

ANTI BULLYING POLICY

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Leaders of Pastoral Care
MacKillop College Leadership Team.

Policy Contact Officer: Principal

Related Documentation:

Catholic Education in the Diocese of Lismore, Foundational Beliefs and Practices- The Essential Framework

Nine Elements for a Parish School Approach to Wellbeing (Diocese of Lismore, poster resource)

The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (2008)

The National Safe Schools Framework (2011)

The NESA Registration Systems and Member Non-Government Schools (NSW) Manual, Requirement 5.6, a Safe and Supportive (School) Environment

Children and Young Persons Act 1998 (Care and Protection) with reference to Chapter 16A Exchange of Risk of Harm information

Keep Them Safe: A Shared Approach to Child Wellbeing, with reference to the Mandatory Reporting Guide, specifically, physical abuse and psychological harm.

Education Act Part VA i.e. Exchange of history of student violence information

Catholic Education Commission New South Wales Anti-bullying Policies

RATIONALE

At MacKillop College the dignity of the human person is the foundation of all Catholic social teaching and intrinsic to our education ministry. Consequently, the principle that the person is made in the image and likeness of God, is central to the mission of our parish school. This policy identifies the interconnectedness of the characteristics of quality Catholic learning and teaching and is intended to value, respect and promote the self-esteem and dignity of each student. The school will actively promote anti-bullying messages alerting students and staff of the need to be vigilant.

SCOPE

The family of St Agnes' Parish Schools lives in an increasingly multi-cultural, and also multi-denominational and multi-faith society. Further, we are challenged by a situation where many people do not have any faith, and/or for a variety of reasons have negative attitudes towards religion and spirituality. These cultural challenges present an invitation for us to be more actively engaged in evangelisation within our school communities, more committed to journeying with all people in our school community through responding to the issues that some people are struggling with in regards to Church, and importantly supporting those young people involved in the life of the Church community.

In Australia, the Freedom of Religious worship, practice and observance is underpinned by Constitutional and other legal regulations, including our nation's commitment to the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the establishment of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. Exemptions for religious organisations within various pieces of legislation do not mean that it is acceptable to be disrespectful to any person within our school community- whatever their religious adherence may be. Importantly, as Catholic schools, our foundation is Jesus Christ and thus we are called to imitate as best we can how he treated all people. Consequently, we need to be pro-active against bullying in that it represents a threat to the right of students to develop in freedom and peace. The bullying of those students engaged in religious worship, practice and observance in our Parish is of a particularly pernicious nature and totally alien to the values of Catholic schools.

With these above principles in mind, as a Parish, we need to ensure that we are creating a culture within our schools that is supportive and encouraging of those students who wish to be involved in various ministries within the Catholic Church.

To this end, the following policy of the St Agnes Parish is to be paramount in all our parish Catholic Schools, and to be respected by all employees, students, parents, visitors, and all those who are associated with the education and formation of students in our parish school family.

The development of this policy further supports our mission, that *'Everything is to be oriented towards the praise and Glory of God'*.

In keeping with our Parish Vision all that we do is oriented towards the Praise and Glory of God. In that context all forms of bullying in schools is unacceptable and must be brought to the attention of the College Principals so that they are aware of the matter even if another

staff member is responding to the issue. All acts of bullying that are brought to a staff member's attention must be investigated, appropriate disciplinary procedures enacted, appropriate support offered to the victim, and the parents/carers of all students involved must be informed that appropriate action has been taken, particularly when parents have lodged a complaint on behalf of their children. It is recommended that incidents of bullying be recorded so that the actions of offenders can be monitored.

In the context of bullying that arises in a school as a result of one's attendance at Mass and/or participation in ministries within the parish, additional safeguards shall be in place that involves greater collaboration between the school and the parish. Consequently, any case of this manner of bullying by any person, and/or any repeat occurrence of this manner of bullying directed towards an individual must be reported not only to the Principal but also to the School Priest Chaplain. The Parish Pastoral Assistant will be consulted on ways to support the person being bullied in this manner.

