Respectful Relationships – Anti Bullying Policy

Rationale

The community of Sacred Heart College Kyneton is committed to building and nurturing an environment that is safe, supportive and empowering for all its members.

Bullying behaviour can offend and harm others, cause them pain, embarrass and endanger them, or damage their self-esteem. Bullying behaviour, inclusive of cyberbullying, seriously undermines the ethos of the College, is not acceptable, and will not be tolerated.

This policy is primarily concerned with incidents of student bullying, however, the policy is directed to all members of the SACRED HEART COLLEGE KYNETON community – students, staff and parents – with the expectation that all will collaborate in supporting its intentions and procedures.

Principles

- Bullying behaviour contravenes Sacred Heart College Kyneton's Mission, Vision and Mercy Values which include aspirations for appropriate behaviour. Corporal punishment at Sacred Heart College is prohibited. College members seek to:
  - o live authentically, guided by the values taught by Jesus and echoed through our Mercy Education Values
  - o treat each other with respect and as worthwhile individuals
  - o act for justice in our community
  - o understand others and respond to them in times of need
  - o know the power of forgiveness and offer this to others.

- Every member of the community has a right to a safe environment, free from bullying.

- If students are bullied, they have the right to complain.

- Sacred Heart College Kyneton manages all disrespectful behaviour, including bullying, using Restorative Practices. Restorative Practices focus on learning how to take responsibility for one's actions and their impact on others, and ways to repair the harm where relationships have broken down. A restorative approach also aims to develop student resilience in the midst and in aftermath of harmful and distressing experiences.

- Sacred Heart College Kyneton is committed to:
  - o promoting appropriate standards of behaviour
  - o upholding both prevention and intervention measures with respect to bullying
  - o treating complaints of bullying in a sensitive, fair, timely and confidential manner
  - o working with students to build resilience and manage difficult situations
  - o ensuring that staff are appropriately trained to manage incidents through an understanding of the use of Restorative Practices
  - o encouraging the reporting of behaviour which breaches this policy.

Definitions

- Bullying is a repetitive attack that causes distress at the time or in the future. It involves an imbalance of power and leaves people feeling distressed and without power.
- Bullying behaviour can be of a personal, sexual, emotional, psychological or physical nature.
- Bullying is unwelcome or uninvited behaviour that students find humiliating, intimidating, offensive or frightening.

Bullying may include:
- Unwelcome and uninvited verbal behaviour such as racist taunts, threats, sexual comments or continuing comments;
- Unwelcome and uninvited conduct such as making rude gestures, staring, or displaying pictures, posters or graffiti that may cause offence;
- Unwelcome and uninvited behaviour towards a student, such as hitting, pinching, pushing, verbal abuse, rude, offensive or intimidating text messages, emails or posts on social networking sites, spitting, or sexual approaches such as patting, touching, embracing, fondling and grabbing.

What Bullying is Not

- **Mutual conflict**: where an argument or disagreement occurs but both parties are upset and want resolution to the problem.

- **Social rejection**: this is not bullying unless directed towards someone specific and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

- **Single-episode acts of meanness**, or random acts of aggression or intimidation. These will not be ignored but are not acts of bullying.

- **Changes in peer group dynamics and composition**: it is not unusual for a shift in friendship groups to occur as students move through adolescence and interests and personalities develop.

Definition of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is a form of bullying which is carried out through an internet service such as email, chatroom, discussion group, online social networking (e.g. Facebook or Instagram, Snapchat), instant messaging or web pages. It can also include bullying through mobile phone technologies such as SMS or MMS.

Cyberbullying can occur when people are involved in:
- **Flaming**: Sending angry, rude, vulgar messages about a person to an online group or to that person via email or other text messaging

- **Online harassment**: Repeatedly sending offensive messages via email or other text messaging to a person, repeated calls or hang-ups

- **Cyberstalking**: Online harassment that includes threats of harm or is excessively intimidating

- **Denigration (put-downs)**: Spreading rumours, sending harmful, untrue, or cruel statements about a person to other people or posting such material online

- **Masquerade or Identity Theft**: Pretending to be someone else, taking on their identity and sending or posting material so that another person looks bad

- **Outing**: Sending or posting material about a person that contains sensitive, private, or embarrassing information, including forwarding private messages, photos or images

- **Exclusion**: Cruelly excluding someone from an online group.

Procedures

1. Students

Students are encouraged not to stay silent or to retaliate. They should discuss the matter with parents/sibling/significant person in their life and report any bullying or harassment to a staff member, such as:

- Homeroom Teacher
- Year Level Leader
- Wellbeing Team Members
- Deputy Principal: Student Wellbeing
- A College Leader
- Principal

Any student who observes this behaviour must not join in and is asked to report the incident to ensure that both the victim and the instigator of bullying receive assistance.

2. Staff

Staff will always investigate the incident and act promptly. Each incident is recorded by the reporting teacher on the Student Behaviour Tracking system – SIMON.

- Students on both sides of the issue are usually interviewed
- Contact with parents is made if required
- Techniques of a restorative manner will be applied in responding to bullying issues
- Students are usually brought together in serious incidents to establish a mediated plan of action.

3. Parents

- **Parents** should encourage their son or daughter to report the incidents to their Homeroom Teacher or Year Level Leader. If your son or daughter is unwilling to do so, then the parent should contact the College.

- In the case of cyberbullying, parents are reminded of the strength of the law. Contact with police ought to be considered.

4. College Response

All reported incidents will be managed on an individual basis and will be investigated and followed up. The Year/House Coordinator, in consultation with the Head of Student Wellbeing, will decide if the issue needs any further action. This may include notifying parents, student counselling or reporting to the Principal.

Some wrongful behaviours of a serious nature are by definition criminal offences and consultation with police will occur.

Related Policies

Sacred Heart College Kyneton, *Behaviour Management Policy*
Other

RESPONSIBILITY:	Student Wellbeing Leadership Team and Leadership Forum Team
DATE UPDATED:	April 2015
REVIEW DATE:	Annual Review