



Anti-Bullying Policy 2018

Purpose

At St Brendan's Catholic School, we believe that all members of the community have the right to a safe and supportive learning environment. In a Catholic community, there are also important expectations on each person to seek to maintain positive relationships with one another and to resolve conflict in a respectful and dignified manner. Bullying and cyber-bullying disregard the core values of our Catholic faith and are unacceptable.

Policy Framework

This policy is informed by the DSS Pastoral Care and Wellbeing Framework for Learning, the National Safe Schools Framework [NSSF, (2013)], and the Positive Behavioural Interventions and Support (PBIS) Framework.

1) National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF)

The NSSF provides guiding principles that emphasise student safety and wellbeing as a pre-requisite for optimising student engagement. It affirms the rights of all members of the school community to feel safe at school to optimise student learning and wellbeing.

2) Positive Behavioural Interventions and Support (PBIS) Framework – Preventing Bullying

The PBIS framework for preventing bullying (also known as PBL), is based on a multi-tiered responsiveness-to-intervention approach to preventing bullying behaviour. This approach provides for variations in student responsiveness due to the variations in an individual's risk and protective factors (i.e. self-management and social skill competence).

3) Whole School Positive Behaviour Approaches

The most effective bullying interventions typically use whole-school positive behaviour approaches such as; school-wide rules and consequences, teacher training, classroom curriculum focused on social and emotional learning (SEL), conflict resolution training, counselling and partnerships with families. Teaching students the SEL skills (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationships, and responsible decision-making) are foundational competencies that students need in order to prevent and to respond to bullying.

4) STAR/BEST Strategy

A research based strategy which supports students to build skills to respond appropriately to bullying situations whilst developing resilience and self-efficacy.

Definition

There is general consensus that bullying behaviour:

- is deliberate and often repeated
- intends to cause fear, distress, hurt or harm to another
- is action by a more powerful individual or group over a less powerful individual or group

Bullying takes many forms, all of which will cause distress. Examples of bullying include:

- *Physical* - hitting, pushing, tripping, kicking, spitting on others etc
- *Verbal* - teasing, using offensive names, ridiculing, spreading rumours etc
- *Non-Verbal* - writing offensive notes or graffiti about others, rude gestures etc
- *Exclusion* - deliberately excluding others from group, refusing to sit next to someone etc
- *Extortion* - threatening to take someone's possessions, food or money etc
- *Property* - stealing, hiding, damaging or destroying property etc
- *Cyber* - any form of bullying which is carried out through electronic means such as mobile phones, email, chat room, social networking, 'sms', web page etc

Cyber-bullying refers to bullying through the use of information and communication technologies by an individual or group that is intended to harm others, or is undertaken recklessly without concert for its impact on others.

How do we prevent bullying at St Brendan's Catholic School?

Ultimately, strategies to prevent bullying will only be effective when placed within the context of a culture in which respect for others is consistently taught and demonstrated across all facets of school life. The Christian values, which represent the antithesis of bullying, must be continually affirmed in words and actions.

Strategies to prevent bullying will fall within the following broad categories:

- 'moral education' in the context of religious education, liturgies and assemblies where the value of the individual is affirmed and the importance of qualities such as compassion, kindness, reconciliation, tolerance, respect and justice are encouraged
- 'across the curriculum' values teaching (eg looking at the problem of prejudice within the context of a novel or a history lesson)
- processes aligned to the principles of the Restorative Justice
- clear statements from staff about the nature and unacceptability of bullying
- teaching specifically related to bullying in the PDH curriculum
- Positive Behaviour for Learning & KidsMatter frameworks & STAR/BEST
- teaching more positive ways of resolving conflict, such as working co-operatively within the classroom and playground
- staff and students as role models, particularly those in leadership roles such as peer support, school captains, house captains etc.
- appropriate provision of counselling or other support services
- provision of support for parents through information seminars, support networks etc

How do we respond to Bullying at St Brendan's Catholic School?

Bullying is viewed as a breach of the school's ROSE rules. Any reports of bullying will be investigated and appropriate action will be taken. The response to bullying will provide:

- guidance and other support for the victim
- appropriate and consistent sanctions and support for the bully

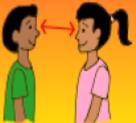
Staff will be encouraged to report suspected incidents of bullying to the class teacher of both the victim and the bully. If they encounter an incident of bullying, they should first take steps to protect the victim. All staff are expected to pass on information about any bullying to the Principal/ Assistant Principal and the Wellbeing Coordinator, for further action.

The School seeks to promote a culture in which students will be encouraged to:

- take some positive action to stop the bullying if they observe an incident
- report the bullying incident to a teacher as soon as possible
- make it clear to their peers that bullying is not accepted

Victims of bullying will be encouraged to follow the STAR/BEST strategy:

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| S | <p>Stop (Do or Say <u>nothing</u>)</p>  |
| T | <p>Think What is it that is going on?</p>  |
| A | <p>Assess How am I feeling? Am I calm enough to use the skills effectively?</p>  |
| R | <p>Respond or Relax If I am calm- Use B.E.S.T. If I am very upset – Leave and practise B.E.S.T.</p>  |

| | |
|---|---|
| B | <p>Blank Body Language Show no emotion</p>  |
| E | <p>Eye Contact Hold this longer than usual</p>  |
| S | <p>Silence Wait longer than usual to respond – create discomfort</p>  |
| T | <p>Tell Them What You Want "I want you to leave me alone."</p>  |

What Parents can do

Parents play a key role in the support of both the victims and the perpetrators of bullying. The school must work in partnership with parents in the disciplinary process. Parents can assist in the following ways:

- Let your child know that bullying in any form is never acceptable. Listen to your child and take their feelings and fears seriously.
- Make sure your child knows that being bullied is not their fault.
- Avoid bullying tactics around your child, so they don't get mixed messages.
- Avoid the urge to take everything into your own hands unless absolutely necessary, as this will make your child feel less in control.
- Practice the BEST/STAR strategy with your child.
- When it is clear that your own child is the bully, recognise the seriousness of the issue and support the school in implementing this policy.

Procedures for investigating bullying and follow up

In discerning appropriate responses to bullying, school leaders need to balance the collective welfare of the school community with the individual needs of the student.

- Preliminary interview(s) will be conducted to ascertain the specific nature of the bullying.
- The initial interviews should focus on the safety of individuals. This should include:
 - a clear statement on the consequences if the bullying continues or if there are any reprisals as a result of the reporting of the incident
 - immediate preventative actions that will be implemented to avoid further incidents.
- Decisions will be made as to the level of severity of the incident and whether the parents of those involved need to be informed.
- Follow up interviews should focus on appropriate strategies to assist and support all involved within an Individual Behaviour Support Plan (IBP). This Plan will specifically identify the inappropriate behaviours, name the replacement behaviours, outline strategies to support the replacement behaviours and reinforces (both negative and positive) when behaviours occur.
- A record of the separate interviews should be kept.
- Regular monitoring and follow up with the students involved is necessary.
- Review of the IBP will take place to modify strategies and supports.
- Any further recurrence of bullying may result in an issue of warning re suspension and could lead to the implementation of suspension procedures and, if necessary, removal of the student from the school through:
 - Suspension pending negotiated transfer,
 - Negotiated transfer or
 - Expulsion

Policy Dates

Policy written December 2003

Past reviews May 2007, January 2009, August 2010, January 2013, June 2015, April 2016, April 2018

Next review December 2019