BULLYING AND HARRASSMENT POLICY

January, 2015
# Bullying (Including Cyber Bullying) and Harassment Policy

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Rationale
Everyone in our community has the right to work, learn and play in a safe environment that is free from bullying and harassment. We believe that bullying and harassment in any form is a violation of a person’s rights and will not be tolerated.

Definitions

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

“It is an imbalance of power which causes stress not only at the time of attack but also at the threat of future attacks.”
(Besag, 1989)

Harassment
Harassment is any type of deliberate, uninvited behaviour that is considered unacceptable to the community. It may offend, embarrass and/or scare. It could be sexual or target people because of their race, religion, gender, disability, culture.

Such behaviour could be verbal, non verbal, or physical and may include physical aggression, offensive jokes, comments or notes, or unwanted touching.

Types of Bullying
Bullying may be:
- Verbal: Includes use of abusive language, name-calling, spreading rumours
- Physical: Includes kicking, biting, hitting and other forms of violence, destruction of property, and damaging or hiding of others’ belongings...
- Social: Includes exclusion and isolation
- Psychological: Includes extortion, threats, blackmail, phone bullying, cyber bullying...

Cyber Safety – Cyber Bullying
Cybersafety and ethics are explicitly taught as part of the school curriculum. Cybersafety refers to the ways students keep both themselves and their friends safe on the internet.

Students are now producers of web content on sites like Instagram and Facebook. Much of that occurs outside the school environment. However we believe that our school still has a responsibility to address the underlying values (ethics) and responsible behaviours expected of students.

Dangers can include:
• bullying or harassment (cyberbullying)
• accessing inappropriate content
• contact with strangers
• posting private information
• using (or stealing) content owned by others eg images, music or videos
• plagiarising: taking ideas or information created/owned by others without referencing their origin
• not using critical thinking skills when using the internet
• not seeking support offline when there is an issue.

It is recommended that when dealing with or teaching cybersafety or ethical behaviours that it is helpful to take the ‘technology’ out of the incident to actually help identify the behaviours which are occurring.

Declaration of Rights
All members of our school community have the right to feel safe and secure at all times.

Responsibilities
All members of the St John the Apostle Catholic Primary School community have a responsibility to ensure that everybody feels safe and comfortable within our school by reporting all incidents of bullying or harassment as soon as possible. Reports should be made to an appropriate person, such as the Principal, Deputy Principal etc. Passive by-stander behaviour will not be accepted.

Procedures for Dealing with Bullying and/or Harassment Incidents:
• Reported incidents of bullying or harassment will be investigated, documented and monitored.
• The Principal, classroom teacher, and Student Wellbeing Coordinator will be informed
• Victims of bullying or harassment will be supported, to feel safe and protected and will be encouraged to develop assertiveness skills
• Bullies will be encouraged to develop positive social skills and to change their behaviour. However appropriate consequences will be applied when necessary (e.g. time out, loss of privileges, reparation, behavioural sheet, ...)
• Open discussion (facilitated by a teacher) between victim and bully will occur to empower the victim to speak up and encourage the bully to change their attitude and behaviour.
• Where appropriate, parents of both parties will be kept informed.
• When necessary children will be referred to professional counselling
• The staff of St John the Apostle will deal with any alleged harassment/bullying complaint seriously, sympathetically, promptly and confidentially.
Continuing Behaviours
Should a student continue to re-offend, the staff will refer to the “Pastoral Care of Students” CECV policy- guidelines for dealing with serious offences.

Adult Offenders
Should the bullying and/or harassment behaviour be perpetrated by an adult, then the process listed in the “CECV Guidelines for Dealing with Harassment“ (2002) will be implemented. CEOM Policy 2.15 Sexual Harassment Policy will also be used as a guide to managing harassment complaints.