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

RATIONALE

Whitford Catholic Primary School believes that every student has the right to be and to feel safe; therefore bullying, harassment and disrespectful behaviours will not be tolerated at the school. The policy is developed on the principles of the Australian Governments’ National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF) and adopts a whole school approach to safety and wellbeing.

The National Safe Schools Framework is based on the following overarching vision:

*All Australians Schools are safe, supportive and respectful teaching and learning communities that promote the student wellbeing.*

Whitford Catholic Primary School’s policy exists to minimise the risk from all types of harm, values diversity and promotes a community where all members feel respected, included and confident that they will receive support in the face of any threats to their safety or wellbeing.

Every person at Whitford Catholic Primary School has the right to:

- feel safe and be safe at school.
- learn and grow in a community free of verbal, physical, social, psychological or cyber abuse.
- work in a safe and positive learning environment.
- be supported to develop understandings and skills to keep themselves and others safe.

Bullying, harassment, aggression and violence challenge these rights. At Whitford Catholic Primary School we do not accept or tolerate bullying, harassment, aggression or violence.

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. 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.
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.

PRINCIPLES

- Whitford Catholic Primary School is a safe and supportive environment where the 6 Guiding Principles and 9 Key Elements of the National Safe Schools Framework are practiced.

**Guiding Principles:**

1. affirm the rights of all members of the school community to feel safe and be safe at school
2. acknowledge that being safe and supported at school is essential for student wellbeing and effective learning
3. accept responsibility for developing and sustaining safe and supportive learning and teaching communities that also fulfil the school’s child protection responsibilities
4. encourage the active participation of all school community members in developing and maintaining a safe school community where diversity is valued
5. actively support young people to develop understanding and skills to keep themselves and others safe
6. commit to developing a safe school community through a whole-school and evidence-based approach

**Key Elements**

1. Leadership commitment to a safe school
2. A supportive and connected school culture
3. Policies and procedures
4. Professional development of staff on aspects of bullying and identifying whole-school preventative strategies
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

- Whitford Catholic Primary School has a duty of care to its students.
- Whitford Catholic Primary 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 others
  - develops physical/emotional well-being and resiliency
  - develops interpersonal skills and positive mental health

- Whitford Catholic Primary School has a whole-school and community approach to bullying, harassment, aggression and violence.

- Bullying, harassment, aggression and violence may occur outside of the school. When these behaviours impact on a student’s learning and behaviour in school, Whitford Catholic Primary School will take action to support the continued wellbeing of those involved.
• 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.

• 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.

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

PROACTIVE PROCEDURES

Education:
(a) Staff:
- Conflict Resolution Training
- Mediation Training
- National Safe Schools Framework
- Access to school’s Social Worker
- Celebrating cultural diversity through Harmony Day

(b) Parents:
- Policy made available to parents and on the school website
- Information sessions for parents
- Access to school’s Social Worker
- Celebrating cultural diversity through Harmony Day

(c) Students:
- Conflict Resolution Skills
- Friendly Schools Programme
- Problem Solving Skills
- Confidence/Assertiveness Training including GirlPower and Good Guys Programmes
- Protective Behaviours Programme
- Resiliency skills development via Bounce Back Program
- Social skills programmes including Fun Friends and Friends for Life
- Rainbows and Seasons programs for selected students in need
- Access to school’s Social Worker
- Celebrating cultural diversity through Harmony Day
- Constable Care and Life Education incursions

Awareness Campaign:
- National Safe Schools Framework Posters
- Treatment and Courtesy School rules
- Buddy System

Supervision:
- Clear guidelines on yard duty
- Clear ICT guidelines for school and home
- Clear guidelines for games
- Punctuality of students and staff in arriving at classrooms

STUDENT BEHAVIOUR RECORDS

Staff members who observe a child behaving in an inappropriate manner will record the behaviour on the student’s SEQTA profile. This record serves as a documented warning to children, provides staff with documented examples of a child’s behaviours of concern and, if appropriate, sets in place a discussion with the Principal or an Assistant Principal with regards to the behaviour. Where students display continued or severe behavioural issues, the class teacher will contact the parents for an interview.
PROCEDURES AND ACTION PLAN FOR STUDENTS WHO ENGAGE IN BULLYING

Step One - First Incident
Deal with as a social interaction problem rather than a discipline problem. A conciliatory rather than a punitive approach would occur.

1. Isolate the student who has bullied and allow for a cooling off period.
2. Make the student who has bullied aware of the real or possible effect this behaviour has on others (“How do you think he/she might be feeling?”)
3. Give a clear statement that the behaviour is unacceptable and a clear warning of possible penalties if the behaviour does not stop.
4. Apology to the student who has been bullied.
5. Phone call to parents if considered necessary, and follow up as required. eg. interview, conference with other parents.
6. Incident recorded in SEQTA if appropriate.

Step Two – Repeat Incidents
When a student repeatedly comes to the attention of a staff member they may:

1. Repeat Step One AND
2. A second warning and appropriate penalty:
   a. Identification of two positive actions that the offender will carry out toward/or for victim within the week. The aim of this action is to restore and repair the relationship between the two.
   b. The Four W’s. Child to answer the following and have it signed by their parents. What they did? Why they did it? What rule/s did they break? What can they do to fix it up?
3. Blue Behaviour Slip given and behaviour recorded on SEQTA.
4. Referral to Social Worker if considered appropriate.
5. Support for victim.

STEP THREE: For students who continually bully

1. Interviewed by Principal
2. Second Blue Behaviour Slip given and behaviour recorded on SEQTA.
3. Phone call to Parents with follow-up letter/interview /conference as appropriate
4. Appropriate Penalty:
   a. The Four W’s (See above)
   b. Other acceptable penalty as discussed with parents and/or concerned parties: e.g. Detention, Suspension (with specific work to be completed) or Exclusion (for severe physical assault)
5. Referral to Social Worker or other appropriate professional for individual counselling and/or social skills e.g. anger management, self-esteem.

PHYSICAL ASSAULTS – causing injury
Steps One and Two are automatically omitted.
Step Three immediately implemented.