

### **Bullying Policy**

#### **Definition**

When an individual or group misuses power to target another individual or group to intentionally threaten or harm them on more than one occasion.

#### **Bullying**

- Is repetitive
- Involves an imbalance of power
- May be verbal, physical, relational, psychological or electronic

#### **Examples of Bullying**

- Name-calling
- Hitting, punching or kicking
- Threatening
- Sending hurtful notes, via text messages, via Internet
- Deliberately ignoring or excluding
- Teasing
- Rumour
- Interfering with the property of others
- Unwanted sexual innuendo and harassment
- Cyber bullying

#### **Objectives**

- To raise awareness among staff, students and parents about bullying
- To prevent and reduce the occurrence of bullying at Sacred Heart College
- To assist students to resolve conflicts and differences with bullying
- To create a school environment where all students and staff feel safe and welcome
- To create a climate where it is okay to talk about bullying to people who can help, (eg. parents, teachers, other students)
- To encourage students who are aware of incidents of bullying to inform a staff member

At Sacred Heart College we have a hierarchy of responses to bullying. We begin with a problem solving approach where we try to resolve the issue between the students involved. If this does not stop the bullying, we then use the more formal procedure in our College Harassment Policy. Consequences for the bully will include meeting with the Dean of Students and parents to investigate the situation, detention, suspension or, ultimately, exclusion.

#### **Strategies that will be used to deter bullies**

- Awareness raising exercises in the curriculum about the impact of bullying and conflict resolution
- Small group and individual counselling of victims of bullying
- Counselling students who bully and encouragement for them to change their behaviour
- Appropriate responses developed to apply to particular situations
- Active supervision of the yard and school bus stop by teachers
- Professional Development programs for teachers
- Parent Education programs
- IT Policy

#### **Strategies that may be used for students being bullied**

- Ignore the bullying/bully – show that you are not going to be upset by it
- Stay away from the bully, or places where bullying occurs
- Be with supportive friends

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## SACRED HEART COLLEGE – POLICIES

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- Use a sense of humour
- Be assertive – stand up for yourself by telling the bully to stop
- Tell a friend, or talk it over with an older student (e.g. Peer Mentor, a Captain)
- Tell an adult that you are being bullied eg: parent, teacher, Dean, Chaplain, College Psychologist. They will help you make a plan to deal with the bullying

### **Strategies that may be used by students if they are aware of someone being bullied**

- If possible, you could intervene as the bullying occurs by telling the bully to stop. This is very useful if you have influence with the bully
- Refuse to join in with the bullying
- Support students who are being bullied – just standing by them can be enough
- Tell a staff member if you are aware of bullying

### **Information for parents**

If your child reports being teased, intimidated or threatened (verbally, physically, electronically or psychologically), treat the concern seriously. Children's perspectives are very different from adults. What adults perceive as minor incidents may be very distressing for children. Encourage your child to talk about how he/she is feeling about the situation. Remind your child that nothing is so awful that they cannot talk about it with someone else and that they have a right to feel safe at all times.

Please contact your child's Dean of Students or the College Psychologist if you detect any indicators of concern including changes in behaviour or mood that your child may be exhibiting.

Please be assured that the College will support families and that the matter will be dealt with in a sensitive and caring manner.

### **Responses to bullying at Sacred Heart College**

The following steps can be used by the Dean of Students or College Psychologist:

#### **Step One – interview with the student being bullied**

When the Dean of Students/Psychologist finds out that bullying has happened he/she begins by speaking to the student being bullied about his/her feelings. The Dean of Students/Psychologist establishes the facts, finds out what happened, who was involved and what has happened since.

#### **Step Two – Interview all the people involved**

The Dean of Students/Psychologist interviews individually all people involved. This may include some bystanders or colluders who joined in but did not initiate any bullying. The aim of this is to determine what was their involvement, what has happened since and to try to identify any other areas in the student's life which may have led to this. The Dean of Students/Psychologist asks them how they have been affected by this, what are the issues that concern them most, and if they have thought about what they need to do next.

#### **Step Three – Convene a meeting with the people involved**

The Dean of Students/Psychologist arranges a meeting of this group of students who were involved.

#### **Step Four – Explain the problem**

The Dean of Students/Psychologist tells them about the way the student being bullied is feeling and explains the harm done.

#### **Step Five – Share responsibility**

The Dean of Students/Psychologist does not attribute blame but states that he/she knows that the group is responsible and can do something about it.

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## SACRED HEART COLLEGE – POLICIES

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### **Step Six – 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 Dean of Students/Psychologist gives some positive responses but does not usually go on to extract a promise of improved behaviour.

### **Step Seven – Leave it up to them**

The Dean of Students/Psychologist ends the meeting by passing over the responsibility to the group to solve the problem. He/she arranges to meet with them again to see how things are going.

### **Step Eight - Meet them again**

About a week later the Dean of Students/Psychologist discusses with each student, including the student who was bullied, how things have been going. This allows the Dean of Students/Psychologist to monitor the situation and keep the students involved in the reconciliation process.