

Respectful Relationships – Anti Bullying Policy

Rationale

The community of Sacred Heart College Kyneton is committed to building and nurturing a learning and workplace 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

- Each member of the Sacred Heart College Kyneton community shares the collective responsibility to develop positive relationships and to ensure every member feels safe, supported and valued at all times.
- When individuals share healthy relationships with one another, personal growth is enhanced and the potential for high for levels of achievement in all areas is strengthened. Bullying has a negative impact on relationships and the learning environment.
- 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 in conjunction with consequences. Restorative Practices focus on learning how to take responsibility for one's actions and their impact on others, as well as 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. Consequences are effective when teamed with a restorative approach. They and are both College generated and sometimes negotiated.
- Corporal punishment at Sacred Heart College is prohibited.

Aims

Bullying behaviour contravenes Sacred Heart College Kyneton's Mission, Vision and Mercy Values which include aspirations for appropriate behaviour. College members seek to:

- live authentically, guided by the values taught by Jesus and echoed through our Mercy Education Values
- treat each other with respect and as worthwhile individuals
- act for justice in our community
- understand others and respond to them in times of need
- know the power of forgiveness and offer this to others.

Sacred Heart College Kyneton is committed to:

- promoting appropriate standards of behavior
- understanding and complying with the requirements of Child Safe legislation
- upholding both prevention and intervention measures with respect to bullying
- treating complaints of bullying in a fair and thorough manner
- ensuring that all parties feel heard, safe and supported
- working with students to build resilience and manage difficult situations
- ensuring that staff are appropriately trained to manage incidents through an understanding of the importance of Restorative Practices
- encouraging the reporting of behaviour which breaches this policy.

Definitions

Bullying

- 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.

Types of bullying:

- **verbal bullying:** The repeated use of words to hurt or humiliate another individual or group. Verbal bullying includes using put-downs, insulting language, name-calling, swearing, nasty notes and homophobic, racist or sexist comments.
- **emotional/psychological bullying:** Includes repeated stalking, threats or implied threats, unwanted email or text messaging, abusive website messages/comments, threatening gestures, manipulation, emotional blackmail, and threats to an individual's reputation and sense of safety.
- **relational bullying:** Usually involves repeatedly ostracising others by leaving them out or convincing others to exclude or reject another individual or group, making up or spreading rumors, and sharing or threatening to share another's personal information.
- **physical bullying:** Includes repetitive low level hitting, kicking, pinching, pushing, tripping, 'ganging up', unwanted physical or sexual touching and damage to personal property. More serious violent behaviours are not necessarily treated as bullying and may be better managed through the school's Student Management processes.
- **cyberbullying:** Involves the use of information and communication technologies such as email, text messages, air dropping, instant messaging and websites to engage in the bullying of other individuals or groups. This technology provides an alternative means for verbal, relational and psychological forms of bullying.

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 threats that are 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.

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.

Bystanders

Bystanders are those who are aware of bullying, or witnesses to bullying, but who are not directly involved in bullying or being bullied themselves. Sometimes bystanders can assist bullying without being aware of their actions. All members of a school community need to know how to support those who are being bullied and how to discourage bullying behaviours. Any members of a school community can be a bystander and can learn ways to act successfully in preventing or stopping bullying.

WHOLE SCHOOL PREVENTION STRATEGIES

At Sacred Heart College we will:

- promote collaborative relationships between the school, parents and the wider community to develop and implement school-based strategies and programs with students;
- develop a whole-school *Positive Education* plan based on the teaching and recognition of respectful and positive social behaviour;
- develop active, trusting relationships within the whole school community;
- provide professional learning for staff and parents in identifying, preventing and addressing bullying;
- promote a school culture that seeks to be proactive and restore relationships affected by persistent or unresolved conflict;
- promote positive staff role modelling; and
- regularly evaluate and review strategies.

PROCEDURES

1. Students

Students who experience or witness bullying 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.
- Consequences will be imposed if the situation is deemed serious.
- Students are often 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 Level Leader, in consultation with the Deputy Principal - Student Wellbeing, will decide any further actions to be taken. The College uses a variety of methods of consequence, depending on the type and severity of the behavior.

CONSEQUENCES FOR THOSE WHO BULLY

Students found to be bullying face a range of consequences ranging from a formal interview with a staff member to losing their place at Sacred Heart College Kyneton. All incidents will be placed on record in the SIMON Database. Any retaliation against someone who reports bullying will be dealt with very seriously.

Consequences include:

- restorative conference or mediation
- recording of incident on College files
- formal interview with key staff

- parent notification and involvement
- counselling
- restitution for any damage to property or personal possessions
- detention
- suspension (for serious offences or persistent inappropriate behaviour)
- negotiated transfer to an alternate school where persistent and / or serious bullying occurs.

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

RELATED POLICIES

Sacred Heart College Kyneton:

- *Student Management System Policy*
- *Child Safety Policy*
- *Student Wellbeing Policy*

RESPONSIBILITY:	Student Wellbeing Leadership Team and Leadership Forum Team
DATE DEVELOPED:	March 2017
DATE UPDATED:	March 2018
REVIEW DATE:	March 2019 (Annual Review)