclude, stare at, hit, pinch, bite, spit upon, apply pressure or do anything to another individual of which they do not consent
- Staff must model in words and actions the Christian principles on which harmonious interpersonal relations are based including involving students in peer mentoring, year meetings, dormitory meetings, guest speakers, and bullying workshops
- Staff receive ongoing training in anti-bullying techniques
- All reported incidents will be thoroughly investigated in an impartial and transparent manner following the procedures outlined in the College Grievance Policy
- Teaching students how to relate properly to one another and how to handle instances of bullying is an ongoing process
- Students need to be taught by their parents and teachers how to take initiative themselves to deal with problems of harassment without always having to rely on adult intervention

- Students and staff, and families who are the subjected to any form of bullying or harassment must be supported
- The perpetrators of bullying behaviour must accept responsibility for their behaviour. It should be noted that inappropriate use of any technology such as mobile phones, e-mail or the internet to intimidate, identify, bully or defame students, teachers or the College will be responded to seriously, including by 'show cause' and the possibility of expulsion. Misuse of technology can lead to criminal charges of stalking, threats, assault and breaches of the Child Protection and Defamation laws.
- Students who are the victims of bullying or harassment must be encouraged to report instances of such behaviour to a teacher as soon as possible so that appropriate action can be taken

As a response to bullying behaviours:

- Where appropriate, students will be guided through a restorative approach to repair relationships including mediated individual and joint conversations to gain understanding of both parties' intentions, responses, impacts, and hopes.
- If resolution cannot be reached and bullying continues, it should be reported to a staff member for further follow-up and consequences.
- A person witnessing bullying is asked to support the person being bullied, tell the person doing the bullying to stop, and to report bullying behaviour to a staff member.
- Depending on its severity, the College's response to bullying may involve a formal warning, with repetitions of bullying behaviour progressing onto a formal warning with notification to the parents, internal suspension, external suspension and eventually expulsion.
- Counselling available for those bullied and bullying
- Confidentiality and privacy require that all staff ensure that information regarding students is restricted to those who need to know.
- Record to be kept in the confidential section of school information system

### **Principles**

Our accepted rules for action include:

- Establishing that duty of care of all persons is taken seriously by the College
- Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of every person in the College is paramount
- Addressing inappropriate behaviour

### **Responsibilities**

#### 1. Principal

- 1.1 To ensure relevant members of Wellbeing Team understand and implement the policy.
- 1.2 To apply consequences as needed.
- 1.3 To notify relevant authorities, agencies, and College Chair/Board as appropriate.

#### 2. College Staff - to monitor, report and address situations as they arise

### **References**

Olweus, D. (1993). *Bullying at school: What we know and what we can do*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing

**Review**

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