Persons associated with the St Agnes Parish in Port Macquarie will be expected to respect the rights of all individuals within our schools, regardless of age, sex, or race, to be actively involved in Ministry and the expression of their faith according to the guidelines of the Catholic Church. A condition of employment, or involvement in the St Agnes Parish, is the agreed acceptance of the rights and responsibilities with respect for all persons willing to be actively involved in the life of the parish.

In summary, to belittle any person's involvement in Ministry or their expression of their Catholic beliefs, will be deemed unacceptable and appropriate measures should be taken for the person or persons involved.

It is essential that we create and maintain a respectful, safe and supportive learning environment that promotes student wellbeing and enables the school to engage a diverse range of learners.

This Anti-Bullying policy supports the school's Mission and Vision Statements and Catholic Education in the Diocese of Lismore, Foundational Beliefs and Practices-*The Essential Framework*.

The Diocesan approved poster resource is included in this policy, Nine Elements for a Parish School Approach to Wellbeing and is based on the National Safe Schools Framework. This poster helps to locate bullying issues within a wider pastoral care context.

At MacKillop College we consider it essential to create and maintain a respectful, safe and supportive learning environment that promotes student wellbeing and enables school communities to engage a diverse range of learners including those with disabilities.

At MacKillop College we expect that learning technologies are used ethically and responsibly in the school environment, so that communication is respectful and human dignity valued. The prevention of and responses to incidents of bullying, inappropriate use of technology and disrespectful behaviour is more readily achieved in a caring and supportive school culture that promotes positive relationships and reflects Gospel values. Bullying, cyber-bullying, harassment, aggression and violence disregard core values of our faith including dignity,

respect, justice, equity, compassion, trust and courage. Importantly, such actions can adversely affect the wellbeing of our students and are therefore unacceptable.

All members of this school community are expected to prevent and challenge such actions in order to build respectful relationships that respond effectively and sensitively to the needs of each student.

Context

At MacKillop College we define bullying as:

A pattern of repeated physical, verbal, psychological or social aggression that is directed towards a specific student by someone with more power and is intended to cause harm, distress and/or create fear. Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term physical and psychological effects on those involved, including bystanders.

Bullying may be carried out overtly (e.g. face – to – face) or covertly (e.g. through repeated social exclusion or via technology). It is a sub-category of aggression and is different to, but also related to, harassment and violence. It is not the same as conflict or social dislike even though, in some cases, the outcome of both can be bullying.

The different types of bullying identified by the National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF) include:

Face-to-face bullying (sometimes referred to as direct bullying) involves physical actions such as punching or kicking or overt verbal actions such as name-calling and insulting.

Covert bullying (sometimes referred to as indirect bullying) is a subtle type of non-physical bullying which isn't easily seen by others and is conducted out of sight, and often unacknowledged by adults.

Cyber-bullying occurs through the use of information or communication technologies such as Instant Messaging, text messages, email and social networking sites. Cyber-bullying involves the use of any information and communication technology involving deliberate, isolated or repeatedly hostile behaviour by an individual or group, that is intended to harm others or is undertaken recklessly, without concern for its impact on others. By virtue of its nature, technology facilitates repeated access to harmful content. It has many similarities with offline bullying but it differs in that the student(s) who is/are bullying can be anonymous, it can reach a wide audience and the sent or uploaded material can be difficult to remove.

Most students who cyber bully also bully off-line. It is now recognised that many forms of covert bullying appear to have significant potential for serious harm.

This definition covers the use of digital technologies which are very much a part of life and learning, because they offer such a wide range of tools and platforms for social and educational engagement. However, the risks of the digital environment must be acknowledged and constantly addressed. Being cyber safe and acting ethically when using electronic communications is the responsibility of all members of this school community.

At MacKillop College a conflict between equals and single incidents are not defined as bullying although, of course, such incidents will require intervention by the school and are treated as serious.

Duty of Care at MacKillop College

Teachers at this school must be aware of the possibility of bullying and take action to prevent bullying if it is reasonably foreseeable.

