

ANTI BULLYING POLICY

updated 2017

DEFINITION

Whilst there is no definitive and universally accepted definition of bullying, the most influential research in the area of what constitutes bullying has been proposed by Olweus (1993):

“...bullying may be defined as a student being exposed, repeatedly and over time, to intentional injury or discomfort inflicted by one or more other students. This may include physical contact, verbal assault, making obscene gestures or facial expressions, and intentionally excluding the student.”

The *National Safe Schools Framework* (2011) defines bullying as repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons.

“...Bullying is thus conceived largely in behavioural terms, that is, it involves negative actions on the part of the perpetrator.” [Rigby (2006) from *Bullying Solutions* p.4]

It is important to note that cyber bullying has become a significant area of concern and action in recent years. Cyberbullying may be defined as:

“..... any form of bullying that utilises technology such as instant messaging, online chat rooms, online bulletin boards and email. In many ways this is a more insidious form of bullying since it may reach into a victim’s home.” In other words, technology now allows the bully to inflict psychological harm on his or her victim anywhere and anytime without respite. (Schools and the Law - Des Butler and Ben Matthews p.46)

The Commonwealth Code sets as an offence the use of a carriage service (such as a mobile or internet) in a way that is menacing, harassing or offensive. The maximum penalty for committing the offence is 3 years imprisonment.

‘Sexting’ is an occurrence that may be considered bullying. Under present legislation perpetrators place themselves in the serious position of making, viewing and or sending inappropriate and unlawful material.

Conflict or fights between students or single incidents are not usually defined as bullying.

(extract taken from CSO anti-Bullying Policy for Students 2012)

RATIONALE

Bullying can impact on the capacity of children to achieve their God given potential. Bullying is not a normal part of growing up and it is not part of any ‘toughening up process’ that a child has to go through. Bullying can seriously harm a child physically and emotionally.

All schools have a bullying problem...Good schools do something about it.

AIMS

The St. Benedict’s Anti-Bullying Policy is written to supplement the school’s Student Welfare Policy and complement the school’s Complaints and Grievances Policy.

Its primary aim is to assist St. Benedict’s commitment to provide a happy and safe environment for its students.

To achieve this aim, St. Benedict’s will focus on the prevention of bullying and dealing with and assisting those involved in bullying.

IMPLEMENTATION

- The St Benedict's community clearly understands that ~

BULLYING IS UNACCEPTABLE AND WILL NOT BE TOLERATED

- This policy operates within the context of and is based on the Catholic School's Office Anti-Bullying Policy for Students (2012) and Addressing Harassment and Bullying in the Workplace Policy (2010).
- The staff is responsible for the implementation of the school Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Staff and members of the school community need to be familiar with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy which provides clear information as to which persons manage particular concerns and their roles in the process.
- Staff confirm their awareness and understanding of the requirements of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy annually.
- The policy is available on the school website and a hard copy on request.
- Confidentiality will be respected and maintained by all parties.
- Staff are supported to be aware of current trends in dealing with bullying.
- Staff provide thorough and vigilant classroom and playground supervision.
- The school Anti-Bullying Programme (Support Document 1) is implemented annually.
- 'Student at Risk' is a permanent staff meeting agenda item.
- When a complaint that involves an allegation of bullying is made, the Bullying Information Sheet (Appendix 1) is used to clarify the situation. It may be appropriate to ask the person making the complaint to take the Information Sheet away to clearly articulate their responses.
- A 'No Blame' approach is adopted when dealing with incidents of bullying, providing support for both the bully and the bullied.
- If there is evidence to support an allegation of bullying, contact the Principal and /or delegate and table the Bullying Information Sheet.
- The Principal or delegate will utilise the responses to assist with the completion of the CSO's Alleged Bullying-Initial Action Tool, which might involve interviewing students and the Bullying Assessment and Action Flowchart to establish what are and what are not incidents of bullying.
- Utilise the Police Liaison Officer Program – 49429945
- If necessary counselling, social-skills training, Zimmerman Services and/or Police Liaison Officer (49429945) Intervention and / or Anti-Bullying Plans will be considered.
- Feedback is provided to both the alleged victim and to the perpetrator.
- Record all interviews and file with the Bullying Information Sheet, Initial Action Tool, notes taken, letters sent and / or Action Plans implemented in the Bullying Record Folder in the Principal's Office. Action Plans are also to be kept with other Individual Learning and / or Behaviour Plans. A summary will be recorded in Gate 21 in the Student Info "Notes" section.
- Bullying concerns that are not resolved at a school level may be referred to the Parent Liaison and Resources Officer at the CSO or the Executive Assistant to the Director of Schools.
- The Parent Liaison Officer where necessary will refer concerns to the relevant Assistant Director for resolution.
- Where the concern remains unresolved by the Assistant Director the Parent/Carer or the Assistant Director may refer the matter to the Director of Schools for review.
- A copy of Anti-Bullying Key Reference Points (Appendix 2) is kept in the staff room.

The following procedure is to be followed when dealing with incidents that are clearly identified as not bullying.

The family of the alleged victim is contacted and the results of the investigation are discussed.

The following procedure is to be followed when dealing with incidents that are clearly identified as bullying.

1) The family of both the victim and perpetrator is contacted. A meeting may be called with the victim and / or the perpetrator, which would involve an initial warning and outline of consequences of further bullying behaviour.

2) For a subsequent offence, a meeting with the perpetrator's family will be called. This may involve:

- a) developing an Anti-Bullying Action Plan, a counselling referral, Reflection Room, meditation, police / legal intervention (in cases of assault), suspension or other disciplinary action deemed suitable by Principal in consultation with CSO.
- b) giving a verbal and/or written apology.

