



ST JOHN BOSCO  
COLLEGE  
JOY IN LEARNING

## DEALING WITH BULLYING, HARASSMENT, AGGRESSION AND VIOLENCE (STUDENTS) POLICY

### REVIEW HISTORY

Originally Written:	Reviewed by:		Revised:	Next Review:
2016	College Staff		2019	2020

### RATIONALE

St John Bosco College believes that every student has the right to feel safe.

We are committed to carry out our Vision:

***Creating a flourishing environment in which every student can thrive in a Catholic learning community, where development of the whole person is of the utmost importance.***

We believe that our community has a responsibility to provide an educational environment that promotes the dignity and respect of the person and, therefore, aims to encourage the development of positive relationships between students and as such, bullying, harassment, aggression and violence will not be tolerated.

This requires that all members of our College community are alert and responsive to situations of anti-social behaviours and take responsibility for modelling appropriate behaviour.

This policy is developed on the principles of the Australian Government's National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF) and adopts a whole College approach to safety and wellbeing.

The National Safe Schools Framework is based on the following overarching Vision:

***All Australian Schools are safe, supportive and respectful teaching and learning communities that promote the student wellbeing.***

These guiding principles emphasise the importance of student safety and wellbeing as a pre-requisite for effective learning in all school settings.

Australian schools:

- affirm the rights of all members of the school community to feel safe and be safe at school
- acknowledge that being safe and supported at school is essential for student wellbeing and effective learning
- accept responsibility for developing and sustaining safe and supportive learning and teaching communities that also fulfil the school's child protection responsibilities
- Encourage the active participation of all school community members in developing and maintaining a safe school community where diversity is valued

- actively support young people to develop understanding and skills to keep themselves and others safe
- commit to developing a safe school community through a whole-school and evidence-based approach

The nine key elements that schools need to have in place to implement the NSSF are described in the Framework as:

1. Leadership commitment to a safe school
2. A supportive and connected school culture
3. Policies and procedures
4. Professional learning
5. Positive behaviour management
6. Engagement, skill development and safe school curriculum
7. A focus on student wellbeing and student ownership
8. Early intervention and targeted support
9. Partnerships

St John Bosco College community is guided by the principles and key elements of the NSSF in the development of its Dealing with Bullying, Harassment and Violence (students) Policy and Practices.

## DEFINITIONS

In order to respond effectively to bullying, it is important to understand the differences between it, aggression, violence and conflict.

**Bullying** is a repetitive attack that causes distress not only at the time of the attack, but also by threat of future attacks. It is characterised by an imbalance of power and can be defined by the impact on the vulnerable person. It is an act that causes hurt or fear in another person. It may be deliberate or a result of thoughtlessness. It may be a physical attack on the person or their property. It may be verbal teasing or insulting. It may be indirect such as spreading rumours, excluding people from groups or manipulation of others to mistreat another student. It may be the creating of hurt or fear in others through cyber bullying, that is, the use of electronic devices such as mobile phones, SMS messaging, social networking sites, chat rooms and other applications available through the use of the internet.

Bullying

- Involves the misuse of power
- Is repetitive – prolonged over time
- May be verbal, physical, social or psychological
- May be an attitude rather than an 'action'
- Is hurtful and / or demeaning.

Bullying comes in many forms, and includes but not limited to the following:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Name-calling, using hurtful or racist names</li><li>• Threatening verbally, or through body-language</li><li>• Deliberately ignoring or excluding</li><li>• Using sexual innuendo and harassment</li><li>• Spreading rumours</li><li>• Writing graffiti about another</li><li>• Disclosing another person's 'secrets'</li><li>• Stalking</li><li>• Telling lies about another, teasing or mocking</li><li>• Hitting, punching, kicking, bumping</li><li>• Interfering with the property of another</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hiding the property of another</li><li>• Repeatedly 'putting down' another</li><li>• Making fun of another person so that others laugh at them</li><li>• Sending harassing or abusive emails and phone messages</li><li>• Making prank or silent phone calls</li><li>• Spreading rumours via email or phone messages</li><li>• Sending offensive SMS phone texts</li><li>• Posting insulting messages on the internet</li><li>• Posting photos/images/videos to the internet in order to demean, insult or make fun of another</li></ul> |
|--|--|

**Harassment** is any unwanted, unwelcome or uninvited behaviour which makes a person feel humiliated, intimidated or offended. Harassment can be seen as a particular form of bullying.