The school will take reasonable actions to develop plans and implement programs aimed at deterring bullying activities. At MacKillop College the following anti-bullying plans and programs are mandatory:

1. Biannual anti bullying survey and interventions
2. Public awareness through newsletter and school assembly
3. Support of National of Action Against Bullying
4. Brainstorm Productions
5. PDHPE Curriculum
6. Specific individual programmes
7. Individual mentoring

Our Duty of Care means this Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures is disseminated as appropriate to members of the school community in both digital form on our web and in hard copy school policy documents.

If a serious criminal offence has been identified, we will report this to the police. This is the principal's responsibility. Teachers are to contact the principal immediately when conduct such as stalking, destruction of property, threats to inflict serious injury and/or kill, physical and sexual assault, offensive behaviour, discrimination, cyber stalking, defamation, breach of privacy, hacking, sexting and creating or possessing and/or disseminating child pornography are brought to your attention.

Teachers must be aware that in many instances, cyber-bullying can constitute criminal conduct, especially when the behaviour is seriously threatening, harassing or intimidating. Cyber bullying and highly inappropriate use of technology could include: child pornography, fraud, impersonation, or sending words or images that cause offence, distress, menace or threaten.

Our Duty of Care with bullying and related matters can extend past the school hours of instruction. If unacceptable behaviour occurs that has a close nexus with the school or with the wellbeing of a child educated at the school but occurs outside school hours, off-site or through the use of a student's personal mobile devices and/or computer, we may still have an obligation to respond.

Therefore, at MacKillop College if teachers become aware of such a circumstance they are obliged to bring the matter to the attention of the principal.

In our schools, programmes will need to be devised to educate all staff regarding this policy. Firstly, to educate all staff that zero tolerance will exist towards bullying that arises in a school. Particular attention should be given where a student is the victim of bullying as a result of his or her attendance at Mass and/or participation in ministries within the parish. Further, that when this later form of bullying is reported, the staff member is to act immediately to bring

it to the attention of the College Principal and the Priest Chaplain and the perpetrator is to be dealt with in accordance with policies devised by the school for such matters.

Schools should proactively work to establish an environment where involvement in Parish ministry is a praiseworthy ideal and is encouraged in every way possible. All students should be aware that if they wish to be involved in Ministry, it is their right to do so. They will be respected and recognised for that involvement by the Parish of St Agnes, including their respective schools.

All students have the right to express their concerns if any form of bullying- whether that be verbal, through social media, written or otherwise takes place. All students will be informed of the consequences if they are involved in any form of bullying and in particular towards any person associated with Ministry, be it in the Catholic Faith or any other Faith or Church group.

At MacKillop College we

- Use an Anti-Bullying Response Pathway when we become aware of incidents. The Pathway assists with a regulated and thorough response. (Appendix A)
- Will implement an anti-Bullying Action Plan as part of the Response Pathway. (Appendix B)
- Will keep a written record of any bullying investigation. (Appendix C sample)
- Want students, staff and parent/carers to report bullying and cyber-bullying to the class teacher or directly to the principal.
- Will investigate complaints of bullying and cyber-bullying in a manner that respects the dignity and privacy of those involved.
- Will appoint a nominated person to co-ordinate strategies for the resolution of specific bullying incidents reported in this school.
- Will notify parent/carers of bullying incidents involving your children.
- Will notify the Police Youth Liaison Officer if the bullying situation has involved violence, threat of harm or alleged criminal conduct.
- Will maintain records of bullying incidents and related interventions in accordance with the Catholic Schools Office Compliance manual. At our school this written record is maintained by Leaders of Pastoral Care, Assistant Principal Pastoral Care and Principal. As a staff we will review the record at regular intervals to see if any patterns are emerging.
- Will survey students at least once a year on various matters and include questions about bullying, cyber bullying, safety and wellbeing.
- Will regularly review and evaluate this anti-bullying policy and the responsible use of technology procedures to ensure they are working effectively. (Appendix D)
- Will involve parents in this review through communication at Parent Forum and St Agnes' Parish.
- Will purchase Anti-Bullying resources and support material for students, staff and parents and ensure easy access to this material for all staff, parents and students.

