



QUALITY RELATIONSHIPS

POLICY ON BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

*“what makes the Catholic school distinctive is its attempt to generate a community climate in the school that is permeated by the gospel spirit of freedom and love.”
The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School #1*

VALUE BASE

This policy aims to provide a fair and supportive environment free of bullying and harassment behaviours that promotes mutual respect and provides physical and emotional safety for all.

RATIONALE

St Mary's High School considers bullying and harassment to be unacceptable and it will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Such behaviour has no place in a faith community, which exists to proclaim and witness to the love of God for each individual and among one another. In our Christian community great value is placed on a sense of family, belonging, and care.

St Mary's High School has the responsibility to foster an educational environment where there aren't any barriers to learning and where all students, staff, parents and visitors feel safe and valued.

What is Bullying and Harassment?

Bullying/Harassment is when people intentionally use their power to hurt, scare or put down others. It can be done by an individual or a group. It can be carried out physically, emotionally, sexually or verbally.

Bullying/Harassment is any form of behaviour that is not wanted, and not asked for, which humiliates a person.

This type of behaviour is UNWANTED, UNWELCOME, UNSOLICITED and is usually PERSISTENT.

As such, it undermines the rights of the individual and erodes morale in our Christian community. Bullying diminishes the very values that this school seeks to promote.

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At St Mary's High School our goal is to maintain and develop relationships based on Gospel values and in the spirit of our motto "**Reach Out**".

Bullying is when a person tries to hurt, threaten, intimidate or embarrass someone else (the victim) as a way of making themselves (the bully) feel better. This is usually repeated behaviour.

Everyone has rights – all members of the St Mary's community have the right to:

- feel safe and comfortable at school.
- travel to and from school feeling safe.
- learn and no-one has the right to stop others from learning.

Pastoral Care

Pastoral Care is achieved or forfeited in the quality of relationships established in the school. In the school's daily and routine life, the ways in which people interact with one another are a significant determinant of each person's self worth, belonging and well being. The fostering of high quality interpersonal relationships among staff, students and parents is a responsibility shared with everyone.

Quality Relationships

Because quality relationships provide everyone with an environment where pastoral care can thrive, we specifically believe that quality relationships:

- Respect each person as an individual with unique talents and gifts.
- Acknowledge and work towards improvements.
- Demonstrate trust, acceptance and forgiveness.
- Work towards developing each individual and promoting emotional health and well being.
- Promote a safe and productive learning environment.
- Demonstrate the importance of celebration and affirmation in the school community.

Quality relationships are an expectation and the responsibility of all members of the St Mary's community. We believe that quality relationships don't just happen, they require planning, reflection and commitment by individuals. Through our relationships we give substance to our vision statements.

In our relationships with each other, all members of the community should:

- Offer positive comments and affirm each other.
- Promote genuine dialogue that treats the other with respect i.e. voices remain calm, even in disagreement and there is a genuine attempt to understand each other.
- Recognise that quality relationships help promote emotional health and well being, and are beneficial for everyone.
- Teach and model positive behaviour to everyone with whom we come in contact.

AT ST MARY'S WE DON'T TOLERATE THE FOLLOWING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOURS

Physical Harassment - Hitting, pushing, kicking

Social Harassment - Exclusion, spreading rumours

Verbal Harassment - Threats, put-downs, pranks, name-calling, standover tactics, teasing

Sexual Harassment - Inappropriate touching, gestures or comments about another person's moral or private life

Economic Harassment - Stealing money or property, not paying debts, ridiculing clothing

Cultural Harassment - Racist remarks, language or insults

Psychological Harassment - Standover tactics and gestures

Religious Harassment - Ridiculing beliefs and practices

These behaviours can be carried out in the following ways:

- To staff, students and parents
- To individuals or groups
- By telephone, text message, in writing or e-mail and via direct or indirect means

POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Physical Consequences - Headaches, anxiety-related illnesses, eating disorders

Social Consequences - Isolation, reduced school attendance or involvement, absence from activities

Verbal Consequences - Depression, lowered self-esteem, diminished confidence, fear

Sexual Consequences - Delayed development, loss of identity, distortion about image and body image

Economic Consequences - Loss of books, equipment, hardship

Cultural Consequences - Confusion, embarrassment, family conflict

Psychological Consequences - Loss of self-esteem, fear

Spiritual Consequences - Loss of faith, meaninglessness, hopelessness, loss of trust

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

- If your child has concerns ask how you may best help her/him and assure her/him that she/he has done the right thing in reporting the incident.
- Establish the facts. Find out exactly what happened, who was involved, when, where and whether there was any provocation.
- Do not attempt to sort out the problem yourself. Make an appointment to see your son's/daughter's Homeroom Teacher or Year Coordinator or KLA Coordinator to present your concerns with the aim of working together to resolve the problem.

WHAT STUDENTS MUST DO

- Treat others with respect and dignity at all times.
- Be prepared to listen to what others are saying about your behaviour and be prepared to change if it is inappropriate.
- If you see anti-social behaviour taking place, **speak up!**
You must report it to an adult you trust.
This is reporting abuse, it isn't "dobbing".
Don't be afraid to keep notes as they may be helpful in the future.
- Make an effort to be with people who treat others with respect. Being part of a group is no excuse for poor/unacceptable behaviour.
- Be assertive. Be strong in rejecting anti-social behaviour. Nobody has the right to harass you.