BUDGET

The school will endeavour to devote a proportion of the School Budget to the purchase of curricula material and provision of staff professional development opportunities that support the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

EVALUATION

This policy is to be reviewed as required.



BULLYING INFORMATION SHEET

Complaint made to: _____ Complaint made by: _____

Date: _____

Whilst there is no definitive and universally accepted definition of bullying, the most influential research in the area of what constitutes bullying has been proposed by Olweus (1993):

“...bullying may be defined as a student being exposed, repeatedly and over time, to intentional injury or discomfort inflicted by one or more other students. This may include physical contact, verbal assault, making obscene gestures or facial expressions, and intentionally excluding the student.”

At St Benedict's we take complaints that suggest bullying seriously and to assist us respond appropriately, please take the time to write a response to the following questions and return them to school as soon as possible.

* * * * *

What happened? (What is happening?)

Who is involved?

How / When did it start?

Has /Have the child(ren) involved been told to stop?

Is there any relevant background / history that might have contributed to this situation?

Can you provide details specific incidents (dates/places/people involved)?

Do you believe the incidents detailed were deliberate / planned? If so, what evidence do you have to support the claim?

Can you provide the name of any witnesses to the incidents?

What effect is the issue having on you / your child?

What do you believe is required to resolve the situation, now and in the future?

Signed: _____

Date returned: _____

ANTI-BULLYING

KEY REFERENCE POINTS

APPENDIX 2.

All staff should be aware of and have a clear understanding of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy (2017), and the Catholic School's Office Student Anti-Bullying Policy, Resources and Implementation Guidelines (June 2012)



When an allegation of bullying is made the Bullying Information Sheet should be used to clearly articulate concerns. If there is evidence to support an allegation of bullying, contact the Principal and /or delegate and table the Bullying Information Sheet.



The Principal or delegate utilises the responses to assist with the completion of Alleged Bullying-Initial Action Tool, which might involve interviewing students, and the use of a Bullying Assessment and Action Flowchart to establish what are and what are not incidents of bullying.



When a complaint has been determined to be or not to be bullying the Principal will adhere to procedures as outlined in the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.



When an allegation of Bullying has been responded to, a copy of the Bullying Information Sheet, the Alleged Bullying Initial Action Tool and any relevant notes, Action Plans implemented and letters sent are filed in the Bullying Record Folder in the Principal's office. A brief summary is recorded in Gate 21 in the Student Info "Notes" section.



Where an allegation of bullying is not resolved by the Principal after all efforts have been made to do so, the parent/carer should be advised to refer the concern to the Catholic Schools Office via the Parent Liaison and Resources Officer or the Executive Assistant to the Director of Schools. The Parent Liaison and Resource Officer will refer the matter to the relevant Assistant Director for resolution.



Where the concern remains unresolved the Parent/Carer or the Assistant Director may refer the matter to the Director of Schools for review. A formal avenue of appeal is available in accordance with the Diocesan Pastoral Care Policy. All such appeals should be made to the Director of Schools in writing and in a timely manner.

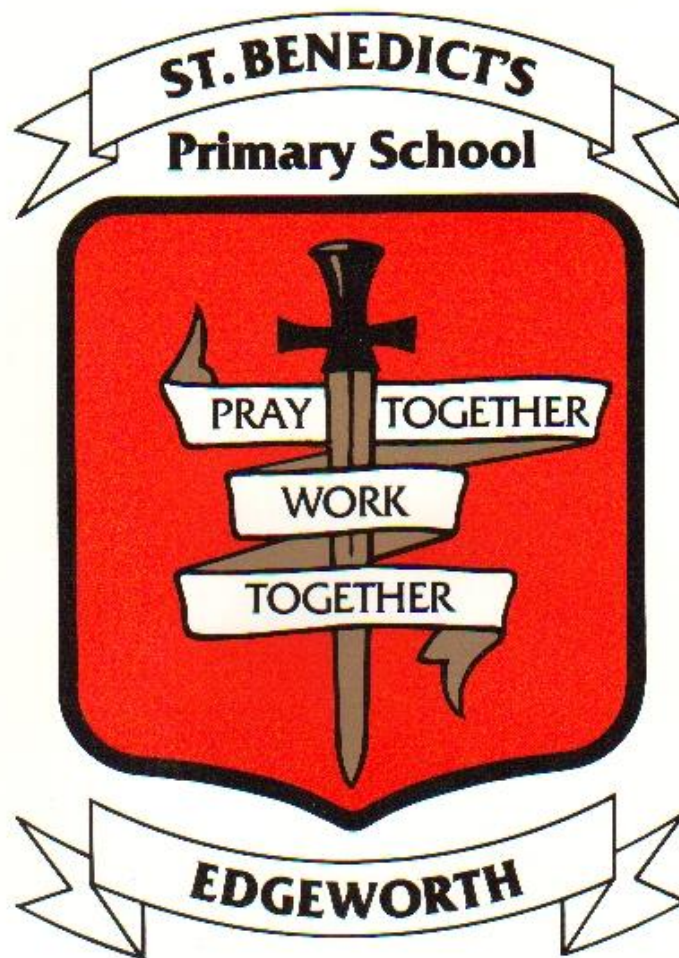


If ultimately the Parent/Carer is not happy with the way their concern has been dealt with by the school or the Catholic Schools Office, they may wish to go to an external agency or legal advocate for advice and assistance.

Concerns that are clearly identified as Child Protection are to be addressed using the school's Child Protection Policy.

SUPPORT DOCUMENT 1

ST. BENEDICT'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL EDGEWORTH ANTI-BULLYING PROGRAM



Still being finalised