**Violence** may be defined as an act of physical aggression where a person is intimidated, abused, threatened or assaulted, or where property is deliberately damaged by another person. It is distinguished from bullying in that it is usually a one-off extreme use of force resulting in injury or destruction. Unlike bullying and harassment, violence is not necessarily associated with an imbalance of power. It can occur between people of equal power. It implies extreme forcefulness, usually (but not always) of a physical kind.

**Conflict** involves a disagreement between two or more people where one or more individual's needs are not being met. Conflict, so defined, does not involve an abuse of power as the people involved are of equal powers. In such situations, conflict resolution strategies can be used to provide opportunities for personal growth.

## PRINCIPLES

1. St John Bosco College works to provide a safe and supportive environment where the 11 principles and 6 key elements of the National Safe Schools Framework (2003) are practised.
2. St John Bosco College owes a duty of care to its students.
3. St John Bosco College provides a supportive environment for all children, where it promotes respect for self and others, physical/emotional wellbeing and positive mental health.
4. St John Bosco College has a whole College approach to dealing with bullying, harassment, aggression and violence.
5. If bullying, harassment, aggression and violence occur outside of the College, and these behaviours impact on a student's learning and behaviour in the College, St John Bosco College will take action to support the continued wellbeing of those involved.
6. All bullying, harassment, aggression and violence shall be responded to. Bystanders (those who observe bullying) can encourage or assist those who bully simply by doing nothing.
7. While the aim is to promote and encourage positive behaviour, our policy and procedures contain clear statements regarding the range of appropriate consequences that may be applicable for unacceptable behaviour. In looking at consequences relating

to specific issues, consideration will be given to other circumstances, which may have bearing, such as family or mental health matters.

8. All parties to incidents of bullying, harassment, aggression and violence are entitled to appropriate support.

## **PROCEDURES**

### **RESPONSIBILITIES of MAJOR PARTIES**

It is the responsibility of all members of the College community to seek to create an environment free from bullying, harassment, aggression and violence and to take a pro-active stance that promotes safety and wellbeing.

#### **STAFF:**

- All staff have a responsibility to be alert to situations of and /or allegations of bullying, harassment, aggression and violence, and respond accordingly.
- All allegations and reports of incidents of bullying, harassment, aggression and violence need to be investigated, recorded on SEQTA in Pastoral Notes and reported to a member of the leadership team.
- Staff should always seek to model appropriate behaviour.

#### **LEADERSHIP:**

- Implementing this policy within the College.
- Placing relevant information on the College website and in correspondence to our community via eNews.
- Being aware of legislative requirements relating to bullying and harassment (refer to CEWA policy 'Harassment in Schools')
- Ensuring the students, staff and College Community members are familiar with the College's policy and understand their rights and responsibilities in relation to it.
- Promoting and reviewing this policy within the College with particular regard to the professional expectations of staff.
- Supporting staff in the investigation and resolution of all incidents and allegations of bullying, harassment, aggression and violence.
- Ensuring that the College's plans to counter bullying, harassment, aggression and violence are monitored including documenting reported instances, interventions and follow-ups and initiating reviews of the approaches at regular intervals.
- Ensuring sensitivity, confidentiality and the protection of the rights of all individuals.
- Providing professional learning as a requirement to staff to ensure they are equipped to identify bullying and to intervene appropriately.
- Providing adequate, visible and active supervision.