> Positive Strategies

1. Try to handle it yourself – if you are comfortable doing this and it doesn't put you in a threatening situation.
 - Be assertive; look the person in the eye
 - Predict situations that may lead to bullying and avoid these
 - Control your fear
 - Look at your behaviour and see if it is, in any way, contributing to the bullying
 - Realise they are trying to upset you – don't give them the satisfaction
2. Get some advice from
 - Your parents
 - The School Harassment Reporting officer (SHRO)
 - Any staff member
 - The school counsellor
 - A trusted adult
3. Report the bullying to the SHRO, a teacher, Year Co-Ordinator, Counsellor, Assistant Principal or Principal, and keep reporting it until it stops.

> What Not To Do

Don't argue with them

Don't act with aggression or retaliate in any way

Don't just do nothing, the situation will only continue

Don't say "I'll keep it all to myself", and then be miserable

YOU CAN CONTROL WHAT HAPPENS

WHAT TO DO

1. **TELL SOMEONE**
Report bullying behaviour to a staff member
2. Staff member records the incident on a “**Bullying Incident Form**” and gives it to the School Harassment Reporting Officer (SHRO) or a member of the school Executive
3. SHRO/member of the school Executive interviews the notifier/victim and records the information on the Bullying Incident Form. SHRO/member of the school Executive makes a copy of the Bullying Incident Form for the Year Co-ordinator
4. Year Co-ordinator interviews perpetrator. SHRO/member of the school Executive attends to verify the facts.
5. Year Co-ordinator and Assistant Principal jointly determine and implement the consequences.
6. Year Co-ordinator:
 - * records the details of what action is to be taken on Bullying Incident Form
 - * notifies/contacts parents
 - * makes copies of all relevant information/forms and ensure one copy is filed in the student files (front office) of all students involved

CONSEQUENCES

Note: An incident of severe or extreme bullying will skip one or more of these stages.

1st report

- Student does the **Bullying Prevention Program** (Appendix 1) and
- Signs the “**Bullying**” Student Agreement

2nd report

- **Counselling meeting** is convened comprising:
student, parents, Assistant Principal, Year Co-ordinator
- **Student may be suspended** from school and completes the Suspension Workbook
(NB: The Counselling meeting will be replaced by the Restorative Justice process when staff and student training is complete)

3rd report

- **Enrolment meeting** is convened comprising:
student, parents, Assistant Principal, Principal.
The student's enrolment in the school is reviewed

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BULLYING INCIDENT FORM

Staff Member: Date:.....

Incident reported by:

Nature of incident (interview with victim/witnesses):.....

.....

Other student/s involved:

.....

FORM TO BE PASSED ON TO YEAR CO-ORDINATOR

Interview with perpetrator:

.....

Outcome/Consequences:

.....

NOTIFIED: * Parents of victim.....
 * Parents of perpetrator.....

COPY of form/notes etc:

- * to SHRO.....
- * Student file: victim.....
- * Student file: perpetrator

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“BULLYING” STUDENT AGREEMENT **for the 1st report of Bullying/Harassment**

Student name..... Year..... Homeroom.....

Date.....

(A) I,accept that I have demonstrated bullying behaviour involving: (indicate specific actions/comments/other)

Physical abuse _____

Emotional abuse _____

Sexual harassment _____

Verbal abuse _____

Other _____

(B) I agree to:

1. treat others with respect and not bully others
2. not encourage others to bully
3. rectify the bullying described above by:

(C) I understand the consequences of breaking this agreement through further bullying will be:

2nd report > **Counselling meeting** is convened comprising: myself, my parents, Assistant Principal and Year Co-ordinator

> Possible suspension from school and completion of the Suspension Workbook

3rd report > **Enrolment meeting** is convened comprising: myself, my parents, Assistant Principal and Principal.

My enrolment in the school will be reviewed.

(D) I understand that if I have a problem in resolving conflict, I ask a teacher for help in order to learn better ways to deal with my problem.

Student signature_____ Parent signature_____

Assistant Principal signature_____

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Policy approved by the school Executive in March 07.

The review of this policy occurs every two years.

The review is co-ordinated by the Assistant Principal.

The next review is due Term 1, 2009.

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APPENDIX 1



QUALITY RELATIONSHIPS

**BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAM
for the 1st report of Bullying/Harassment**

Process

Student completes the Bullying Prevention Program during an after school detention.

- Step 1 - Watch the video/DVD provided
- Step 2 - Answer the questions on this sheet
- Step 3 - Meet with the Assistant Principal to:
 - discuss the answers on this sheet and
 - sign the **“Bullying” Student Agreement**(a copy of this information goes in the student’s file)

(video/DVD questions)

1.

2.

3.

4.

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5.

6. What did I do that is regarded as bullying behaviour?

7. My behaviour was inappropriate because...

8. How will I change my behaviour to avoid this happening again?

9. I now understand the following things about bullying.

10. I realise if there are any more reports of me bullying then the school's consequences are:

2nd report

.....

.....

3rd report

.....

.....

STUDENT NAME:.....

STUDENT SIGNATURE:.....

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL SIGNATURE:.....

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