



POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS POLICY - STUDENTS

PREAMBLE

Mt St Michael's College is a Mary Aikenhead Ministry in the tradition of the Sisters of Charity. We are called to develop in each member of our community a contemporary understanding and application of the charism of Mary Aikenhead and the spirituality of the Sisters of Charity, and the Mary Aikenhead Ministries' mission, vision and values of justice, love, compassion and hope.

In responding to this call Mt St Michael's College is a Christ-centred community established to educate, in partnership with parents, women of faith, integrity, individuality and compassion, confident of their own worth as women and wholly involved in the transformation of society.

PURPOSE

The Positive Relationships Policy promotes cooperation, communication, collaboration and human stewardship. Mt St Michael's College supports the right to work, learn and socialise in a friendly, safe and secure environment. In situations where conflict arises in student relationships, this policy seeks to provide professional, constructive and prompt resolution processes. This policy aims to promote positive wellbeing and appropriate conduct for all students.

This policy is cross-referenced with the following College documents:

1. Student Responsible Behaviour Policy
2. Enrolment Acceptance Contract
3. Digital Citizenship Policy-Students

SCOPE

All members of the Mt St Michael's community are expected to foster positive relationships with each other. This policy applies to all students of the Mt St Michael's College community.

PRINCIPLES

The underlying principle of this policy is that every member of the community must be treated with respect and dignity. All members of the Mt St Michael's College community have the right to raise genuine issues of concern when they feel they are being adversely affected by the actions of another individual or individuals and there are also policies for staff and parents who have concerns. In keeping with the College Mission Statement there is a commitment to resolve disputes in the first instance through processes of dialogue and conciliation. All complaints will be treated seriously and will be resolved with confidentiality and in a timely manner.

The guiding principles of this policy include:

Natural Justice: (also known as procedural fairness) is a process where decision-makers inform people of the case against them, giving them a right to be heard, and acting only on the bases of credible evidence.



Due Process: the principle where the rights of the individual are acknowledged and a just process of investigation should occur when allegations are made against the person.

Restorative Justice: this is a process that involves some form of restoration being made where it has been established wrong doing has occurred.

Reasonable Probability: this is the name given to evidence that will tend to support a contention.

EXCLUSIONS

This policy does not include:

- Concerns or complaints by staff and parents
- Student Protection concerns relevant to the Student Protection Processes and Guidelines
- Serious criminal misdemeanours that are of a criminal nature (i.e., assault, drug trafficking)

POLICY STATEMENT

Mt St Michael's College promotes healthy relationships based on respect, co-operation, compassion, love and forgiveness. These principles are promoted in the College Mission Statement, and are expected to guide the daily interactions with others. Students are encouraged to develop an understanding of healthy and unhealthy relationships within the content of our Positive Education Program conducted in each year level and through the daily interactions with staff, who role-model healthy relationships. We recognise that students are in formation and that friendship issues parallel the changing growth of adolescent development, where conflict and discord may arise from time to time.

DEFINITIONS

Teasing actions which make fun of another person - can be playful i.e. without intention to hurt.

Conflict argument/disagreement where two or more parties are involved.

Bullying argument / disagreement where two or more parties are involved, repeated behaviour and oppression, psychological or physical, by individuals/groups and includes some or all of the behaviours listed below:

1. The behaviour of more powerful person/s against less powerful person/s
2. There is intent to hurt
3. Distress is caused by the immediate action and the threat of future actions

Not Bullying – Single episode of social rejection or dislike/nastiness/aggression/intimidation

Bullying will not be tolerated under any circumstances, having no place in a Catholic school. The following instances are issues of disharmony but do not constitute bullying:

- **Mutual Conflict** - this is where there is an argument/disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power.
- **Social rejection or dislike** -it is not feasible to think that every student must like every other student. All students must however respect the dignity and rights of all students. Not inviting a student to a birthday party for example, is not bullying, provided this is not part of repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.



- **Single-episode act of nastiness or meanness** – this is not bullying, as it is not repeated and ongoing, but should not be ignored or condoned.

There are three broad categories of bullying: direct physical bullying, direct verbal bullying and indirect bullying; which includes cyber bullying.

