

## **St Anthony's Catholic Primary School - Response to Bullying in School Policy**

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### **Rationale**

There is general agreement in the wider community that bullying is a major problem. It is widely acknowledged that bullying exists in schools, and that it can have detrimental effects on victims with regard to social, academic and psychological development. In line with the Pastoral Care Policy of St. Anthony's school, the school is committed to addressing the issues of bullying so as to maintain for students, a positive, nurturing environment within the school.

### **Definitions**

Bullying is characterised by behaviours that intimidate, threaten, frighten, physically hurt or emotionally scar. Bullying can be perpetrated by girls or boys of any age. There is no stereotype for a bully. The following definitions highlight the key elements involved in bullying.

**“Bullying is the repeated oppression, psychological or physical, of a less powerful person by a more powerful individual or group of persons.”**  
(Rigby & Slee, 1994)

### **Commitment of the School**

- That bullying behaviour is unacceptable at St. Anthony's.
- That when we know about a bullying situation, steps will be taken to resolve the matter in a way that is positive for the victim, and for the bully.
- We will educate ourselves, students and parents about issues relating to bullying, so as to increase understanding, and decrease the incidence of abuse.

### **Role of Teachers**

When Bullying is reported to a teacher, by a student or by a parent, or when the teacher detects such behaviour, the teacher will:

- Treat the claim with due seriousness.
- Reassure the victim, and act to remove threat.
- Report the matter to the principal.
- Document the incident.
- Collaborate in the follow up action to resolve the issue between parties.
- Consult with parents and inform parents of the resolved outcome.

## **Role of Students**

Students are encouraged to report incidents of bullying, whether they themselves are the victims, or whether they have seen other children being bullied. By reporting bullying, students can help to stop the negative, destructive behaviour of some students, and support those students who are victims of bullying. Students are encouraged to:

- Speak to teachers, parents or the principal, if they are being bullied by others.
- Speak to teachers, parents or the principal if they notice that another student is being bullied by others.
- Show respect and appreciation for other people, and their different qualities and personalities.

## **Role of Parents**

### **When your child has been bullied:**

Often, parents are the first to recognise that there is a problem for their child. This may be because the child tells parents what is happening, or that parents notice that the child is under stress. When parents know that their child is being bullied, or have strong suspicions that there is a problem, parents are asked to:

- Reassure the child.
- To maintain a calm and open approach to the problem.
- To bring the matter to the attention of the class teacher, Principal or the Deputy Principal, so that some further action can be planned.
- To assist your child to develop strategies to counter bullying, in a positive way.

When parents are not sure about what is happening, but suspect that something is not right; it is helpful if parents can make a few notes about the things you notice. Observations about your child's behaviour and emotional state can sometimes give insight about a problem.

### **When your child has bullied another child, or other children:**

It is sometimes difficult for parents to deal with a situation where their child has hurt others. Generally, parents are alerted of this situation by the teacher or principal, but sometimes the message comes from other children or parents. The school will inform parents of their child's behaviour, when it is deemed necessary to do so. The school discourages other parents or children from taking up issues with parents, but the school does not have control of what other people do.

When parents are aware that their child is involved in bullying others, parents can help by:

- Discussing the matter with the child's teacher and the principal in order to get clarification about what is actually happening.
- Work with the teacher and principal to educate their child about appropriate behaviour towards others.
- Monitor their child in order to identify any triggers that could lead to situations of bullying.

## **How bullying is addressed at the school**

When there is a report about bullying, it is always taken seriously, and follow up action is taken. The exact steps, and the order of the steps, depends on the actual situation, and varies in each circumstance.

The following list indicates some of the possible approaches that could be used by the school. Generally, the plan of action is discussed with the parties concerned.

- Clarification of the nature, intensity and intent of the bullying.
- Clarification regarding the persons involved, and their level of involvement.

- Process of conciliation (depending on the circumstance) – sometimes these matters can be resolved fairly easily; as there is no strong intent, but rather there is a low level of sensitivity. This can be worked on with some education, and apologies are generally exchanged and accepted.
- Process of mediation – where parties are brought together to discuss what is happening. In this process, the victim can hear from the “bully” about where he/she is coming from, and the “bully” can hear from the victim, what it feels like to be bullied. The aim of this process is to come to common understandings, and to promote empathy for the different parties involved.
- Education for the “bully”. This involves the school, and the child’s parents. The child is counselled about bullying, and about appropriate ways of behaving towards other children.
- Education for the victim. This involves the school, and the child’s parents. The child is counselled about appropriate and positive responses to aggressive or threatening behaviour. Sometimes, a level of professional counselling may be required, to help the child to overcome what can be “victim-like” behaviour.
- Further action as required. If a child persists with bullying and destructive behaviour, further action will be taken, in accord with the school’s Discipline Policy regarding Serious Offences.

#### **Policy Review**

##### **Policy reviewed by School Leadership Team: May 2014**

This Policy will be reviewed every three years to take account of any changed technology, legislation, expectations or practices.

**This policy was implemented in 2014. Next review date: 2017 Person responsible: Principal**