



St John Fisher Catholic School

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ANTI-BULLYING GUIDELINES

SUPPORT DOCUMENT FOR THE
ANTI-BULLYING POLICY:
PROMOTING SAFETY, POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR AND SOCIAL INCLUSION
FOR
DIOCESAN SCHOOLS SYSTEM (DSS)

April 2023



St John Fisher Anti-Bullying Guidelines

1. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

St John Fisher Anti-bullying guidelines outline the processes for preventing and responding to student bullying in our school. They reflect the requirements of the Diocesan Systemic Schools (DSS) Anti-Bullying Policy: Promoting Safety, Positive Behaviour and Social Inclusion. St John Fisher Anti-bullying guidelines will be implemented within the context of related DSS policies/frameworks and school guidelines such as: Behaviour Support, Pastoral Care, Acceptable Use of Technology, Cyber safety and Complaints Handling.

St John Fisher Anti-bullying guidelines provide information for our school community to work together to prevent and address issues of student bullying, in order to build respectful relationships that respond effectively and sensitively to the needs of each person. Bullying, including cyber-bullying, can adversely affect the wellbeing of students and is therefore unacceptable.

2. ST JOHN FISHER'S MISSION AND VALUES

The dignity of the human person is the foundation of all Catholic social teaching and is inherent to the ministry of Catholic education. Essential to the dignity of persons is the creation and maintenance of a respectful, safe and supportive learning environment that promotes student wellbeing and enables the St John Fisher community to engage a diverse range of learners in an inclusive manner. Bullying and cyber-bullying disregard core values of the Catholic faith including dignity, respect, justice, equity, compassion, trust and courage. Within this context it is vital that learning technologies are used ethically and responsibly, that communication is respectful, and that human dignity is highly valued.

These guidelines are underpinned by the school rule:

At St John Fisher We Make Good Choices to be Respectful Responsible Citizens

3. WHAT IS BULLYING

3.1 Definition of Bullying

Bullying is 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 can involve: humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and all forms of harassment including that based on sex, race, disability, sexual orientation or practice of religion. Bullying of any form, or for any reason, can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.

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 concern for its impact on others.

Bullying can happen anywhere: at school, travelling to and from school, in sporting teams, or in the workplace. Bullying behaviour can be:

- **verbal**, eg name calling, teasing, abuse, putdowns, sarcasm, insults, threats
- **physical**, eg hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting
- **social**, eg ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating, making inappropriate gestures
- **psychological**, eg spreading rumours, hiding or damaging possessions, malicious SMS and email messages, inappropriate use of communication technology/mobile devices.

Conflict or fights between equals and single incidents are not defined as bullying. Bullying behaviour is not:

- children not getting along well
- a situation of mutual conflict such as, teasing or disagreement
- single episodes of hurtful words or actions, or random acts of aggression or intimidation.

(Adapted from: National Safe Schools Framework (2011) and DEC NSW Website)

4. ST JOHN FISHER'S APPROACH TO PREVENTING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR



St John Fisher has a three-tiered approach to preventing bullying behaviour. This approach provides for differences in student responsiveness due to the variations in an individual's risk and protective factors (i.e. self-management and social skill competence). It also includes a shared responsibility with staff, parents/caregivers and the wider community in working together to teach, foster, promote and encourage positive respectful behaviour.

Our three-tiered approach to preventing bullying behaviour includes:

- Prevention (Tier 1)
- Early Intervention (Tier 2)
- Specialised Intervention (Tier 3)

4.1 Prevention (Tier 1)

Tier I prevention programs are intended to support the vast majority of students, and also to identify students who require more specialised assistance (Tier II and Tier III). All students and staff are explicitly taught about behaving in a safe, respectful and responsible way. The emphasis is on educating students, staff and parents/caregivers about bullying prevention and management, and encouraging positive social skills, resilience and character traits.

4.1.1 Whole School Positive Behaviour Approaches

St John Fisher uses a whole-school positive behaviour approach to prevent bullying such as; promoting a safe and supportive learning environment, school-wide rules and consequences, teacher professional learning, a curriculum focused on social and emotional learning (SEL), conflict resolution training, parent/caregiver education and engagement, and individual counselling. Teaching students the social and emotional learning (SEL) skills (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationships, and responsible decision-making) are essential foundational competencies that students need in order to prevent and to respond to bullying.

