



BULLYING POLICY & PROCEDURES

PREAMBLE

Mt St Michael's College is committed to professional practice and conduct that strives for educational excellence. We set high expectations on ourselves and others in the programs we deliver, the way that we deliver them and in our interactions with members of the Mt St Michael's College community.

PURPOSE

We believe that everyone has the right to work, learn and socialize in a friendly, safe and secure environment, where uniqueness and supportive relationships are nurtured and valued. 'Bullying has no place in a Safe College.'

SCOPE

All members of the Mt St Michael's community are expected to be committed to addressing acts of bullying.

DEFINITIONS

Bullying an intimidating act or pattern against others (verbal, physical or psychological in nature) by one person or group of people. It is perceived as aggressive, hurtful, injurious, embarrassing, upsetting or causing other uncomfortable responses from those being bullied. It often involves an imbalance of power, appearance, possession etc., and may have legal ramifications.

Types of Bullying

- **Verbal** mimicking, teasing, ridiculing, name-calling, degrading, threatening, intimidating, laughing at, racial comments, rumour spreading, comments regarding appearance, note writing, abusive emails/telephone calls, defamatory language, tone of voice
- **Physical** use of hand/finger gestures, kicking, pushing, slapping, poking, taking or damaging others property, uninvited touching, extortion, blocking, shepherding
- **Psychological** deliberately ignoring, isolating or excluding, threatening looks, provocative body language, controlling social behaviour, group elitism, mimicking to ridicule.

The excuse 'it was only a joke' is unacceptable if the other person has not taken it as a joke, and instead is upset by it.

EXCLUSIONS

There are no exclusions to this Policy.

PRINCIPLES

Bullying will not be tolerated under any circumstances, having no place in a Catholic school which espouses and promotes Christian values and respect for the individual.



POLICY STATEMENT

MSM recognises an obligation derived from basic human rights to promote healthy relationships, and to do what it can to prevent bullying and assist students when their safety is threatened.

PROCEDURE

(a) CHARACTERISTICS OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

- greater than average aggressive/ intimidating behaviour patterns
- the desire to dominate others
- the need to feel in control; to win
- lack of remorse for hurting another
- refusal to accept responsibility for their behaviour
- difficulty in establishing effective communication and/ or relationship with others
- low self-esteem and / or poor motivation

If students who bully don't learn to change their behaviour, the pattern often becomes a habit.

(B) WHY BULLYING OCCURS?

- to feel more powerful
- to forget family problems
- to feel better about themselves
- to fit in
- to think they might become more popular / accepted
- in response to previous bullying
- in response to feelings of jealousy
- as a learned behaviour

(C) WHO IS BEING BULLIED ?

The truth is all people can be bullied. Bullying is about relationships and at some point anyone may be bullied.

The effects of bullying may include:

- feeling frightened, unsafe, embarrassed, angry or unfairly treated
- disruptions to work, sleep and ability to concentrate
- a deterioration in relationships with family, friends and colleagues
- feeling confused and not know what to do about the problem
- total withdrawal from interactive activities



- in the extreme, questioning the reason for living

RESPONSIBILITIES

(A) THE COLLEGE LEADERSHIP TEAM IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- To provide the policy for the College community
- provide in-service to staff for an understanding of the policy
- be proactive and interactive in implementing the policy

(B) STAFF ARE REQUIRED TO:

- be familiar with and understand current policy and procedures
- be role models in word and action at all times
- be an active presence in the College environment
- provide structures for a safe and inclusive classroom environment
- be aware of susceptible members of the College community and communicate these concerns
- be observant of signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying
- report suspected incidents to the appropriate staff member (Year Co-Ordinator, Deputy Principal – Student Care)
- educate students on policy and procedures and consequences

(C) STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO:

- be aware of the types of behaviours that constitute bullying (verbal, physical, psychological)
- know and understand the damaging nature of bullying
- refuse to partake in bullying behaviour
- take some form of positive action to prevent the continuation of bullying behaviour
- report suspected incidents to the appropriate person (Home Room Teacher)
- accept that penalties and consequences can arise from bullying behaviour