#### **TEACHERS:**

- Being aware of and alert to signs of bullying and working formally (eg. social skills activities) and informally to encourage children to build healthy relationships involving respectful interactions.
- Implementation of the Friendly Schools Plus Program, along with elements of the College Behaviour Management Plan, including the Fruits of the Holy Spirit Program.
- In accordance to the Friendly School Plus Program and the Western Australian Curriculum implementing lessons to develop resilience to bullying and making students aware of their responsibilities with regard to bullying behaviour.

- Following the 'Behaviour Guidelines' outlined in the College Behaviour Management Plan, teachers will work formally (e.g. social skills activities) and informally to encourage students to build healthy relationships involving respectful interaction.
- Helping students to develop competencies to challenge bullying attitudes and behaviours in themselves and others.
- Listening to and investigating all reports of bullying behaviour and acting to stop the behaviour recurring.
- Protecting the person being bullied from further harm.
- Ensuring that claims of bullying and harassment are speedily and constructively addressed according to College-based strategies.
- Informing the Principal or a member of the Leadership team of all incidents of bullying.
- Recording details of incidents and meetings related to issues of bullying on SEQTA (Pastoral Care Notes) for all parties involved.
- Supervising teachers to report incidents that occur whilst on duty, following the College's procedures outlined in the Behaviour Management Plan.
- Treating information regarding bullying confidentially.
- Being aware of the legislative requirements relating to bullying and harassment

## CASE MANAGEMENT MODEL

### APPENDIX 1

#### The Method of Shared Concern

The Method of Shared Concern aims to change the behaviour of students involved in bullying incidents and to improve the situation for the students being bullied. This method employs a non-punitive, non-blaming and non-aggressive approach to individual and group discussion of the incidents.

#### KEY POINTS:

- This method is used only if the student/s who are bullying have the capacity for empathic responses to the person being bullied
- Those involved in a bullying situation are seen individually.
- The facilitator/teacher shares his or her concerns for what is happening with the student being bullied.
- The facilitator/teacher invites and supports the students who are bullying to take responsibility and suggests actions to remedy the situation.
- The students are carefully monitored.

#### The Method of Shared Concern – Steps and Process

Cross, D., et al., Friendly Schools PLUS: Evidence for Practice. 2013, Hawker Brownlow Education: Perth.

## **Steps of 'Shared Concern' (A)**

### *Meeting with the student who has been bullying*

#### **Step 1**

**"I have asked you to come and speak with me because I have heard that some things have been happening to 'X' that are making him/her very unhappy at the College."**

- Wait for the student to respond.
- If the student doesn't respond ask, "Do you know anything about this that might help me?"
- Do not try to force the student to 'own up' or admit to his/her involvement; simply try to get him/her to acknowledge that there is a situation which is making 'X' unhappy.
- If the student complains about 'X', don't question, just let the student explain the situation.

#### **Step 2**

**"So it sounds like 'X' is having a bit of a tough time."**

- Wait for the student to respond.
- As soon as the student agrees and acknowledges that 'X' is having a bad time and is unhappy, move to Step 3.
- If the student says that 'X' is to blame, accept the point but suggest that 'X' is still having a bad time and is unhappy.

#### **Step 3**

**"Well, I was wondering what you could do to help improve the situation for 'X' to help him/her become happier at the College."**

Accept any suggestions with positive feedback.

Don't question suggestions if they are positive.

If the suggestions are negative, ask the student whether he/she thinks this would help 'X' feel happier.

If the student can't think of anything to do or is resistant to the idea, ask him/her to take some time to think about something he/she could do to help make 'X' feel happier, then move to Step 4.

#### **Step 4**

**"Okay, I'll see you over the next few days to find out how you are getting on."**

If the student had an idea then say you will see him/her to "discuss how their idea went when they tried it."

If he/she didn't have an idea then say you will see him/her to "discuss the idea they have come up with."