Our school prevention strategies include:

- *promotion of the Diocesan Anti-bullying Policy and school guidelines, including on the school website*
- *promotion of safe, positive school communities through the implementation of policies/frameworks such as, pastoral care, behaviour support, PBL*
- *promotion of safe respectful learner messages in all aspects of school life: assemblies, year meetings, newsletters and in classrooms*
- *professional development for staff*
- *parent and community education relating to bullying: policies and procedures (Appendix B)*
- *provision of programs that promote SEL skills such as resilience, assertiveness, conflict resolution, problem solving, 'be an upstander not a bystander' and Bullying No Way day*
- *classroom teachers clarify the school policy on bullying with students each year (Appendix B)*
- *curriculum includes anti-bullying messages and strategies, embedded in KLAs, through wellbeing programs eg. PDHPE, Religious Education and pastoral care and/or PBL lessons*
- *Student Representative Council (SRC), peer support leaders promote "No Put Downs" and "Hands Off" messages*
- *Vigilant classroom, playground and transition supervision.*

4.1.2 Curriculum strategies

Prevention programs are delivered as part of the curriculum across KLAs and through pastoral care and wellbeing programs. Specifically, students learn about matters related to bullying in PDHPE from Years K-6, such as, positive respectful relationships, negative impacts of violence and aggression, effects on mental health, help seeking skills, resilience, the role of the upstander, conflict resolution, effective communication, cyber-safety, belonging and connectedness, risk and protective factors.

4.1.3 Pastoral care and wellbeing strategies

A range of anti-bullying initiatives are embedded into our school pastoral care and wellbeing plan, such as:

- *Bully Upstander sessions with a focus on reporting bullying, and the importance of the upstander in stopping bullying*
- *Harmony Day develops intercultural understanding*
- *R U OK? Day emphasises the need for strong relationships and the importance of mental health and wellbeing*
- *Public recognition, awards and rewards for positive behaviour*
- *Peer/mentor program*
- *Rock and Water program*



- *Cool Connections*
- *SRC led initiatives*
- *Transition programs such as, Kindergarten and Year 6 to Year 7.*

4.1.4 Consequences

The management of bullying incidents will be in accordance with the Diocesan Anti-bullying Policy, the Behaviour Support Policy and school anti-bullying and behaviour support guidelines. The consequences for behaviour violations around bullying should include some form of relationship restoration or remediation that helps students understand the incident and develop pro-social behaviour. Refer to Appendix A and B.

The implementation of these guidelines is supervised by the Pastoral Care Coordinator, Principal and AP and includes:

- *Once identified, each bully, victim and witness, will be spoken with, and all incidents of bullying will be investigated and documented*
- *Both the bully and victim may be offered counselling, depending on the nature of the incident and person(s) involved*
- *Parents/caregivers should be contacted and consequences implemented, consistent with our school's behaviour support guidelines*
- *Consequences for students will be individually-based, and may involve:*
 - *Social skills support*
 - *Reinforcement of positive behaviours*
 - *Class/Year meetings*
 - *Support structures eg. Check in Check Out, Mentor*
 - *Ongoing monitoring of identified bullies and victim*
 - *Rewards for positive behaviour*
 - *Withdrawal of privileges*
 - *Community service*
 - *Exclusion from class*
 - *Exclusion from playground*
 - *School suspension*
- *Counselling support.*

4.2 Early Intervention (Tier 2)

Early intervention is critical to responding effectively to bullying.

Tier 2 students whose behaviours do not respond to Tier I supports are provided with additional preventative learning opportunities, including:

- *more targeted social skills instruction*
- *increased adult monitoring and positive attention*
- *specific and regular daily feedback on their behavioural progress*
- *additional academic supports if required.*

4.3 Specialised Intervention (Tier 3)

Tier 3 students whose behaviours do not respond to Tier I and II supports are provided with intensive preventative strategies, including:

- *individualised academic and/or behaviour intervention planning*
- *more comprehensive, student-centered and case management/wrap-around processes*
- *school-family-community mental health supports as required.*

5. OUR SCHOOL'S RESPONSE

Bullying may be reported:

- *In person by a student to a teacher or via email*
- *By a parent via phone, email, or in person*
- *By a teacher to another teacher such as, the class teacher to the Pastoral Care Coordinator.*

5.1 Recording Incidents of Bullying

All incidents of bullying that have been reported will be recorded on Compass and relevant staff will be notified. The report will include the type of bullying, number of incidents and the action taken by staff. This



information will form the basis of data collection for the review of bullying in the school by the *Pastoral Care & Wellbeing Team*. General behaviour and bullying reports will be monitored and reviewed by the *AP, Pastoral Care Coordinator and Wellbeing Team*.

5.2 Evidence based responses

Our school uses a range of evidence-based methods to respond to bullying as outlined below. Methods of intervention will vary according to the incident and persons involved. Refer to Appendix A.