(D) PARENTS/GUARDIANS ARE REQUIRED TO:

- support the College and students in the Policy
- report suspected incidences to teaching staff
- support the College in their investigation of bullying incidents
- work with their daughter and staff to assist in any way possible to correct unacceptable behaviour



BULLYING PREVENTION AND RESPONSE PROCEDURES

PREVENTATIVE STRATEGIES

The Leadership Team will:

- Make the policy accessible to all members of the community
- Ensure that the implementation of the policy is occurring by regular meetings with Year Co-Ordinators and the College Counsellor
- Undertake appropriate professional development
- Provide opportunities for appropriate professional development and meeting time
- Attempt to identify students at risk and take appropriate supportive action
- Initiate ongoing evaluation of policy and procedures
- Provide opportunities for disseminating information in both formal and informal situations

Year Co-Ordinators will:

- Ensure that the implementation of the policy is occurring by regular meetings with Home Room Teachers and the College Counsellor
- Provide opportunities for appropriate professional development
- Undertake appropriate professional development
- Initiate ongoing evaluation of policy and procedures
- Provide opportunities for disseminating information in both formal and informal situations
- Attempt to identify students at risk and take appropriate supportive action
- Develop and implement pastoral care programs which address bullying and positive peer relations. This will be done in consultation with Home Room teachers.

Home Room Teachers will:

- Make the policy accessible to all Home Room students
- Implement pastoral care programs which address bullying and positive peer relations
- Ensure that the implementation of the policy is occurring by regular meetings with Year Co-Ordinators
- Attempt to identify students at risk and take appropriate supportive action such as working with Year Co-Ordinators in contacting parents, conferencing and providing a supportive Home Room environment
- Undertake appropriate professional development
- Provide opportunities for the dissemination of information in both formal and informal situations to Home Room members and parents

Teaching Staff will:

- Provide supportive learning environments
- Attempt to identify students at risk and refer them to Home Room teacher
- Use the curriculum to explore aspects of bullying and positive peer relations



- Monitor student behaviour in the classroom and playground to identify any bullying behaviour

RESPONSE STRATEGIES

Any student who has a serious concern about her relationship with one or more students in the College, or any person (student/staff/parent) having knowledge of any person experiencing bullying should inform:

- Classroom teacher
- Home Room Teacher
- Year Coordinator
- Deputy Principal (Student Care)

In response to incidents of bullying, the following will be taken into consideration:

- Issues of justice
- Staff, students and parent/guardian responsibilities
- Management procedures

PROCESS OF INVESTIGATING REPORTED BULLYING INCIDENT

1. Teacher and student(s) discuss issue(s)/incident(s).
2. Student incident sheet completed and given to Year Co-Ordinator (Copies to Deputy Principal Student Care) – Serious or urgent concerns are forwarded directly to Deputy Principal Student Care.
3. The Year Co-Ordinator/Deputy Principal Student Care will investigate the concern to form a view of how best to resolve the problem.

Remedies may include:

- Interview/discussions
 - mediation
 - conflict resolution
 - counselling
 - student initiated strategies
4. If it is established that bullying has occurred, parents of all students involved will be notified.
 5. Retaliation/Victimization by students questioned about incidents of suspected bullying, against the student who reports the bullying will be treated seriously by the Deputy Principal Student Care or the Principal and may have serious consequences.
 6. Any concern or dispute that is not resolved at this stage is forwarded to the Principal.
 7. Each case will be dealt with depending on the circumstances and seriousness of the case. Consequences of bullying could involve:
 - A personal contract initiated with the offender(monitored by Year Co-Ordinator, Counsellor or Deputy Principal, Student Care).
 - Personal/Family Counselling



- Restorative Justice – reparation (e.g. apology, positive action of some kind)
 - Internal/external suspension (if bullying offences continue to occur despite intervention, suspension may occur)
 - Exclusion from the College
8. Year Co-Ordinator(s)/Deputy Principal/Principal will continue to monitor the well-being of student(s) involved.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed at least every 2 years.