ANTI – BULLYING POLICY

Rationale:
Our Lady of The Rosary School places great emphasis on the wellbeing and pastoral care of students, parents/carers and staff. All members of the school community are committed to a safe and caring environment which promotes personal growth and positive self esteem. The school will provide a positive culture where bullying is not accepted or tolerated. Students, parents/carers and staff have the right to learn or teach, to feel safe and secure in a respectful school environment.

Definition:
Bullying is:
Repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological aggressive behaviour by a person or group directed towards a less powerful person or group that is intended to cause harm, distress or fear. Bullying is a clear form of ongoing harassment.

Bullying is **not:**
Single episodes of social rejection or dislike, single episode acts of nastiness or spite, random acts of aggression or intimidation, mutual arguments, disagreements or fights.

Bullying may take the form of repeated:
1. Physical bullying - includes hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching, pushing or damaging property
2. Verbal bullying - includes name calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, homophobic or racial remarks or verbal abuse.
3. Covert bullying is often harder to recognise. It is designed to harm someone’s social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Covert bullying includes:
   - Using hand gestures and weird or threatening looks
   - Lying and spreading rumours
   - Mimicking unkindly
   - Whispering, excluding, turning your back on a person
   - Blackmailing, spreading rumours, threatening, stealing friends
   - Criticising clothes and personalities.
4. Cyber bullying - overt or covert bullying behaviour using digital technologies. Cyber bullying includes harassment via a mobile phone, setting up a defamatory personal website or deliberately excluding someone from social networking spaces. Cyber bullying can be conducted in many ways, using different media including:

- Sending abusive texts or emails
- Taking and sharing unflattering or private images
- Posting unkind messages or inappropriate images on social networking sites
- Excluding individuals from online chats or other communication
- Assuming the identity of the victim online and representing them in a negative manner or manner that may damage their relationship with others

Like other forms of bullying such as verbal abuse, social exclusion and physical aggression, cyber bullying has the potential to result in the victim developing social, psychological and educational issues.

**Aims:**
- To educate the school community about what bullying is and what it is not.
- To promote a culture where parental and peer group support plays an important role in the prevention and intervention of bullying.
- To define procedures to respond to observed and reported incidents of bullying.
- To outline preventative initiatives.
- To identify strategies to minimise bullying.
- To teach strategies that empower students to respond to bullying incidents.
- To utilise school resources to build positive self esteem, resiliency and strengthen relationships amongst the school community.

**Implementation:**
- Parents/carers, staff, students and the wider school community will be aware of the school’s position on bullying.
- The school will adopt clear prevention and intervention guidelines.

1. **Prevention**

- To provide SEL (Social and Emotional learning) information to parents/carers at enrolment, through the newsletter, in displays, and at class information sessions. Parents/carers will be informed of...
initiatives undertaken to address bullying and promote positive relationships and resiliency across the school.

- To provide programs which promote resilience, SEL, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.
- Staff will model Catholic values using respectful and positive behaviours towards each other, students and wider community.
- Recognition given for observed positive behaviours in the classroom and the playground.
- Professional development provided for staff.
- Staff to be kept informed regarding current issues, thinking and research.
- Involve parents/carers in consultation at the school board.
- Involve all students to support a positive culture where bullying is not tolerated.
- Wellbeing surveys to be conducted annually.
- Establish safe playground environments where students are actively engaged in a range of stimulating play activities.
- Where staffing permits, provide students with supervised activities during recess and lunch breaks.
- Provide for a wide range of social groupings and learning teams.

Intervention:
- We encourage students and parents/carers, who become aware of bullying, to report it to a staff member in order to determine a course of action.

Procedures for responding to reported incidents of bullying:

1. Provide an environment where people feel comfortable in discussing and reporting bullying issues.
2. Listen to all parties in a caring, respectful and sensitive manner.
3. All incidents or allegations of bullying will be thoroughly investigated and documented (see Appendix 1).
4. The alleged bully and the alleged victim will be spoken with separately.
5. Talk to and document witness’ accounts (if applicable).
6. Where a serious aggressive incident is identified (see bullying definition), flow-chart procedures are initiated (see Appendix 2).

Evaluation
This policy will be reviewed annually with staff.
Responding to bullying incidents:

Incident occurs

Incident reported or observed

- No blame: talk with alleged victim
- No blame: talk with alleged instigator
- No blame: talk with witnesses

Incident documented

- Incident investigated but not considered bullying
  - Negotiated behaviour change for all participants.
  - Explicit teaching of social strategies.
  - Review
  - Observed positive change to behaviour
    - Celebrate
    - Monitor

- Bullying incident substantiated
  - Parents informed
  - Consequences may be implemented as per documented procedure (see appendix 2)
    - Negotiated behaviour change for all participants.
    - Explicit teaching of social strategies.
    - Review
    - Observed positive change to behaviour
      - Celebrate
      - Monitor
Appendix 2

**Procedures to respond to reported or observed incidents of bullying:**

1. The students (bully and victim) are interviewed separately as soon as possible after the incident has been reported.
2. The Principal, Deputy Principal or Student Wellbeing Coordinator interviews the students. The classroom teacher is informed of the situation.
3. The interviewer talks to the victim about his/her feelings and which students were involved. The student is asked to share details of the incident.
4. The interviewer shares his/her concern for what has happened to the victim.
5. The student who is responsible for the action, is expected to take action to remedy the situation. The student is asked to suggest a way in which the victim could be helped to feel safe.
6. A consequence for the bullying action is agreed upon eg time out, exclusion from a particular activity, a letter of apology, contract for future behaviour.
   Consequences will:
   - Be related to the behaviour
   - Focus on relationship building
7. Ongoing monitoring and feedback to student regarding his/her behaviour occurs. A time is made to meet with the students (both bully and victim) to review.
8. The bullying incident with follow up action is documented on the Bullying Incident Report forms (Appendix 3 & 4).
9. A meeting with parents of both students is organised to discuss the bullying incident. The Wellbeing leader will meet with relevant teachers to develop a plan.
10. The Behaviour Plan is discussed at the next staff meeting.
11. The Behaviour Plan is placed in all classroom folders.

**Consequences when incidents of bullying continue.**

**This may involve the student being:**

- Removed from the yard.
- Limited to one area of the yard.
- Given a negotiated contract.
- Interviewed with parents and Principal or DP or Student Wellbeing Leader to discuss a revised Plan.
- Referred to outside agency.
- Suspension.
- Other action deemed appropriate.
- A Bullying Incident Report form is completed.