- No Blame Approach
- The Method of Shared Concern
- The Traditional Disciplinary Approach
- Restorative Practice
- Strengthening the Victim
- Mediation
- The Support Group Method.

5.3 Referral and the School Counsellor

Students will be referred to the School Counsellor for support, depending on the nature of the incident and person(s) involved. Contact the school if you require school counselling support for your child or young person. For high-risk cases a referral can be made to the CSO Wellbeing or Child Protection Teams for additional support.

5.4 Communication with parents/caregivers

The Principal, AP, or Pastoral Care Coordinator will contact parents/caregivers as required in a timely manner. The communication will focus on, what the school can do and what the family can do to support the child or young person.

5.5 Bullying prevention is a shared responsibility

Preventing and responding to bullying is a shared responsibility of all staff, students, parents/caregivers and members of the wider school community. The various roles/responsibilities are outlined in Appendix B and C.

5.6 Incidents involving assault, threats, intimidation, or harassment

Staff are to report these types of incidents to the *Principal, AP, or Pastoral Care Coordinator*. They will assess the situation where a decision will be made of the appropriate action to be taken. Reports will be made to the Police Youth Liaison Officer, Local Area Command and the CSO as required.

5.7 Reporting to the CSO Child Protection or Wellbeing Team

Staff are to report concerns of child wellbeing to the Principal, AP, Pastoral Care Coordinator or to the school counsellor. The Principal in consultation with the AP, Pastoral Care Coordinator and/or Counsellor will assess the situation and a decision will be made on the appropriate action to be taken and if a referral is warranted to the CSO.

5.8 Complaints handling policy

The Principal deals with formal complaints by following the procedures outlined in the [Diocesan Complaints Handling Policy](#). Parents/caregivers can contact the Catholic Schools Office, Diocese of Broken Bay if dissatisfied with the school's response.

6. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Contact Details:

School Liaison Police Officer: Kim Smith 0437 778 707

Police Youth Liaison Officer: Kim Smith 0437 778 707

Local Police: *The Entrance Police Station 4333 2999*

Beyond Blue: 1300 22 46 36

Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800

Headspace: 8785 3200



Useful websites

[Department of Education Victoria – Bullying Prevention Resources](#)

[Bullying. No Way!](#)

[Cybersmart website](#)

[Safe Schools Hub](#)

[National Centre Against Bullying](#)

[KidsMatters](#)

[MindMatters](#)

[Positive Behaviour Intervention Support \(PBIS\)](#)

[Social and Emotional Learning and Bullying Prevention](#)

[CSO Pastoral Care & Wellbeing website](#)

Guidelines development

This policy was developed by *Marcel Arendse* in consultation with *Stephen Lynch*

Review date: *January 2023*

Date of next review: *January 2025*

7. SCHOOL CONTACT INFORMATION

St John Fisher, Tumbi Umbi



Appendix A

Evidence Based Methods for Addressing Bullying

No Blame Approach

The aim of the No Blame approach is to stop bullying episodes by assisting perpetrators of bullying develop empathy for their victims and voluntarily change their behaviour as a result of increased understanding and communication. Students are encouraged to engage in this process with the aid of a support group facilitated by a neutral adult.

The Method of Shared Concern

Students who have engaged in bullying are induced and empowered to assist in resolving the bully/victim problem through the use of individual and group meetings with the participants. This method is usually considered more appropriate for use with senior students attending secondary schools or in the final years of primary. It appears to be unique as a method in dealing with cases in which the victim has behaved provocatively.

The Traditional Disciplinary Approach

This implies the use of direct sanctions administered to students who have bullied someone and also as a general deterrent. This approach is favoured by schools especially in cases of very severe forms of bullying. The bullying behaviour of younger children is more likely to be controlled in this way than that of older students in secondary schools.

Restorative Practice

Those who have engaged in bullying are induced to feel remorse and to take appropriate steps to restore relationships that have been damaged by the bullying. This method can be used when the bully has already admitted to having offended and is either feeling remorseful or can be induced to feel remorseful by being asked to reflect upon their actions. It is assumed that the problem can be resolved by the bully acting restoratively (i.e. by making an apology which is likely to be accepted by the victim and wider community).

For further information:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/methodrestorative.aspx>

Strengthening the Victim

Students are helped to acquire the necessary skills and resolution to confront and discourage the bullying, thereby removing the need for the third party to take direct action. This approach may be used in some, but not all, cases of bullying – the initial imbalance of power between the bully and victim needs to be relatively small, and the nature of the bullying is verbal rather than physical. Careful assessment should be made about the victim's capability to acquire and employ the necessary skills.