## **Steps of 'Shared Concern' (B)**

### ***Meeting with the student who has been bullied***

#### **Step 1**

**"I have asked you to come and speak with me because I have heard that some things have been happening to you that are making you unhappy at the College."**

Wait for the student to respond.

Let the student explain his/her situation. Then simply acknowledge that there is a situation, which is making him or her unhappy.

#### **Step 2**

**"So it sounds like you are having a bit of a tough time."**

Wait for the student to respond.

As soon as the student agrees and acknowledges, go to Step 3.

#### **Step 3 (A)**

**"I have spoken to a few students about your situation and they have made some good suggestions to help you feel happier and safer at the College."**

If the student is concerned about this reassure him/her that you will be keeping a close eye on what is happening.

Let the student know that there may be a few changes in some of the students' behaviour towards him or her.

If you feel the student could help the situation by changing some of his/her behaviours go to Step 3(b).

#### **Step 3 (B)**

**"I was wondering what you could do to help improve the situation for yourself and help you to become happier at the Colleges."**

Accept any suggestions with positive feedback.

Don't question suggestions if they are positive.

If the suggestions are negative, ask the student whether he/she thinks this would help him/her feel happier.

If the student can't think of anything to do or is resistant to the idea, ask him/her to take some time to think about something he or she could do to help to feel happier, then move to Step 4.

#### **Step 4**

**"Okay, I'll see you next week (or sooner) to find out how you are getting on."**

If the student had an idea then say you will see him/her to "discuss how their idea went when they tried it."

If he/she didn't have an idea then say you will see him/her to "discuss the idea they have come up with."

### **STUDENT MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT**

#### ***No Blame Approach***

This technique aims to encourage students who are bullied and students who bully to work together to try to decide on a mutually agreeable way to deal with the bullying. This method is best used when the facilitator feels that the students bullying as well as the students who are bullied want the bullying to stop. The adult who intervenes avoids blaming anyone for the problem.

This approach can work in less serious cases of bullying when the students who are bullied and the students who bully may have previously been friends but this friendship has ended.

It is unlikely to work if the students who bully are picking on students they don't know or care about and if the patterns of bullying are so well established that the bullying itself has become a reward for the students who bully.

Research has found that this method was the most effective when bullying occurs within a social group, particularly girls, who are having friendship difficulties, e.g. exclusion and teasing. By developing empathy for the feelings of the person being bullied the groups were able to resolve this behaviour and determine ways to prevent it from recurring.

***When bullying has been observed or reported the following steps can be taken:***

#### **Step one:**

Interview with the person being bullied. When the teacher finds out that bullying has happened he or she starts by talking to the person being bullied about his or her feelings. The teacher does not question him or her about the incident but does need to know who was involved.

#### **Step two:**

Convene a meeting with the people involved. The teacher arranges to meet with the group of students who have been involved. This will include some bystanders or colluders who joined in but did not initiate any bullying.

#### **Step three:**

Explain the problem. The teacher tells them about the way the student being bullied is feeling and might use a piece of writing or a drawing to emphasise their distress. At no time does the teacher discuss the details of the incident or assign blame to the group.

**Step four:**

Share responsibility. The teacher does not attribute blame but states that he or she knows that the group are responsible and can do something about it.

**Step five:**

Ask the group for their ideas. Each member of the group is encouraged to suggest a way in which the student being bullied could be helped to feel happier. The teacher gives some positive responses but does not go on to extract a promise of improved behaviour.

**Step six:**

Leave it up to them. Not everyone has to be a friend, but everyone must be treated with respect. The teacher ends the meeting by passing over the responsibility to the group to solve the problem and arranges to meet them again to see how things are going.

**Step seven:**

Meet them again. About a week later, the teacher discusses with each student, including the person being bullied, how things have been going. This allows the teacher to monitor the bullying and keeps the students involved in the process.