- Will display this policy for all staff and visitors to read, and will incorporate it into existing school policy documents.
- Will include in their reflection days; an emphasis on the rights of an individual in relation to freedom of religious worship, practice, and observance, including the expression of their beliefs and faith.

Responsibilities: Staff

Staff at MacKillop College aim to treat all members of the school community with dignity and respect and:

- Implement the student anti-bullying and responsible use of technology procedures by responding promptly and appropriately to reported incidents of bullying.
- Support the student anti-bullying and responsible use of technology procedures through positive modelling and the promotion of appropriate behaviour.
- Access professional learning to support appropriate anti-bullying responses which could include cyber safety, restorative justice practices, mediation and developing social skills in students. Such opportunities are made available to staff on the same basis as other professional learning.
- Support all aspects of related school policies.
- Remain vigilant in how students are using technology.
- Embed critical thinking, values clarification, respectful relationships and developing empathy into our teaching practice.
- Respond to bullying and cyber-bullying concerns by providing age appropriate guidance and boundaries so that students can learn to self-regulate.
- Will be reminded of this policy at least through staff meetings, and will be encouraged to discuss their duty of care in relation to ensuring it is adhered to.

Responsibilities: Students

Students have responsibilities as well. The staff at MacKillop College will encourage and support students to:

- Follow the anti-bullying and responsible use of technology procedures. Assist students from Years 7 to 12 to understand what their signature means on use of technology documents.
- Immediately seek help from a trusted adult if they are aware of or involved in a bullying or cyber-bullying incident.
- Seek support if bullied and refrain from retaliating in any bullying incident.
- Understand that any social networking site that identifies the school by name or image or implication is part of the school environment.
- In age appropriate circumstances the student should keep evidence of alleged bullying and produce it on request (for example phone text messages).

Responsibilities: Parent/Carers

Parent/carers have a responsibility to treat all members of the school community with dignity and respect and:

- Read and abide by the College Enrolment Application Form.
- Read, sign and abide by the student anti-bullying and responsible use of technology procedures as part of the application for enrolment at the Diocesan school.
- Work collaboratively with the school in providing opportunities for education on issues related to student safety and wellbeing.
- Notify the school promptly of all bullying situations involving their children.
- Follow the student anti-bullying procedures to report bullying or cyber-bullying, whether actual or suspected.
- Model prudent use of technology and supervise and discuss internet content and time spent using technology to help children grow into ethical and responsible digital citizens by discussing appropriate responses to bullying and cyber-bullying. Encourage children to always disclose to a trusted adult if this occurs.
- Provide appropriate protection and safety, such as filtering devices, for their children when using various technologies.
- Report serious matters of out-of-school hours bullying and cyber-bullying to the Police or other appropriate authority (such as the Internet Service Provider) and, as relevant, to the school.
- Follow due process and use relevant procedures when bringing complaints and grievances to the notice of a school and/or the Catholic Schools Office.

nine elements for a parish school approach to wellbeing



Worship:	Community:	Service:	Witness:	Evangelisation:
the authentic identity of the parish school is most fully shown when it celebrates the Eucharist gathered around the altar of its parish church	'...for where two or three are gathered in my name I am there among them.' Matthew 18:20	'I am among you as the one who serves.' Luke 2:27	the witness of early Christians to the love of Christ, shown in their love for the poor, their care for the weak and respect for human life was evident to all	the call to faith and discipleship should flow through every aspect of life in the parish school

The person of Jesus Christ stands at the heart of Catholic Education. The Apostle's Creed is the faithful summary of our common and life-giving faith.

Supporting the Foundational Beliefs and Practices – the Essential Framework

References: - Creating a Future Full of Hope - A Statement of Strategic Intent for Catholic Education in the Diocese of Lismore 2010-2014 - National Safe schools Framework