Students who are experiencing difficulties with other students should report the incident/issue to a staff member. Upon investigation of the incident, if bullying behaviour is substantiated, consequences will be incurred by the student/s exhibiting the bullying behaviour (see The Student Responsible Behaviour Policy for possible consequences).

COLLEGE EXPECTATIONS

STUDENTS	PARENTS	STAFF
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be informed about the Mt St Michael's College Positive Relationships Policy-College Diary/Intranet 2. Act in accordance with the Mt St Michael's College Positive Relationships Policy 3. Follow procedures for informing the College regarding concerns about bullying. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To be alert for signs of distress: e.g. avoidance of school, a pattern of headaches or stomach aches, becoming withdrawn, change in academic performance 2. To follow procedures for informing the College about suspected bullying incidents (see Flowchart Pg 5) 3. To support your daughter to refrain from acts of retaliation 4. To support your daughter to make healthy relationship decisions by role modelling and encouraging resilience 5. To work in partnership with the College to address incidents. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To nurture an environment where all members of the College community feel safe 2. To model healthy relationships 3. To educate students and parents about healthy relationships and how to manage relationship changes or conflicts 4. To reinforce the Positive Relationships Policy and related procedures with students 5. To offer a range of curricular/co-curricular opportunities that encourage healthy relationships 6. To be alert for signs of discord among students and report concerns to Pastoral Leaders 7. To follow procedures for reporting suspected bullying incidents (see Flowchart Pg 5).



IMPLEMENTATION (Refer also to flowchart pg 5)

PROCESS FOR RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS

STEP 1 **RECEIVING INFORMATION**

CLASS ROOM TEACHERS/HOMEROOM TEACHERS

- Student reports incident to classroom / HR teacher
- If low level Classroom/HR teacher addresses incident
- Incident Resolved

If unresolved Classroom/HR teacher refers matter to Pastoral Leader

STEP 2 **INVESTIGATION (SIGNIFICANT) REFERRED TO PASTORAL LEADER**

PASTORAL LEADER (PL)

- Pastoral Leader further investigates incident
- Interviews student reporting incident and witness/es
- Incident Resolved – no consequence / consequence / parent informed

If unresolved Pastoral Leader refers incident to Deputy Principal Students

STEP 3 **FURTHER INVESTIGATION (SERIOUS) REFERRED TO DPS**

DEPUTY PRINCIPAL - STUDENTS (DPS)

- Deputy Principal Students & Pastoral Leader meet again with student reporting incident / witness/es
- Judgement made on evidence available
- The Deputy Principal Students reserves the right to make a judgement/decision based on reasonable probability in the event a student refutes evidence from witness/es and the evidence suggests the person is not being truthful
- Incident Resolved – no consequence / consequence / parent informed

See Student Responsible Behaviour Policy for range of consequences.

INVESTIGATION PROCESSES

Parents should report inappropriate bullying behaviour to the Class Teacher/Homeroom Teacher /Pastoral Leader. The School will keep them fully informed about the progress of the investigation either by phone or by email.

- All Staff members who have witnessed bullying, or who have had bullying reported to them are to report the matter to the Pastoral Leader
- If related to a special incident Pastoral Leader handling the incident – in conjunction with the Deputy Principal Students – will ask all participants (offender, person against whom bullying has occurred, witness/es) to write an account (see Appendix 1) of the incident separately, and without discussion, to identify what is actually happening
- It is made clear that any suggestion of retaliation by any party will be treated as harassment
- All accounts will be documented and kept with the appropriate staff



- The MSM Positive Relationships Policy will be discussed with all students involved in the incident; students are given a chance to respond to the allegation. Appropriate intervention will occur at that point.
- The person being bullied will be reassured by the Pastoral Leader / Deputy Principal Students that the matter will be investigated
- If the situation has improved, then a follow-up meeting will be planned for ongoing monitoring of the situation
- If the situation has not improved, then the alleged bully/bullies will be interviewed by the Deputy Principal Students and further investigation will occur
- At the end of the investigation process, if wrong doing has been established, student/s will incur a penalty appropriate to the wrong doing, and a restorative justice approach will also be taken.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years.



FLOWCHART FOR REPORTING INCIDENTS