Mediation

Cooperation of the perpetrators is gained by revealing them to the distress that has been experienced by the victim at a meeting, in which students supportive of the victim are additionally present. Mediation can only occur when (1) the participants are willing to participate and (2) the mediator is strictly neutral. The use of mediation in the minority of cases which allow for its use can have a very positive effect upon the general ethos of the school as more students see the value of resolving interpersonal difficulties peacefully.

The Support Group Method

Cooperation of the perpetrators is gained by revealing them to the distress that has been experienced by the victim at a meeting, in which students supportive of the victim are additionally present. This approach typically addresses the cases of bullying where there has been group involvement. It is important to recognise that no one is being blamed for the bullying. This approach gathers assistance for the victimised student. It does this by sharing knowledge of his or her distress at a meeting with the perpetrators, together with peers who would offer support to the victim.

For further information:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/teachoverview.aspx>

Appendix B

Responding to Bullying

What can students do?

If it happens to me:

- Tell the student who is bullying *to stop*. State quite clearly that the behaviour is against school values/rules and is offensive
- *Ignore* them and walk away
- Seek help. Talk about it to someone you trust
- Report it to a member of staff, a trustworthy friend or buddy. Feel confident that an incident can be solved
- Talk it *over* openly with your parents/caregivers – they can help you make a decision
- Do NOT retaliate with physical or verbal abuse
- If you are experiencing bullying on the way to or from school, tell your parents/caregivers and walk home with a friend
- Write a description of the event and report it to a teacher.

If it happens to someone else:

- Tell the person to stop bullying – be an ‘upstander’ not a bystander.
- Be a friend to the person being bullied
- Encourage the person being bullied to inform someone
- Seek help. You can decide to do something about it and help to protect others
- Write a description of the event and place it in the class meeting box/wellbeing email or give it to a teacher
- Talk it over with the teacher.

For further information: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/students.aspx>

What can parents/caregivers do?

- Be aware of the signs of distress in your child, e.g. unwillingness to attend school, a pattern of illness, missing equipment, requests for extra money, damaged equipment or clothing
- Inform the school of any cases of suspected bullying even if your child is not directly involved or affected
- Take an active interest in your child’s social life and acquaintances
- Assist your child to discuss any incidence of bullying with a teacher. If possible, allow your child to report and deal with the situation. Your child can gain respect and confidence through taking the initiative and dealing with the problem without direct parental involvement
- If your child is being bullied, discourage any planned retaliation, either physical or verbal, by discussing positive strategies they can use
- Be positive about your child’s qualities and encourage your child to be tolerant and caring
- Be willing to attend interviews if your child is involved in an incident of bullying, and work cooperatively with the school
- Do not deal directly with the other children or their parents/caregivers but work through and with the school
- Discuss the school’s expectations about behaviour and how best to deal with bullying.

Adapted from: Friendly Schools and Families

For further information: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/parents.aspx>

Appendix C

Bullying Prevention is a Shared Responsibility

Roles and Responsibilities

Preventing and responding to bullying is a shared responsibility of all staff, students, parents/caregivers and members of the wider school community.

The various responsibilities are outlined below.

Staff

School staff have a responsibility to:

- Respect and support students
- Model and promote appropriate respectful behaviour
- Understand the school and system policies relating to bullying, behaviour, responsible use of technology and pastoral care
- Respond in a timely manner to incidents of bullying according to the school's Anti-Bullying Guidelines
- Provide a safe and supportive learning environment
- Provide curriculum and pedagogy that supports students to develop an understanding of bullying and its impact on individuals and the broader community.

Students

Students have a responsibility to:

- Act appropriately, respecting individual differences and diversity
- Act as responsible digital citizens and responsible users of ICT
- Follow the school anti-bullying guidelines
- Act as a responsible 'upstander' rather than a bystander
- Report incidents of bullying
- Seek support if bullied and refrain from retaliating in any bullying incident.

Parent/Caregivers

Parent/carers have a responsibility to:

- Treat all members of the school community with dignity and respect
- Be aware of the school anti-bullying guidelines
- Support their children to understand bullying behaviour, to become responsible citizens and to develop responsible online behaviour
- Support their children in developing positive responses to incidents of bullying
- Report incidents of bullying according to the school anti-bullying guidelines
- Work collaboratively and calmly with the school to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur.

Members of the school community

All members of the school community have a responsibility to:

- model and promote positive relationships that respect and accept individual differences and diversity within the school community.
- support the school's Anti-bullying Guidelines through words and actions.
- work collaboratively with the school to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur.