



## Positive Peer Relationships (Anti-Bullying) Policy

Policy Number: **PPPC0048(5)**

Document Management						
Version Number	Section/s Modified	Brief Description of Amendment	Policy Sponsor	Approved by	Date Approved	Next Review Date
Positive Peer Relationships Policy PPPC0048(5)	Full document review	Inclusion of Student Incident Report	Director of Student Wellbeing	College Leadership Team	06/11/2024	06/11/2027
Positive Peer Relationships Policy PPPC0048(4)	Full document review	Change of Policy name	Director of Student Wellbeing	College Leadership Team	29/05/2024	29/05/2027
Anti-Bullying Policy PPPC0048(3)	Full document review	Updated staff information	Director of Pastoral Care	College Leadership Team	27/03/2019	27/03/2021
Anti-Bullying Policy Policy PPPC0048(2)	Full document review		Director of Pastoral Care	College Leadership Team	22/03/2016	22/03/2018
Anti-Bullying Policy Policy PPPC0048	New document	n/a	Director of Pastoral Care	College Leadership Team	undated	01/04/2010

*Mercy Values - OLMC Parramatta is a Christ-centred learning community founded in the Mercy tradition. The policies of the College, underpinned by the Gospel values of mercy and justice, serve to promote the dignity and uniqueness of each human person. Their aim is to foster the intellectual, spiritual, emotional, physical and social wellbeing of all members of the College community within a safe, healthy, caring and sustainable environment.*

### 1. Purpose

To prioritise positive peer interactions, to create a culture where bullying is not tolerated, and where every member of the OLMC community feels safe, valued, and supported and are encouraged to reach their emotional, spiritual and intellectual potential through classroom activities and beyond.

To provide guidelines to OLMC community members for dealing with bullying should it occur in order to minimise harm and prevent recurrence.

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to all members of the college community, including but not limited to:

- Students
- Staff (teaching and non-teaching)
- Volunteers
- Contractors

This policy applies in all College environments, including physical (including but not limited to on-site and off-site College grounds, sporting events, camps, Retreats, Wellbeing Days excursions), virtual and online environments.



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### 3. Key Definitions

**Bullying** is repeated verbal, physical, social, psychological or cyberbullying behaviour that is harmful, and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. It can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and all forms of harassment including that based on sex, race, disability, sexual orientation or practice of religion.

In any bullying incident there are likely to be three parties involved: the bully, the person being bullied, and bystanders.

- **Bullying** can be but is not limited to:
  - **Verbal** e.g. name calling, teasing, making racist remarks and jokes, abuse, putdowns, sarcasm, insults, and threats;
  - **Physical** e.g. hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, obstructing, spitting;
  - **Social** e.g. ignoring, excluding, ostracizing, alienating, making inappropriate gestures, stealing friends, gossiping, criticizing;
  - **Psychological** e.g. spreading rumours, whispering, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions, malicious SMS and email messages, inappropriate use of computer or phone camera or videos; and
- **Cyberbullying** involves the use of any information communication technology by an individual or group to carry out deliberate, isolated or repeatedly hostile behaviour that is intended to harm others, or is undertaken recklessly without concern for its impact on others. In certain circumstances Cyberbullying can be a single event.

For the purpose of this policy cyberbullying can include but is not limited to:

- Sending harassing, threatening or menacing messages to targets either directly or anonymously;
- Using another person's address or alias via email;
- Harassing and heated arguments via Instant Messaging;
- Anonymously writing anything (true or untrue), creating and adding cruel entries in a worldwide form via Chat Rooms;
- Mocking, teasing and harassing and posting visuals that can be altered via websites/social sites;
- Masquerading as another by using their mobile phone or computer to send harassing or threatening messages via SMS; and

Acts of cyberbullying are prohibited during and after school hours against:

- the students at this College or other schools
- the staff at this College or other schools
- the College itself.



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N.B. Many acts of cyberbullying are Criminal Offences and carry fines and punishment and will be reported to Police.

Students' responsibilities are outlined in the *Acceptable Use of Technology Policy*, which can be accessed in the Student College Diary. Parents are advised to visit the eSafety Commission [www.esafety.gov.au](http://www.esafety.gov.au) for additional information on cyberbullying and tips for keeping your daughter safe online.

- **Bullying is not** conflicts or fights between equals and single incidents are not defined as bullying. Bullying behaviour is not:
  - Students not getting along well;
  - A situation of mutual conflict; and
  - Single episodes of nastiness or random acts of aggression or intimidation including single incidents of loss of temper, shouting or swearing do not normally constitute bullying.

- **Signs of Bullying**

Major behaviour changes may be indicative of bullying. Such behavioural changes may include:

- Crying at night and having nightmares;
- Refusing to talk when asked "What's wrong?";
- An unwillingness or refusal to go to school;
- Feeling ill in the mornings;
- A decline in quality of school work;
- Becoming withdrawn and lacking confidence;
- Beginning to bully siblings; and acting unreasonably.

#### 4. Policy

- OLMC is committed to providing a safe, caring and supportive school culture that promotes positive relationships and reflects Gospel teachings. All staff, students and parents/carers contribute to the prevention of bullying by modelling and promoting appropriate behaviour and respectful relationships.
- There are expectations on each person to seek and maintain positive relationships with one another and to resolve conflict in a respectful and dignified manner.
- Bullying and cyberbullying disregard core values of the Catholic faith including dignity, respect, justice, equity, compassion, trust and courage. Bullying, including cyberbullying, can adversely affect the wellbeing of students and is therefore unacceptable and requires a steadfast 'No Tolerance'.
- All members of the OLMC community share a joint responsibility to identify and address bullying behaviour.



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- At OLMC we embrace a whole school collaborative approach as we believe that a Positive Peer Relationships (Anti-Bullying) Policy is everyone's responsibility. Students, parents/carers, school staff and other community members have a shared responsibility to create a safe, caring and supportive environment where bullying has no place.
- Complaints concerning bullying will be responded to and investigated in a timely manner that respects the dignity and the privacy of those involved, whilst observing due process and procedural fairness. The College will inform students and their families of the allegations against the student, giving them the right to be heard and ensure that the decision making process is fair and reasonable, based on relevant evidence.

### 5. Procedures

#### 5.1 Strategies to Prevent Bullying

The following initiatives form part of our overall bullying prevention strategy and our strategy to create a 'no bullying' culture within the College:

- Promote the development of positive relationships across the College: Vertical House System, Community Time, camps, Retreats, Wellbeing Days and co-curricular activities;
- Involve and inform the whole school community of the policy and procedure: whole school assemblies, Wellbeing Lessons, and House meetings and class where necessary;
- Education, training and professional development of staff in bullying prevention and response strategies;
- A structured Wellbeing Program that provides age appropriate information and skills relating to bullying (including cyberbullying) and bullying prevention, to students over the course of the academic year;
- Promotion of responsible bystander behaviour amongst students, staff and parents/carers;
- Provide counselling and support for parties involved in bullying;
- Provide the College with a set of guidelines, which are readily accessible to all when action is necessary: College Diary, Staff portal, College website;
- Records of reported bullying incidents are maintained and analysed, in order to identify persistent bullies and/or victims and to implement targeted prevention strategies where appropriate;
- Anti-bullying posters (Appendix 3) are displayed strategically within the College and in every classroom;
- Reporting of incidents of alleged bullying by students, bystanders, parents/carers and staff are encouraged, and made easy through the establishment of multiple reporting channels (as specified below);
- Regular provision of information to parents/carers, to raise awareness of bullying as a College community issue to equip them to recognise signs of bullying, as well as to provide them with clear



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paths for raising any concerns they may have relating to bullying directly with the College; and

- Promotion of student awareness and a 'no bullying' environment by participating in events such as the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence.
- OLMC recognises that the implementation of whole College prevention strategies is the most effective way of eliminating, or at least minimising, incidents of bullying within our community.

### 5.2 Possible Consequences for Bullying Behaviour

- OLMC regards all forms of bullying as unacceptable behaviours. Possible consequences for bullying behaviour include:
  - Warnings
  - Student interview with Head of House
  - Parent/carer contacted
  - After school detention
  - Parent/carer interviewed at school
  - Internal suspension
  - Student Care Plan
  - Mandatory counselling
  - External Suspension
  - Expulsion

### 5.3 Reporting an Incident – see Appendix 1 – Anti-Bullying College Response Plan

- Each allegation of bullying will be fully investigated and documented;
- Students must report immediately all incidents of bullying, including cyberbullying, to a responsible adult or teacher they trust;
- If parents/carers become aware of any school-related bullying carried out against their daughter, or another student, they should notify the Head of House immediately.

### 5.4 Processing an Incident – see Appendix 1 – Anti-Bullying College Response Plan

- Once identified, the bully, victim and witnesses will complete a Student Incident Report (see Appendix 2) in the Student Centre and will be interviewed ;
- Parents will be notified by phone and, depending on the nature of the bullying, may need to attend an interview at the College with the Head of House and/or Director of Student Wellbeing with their daughter;
- Students may be immediately sent home until the matter is resolved (serious incidents of bullying);
- The consequences implemented will be consistent with the OLMC Student Management Policy, see College website and those outlined in this policy;
- Bullies and victims will be required to undertake counselling and support with either the College Counsellor or an outside agency;
- In some matters, advice may be sought from the NSW Police School Liaison Officer by the Director



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of Student Wellbeing or Leader of Student Wellbeing; and

- At all times, actions taken by staff relating to allegations of bullying will place the dignity and integrity of the persons involved at the forefront.

### **5.5 Complaints**

All complaints will be dealt with as per the OLMC Complaints Policy.

### **5.6 Tracking**

- Heads of House will monitor documented instances of bullying to identify any emerging patterns of behaviour.
- If patterns are detected initiate Anti-Bullying College Response Plan – see Appendix 1.



### 5.7 Contact Information

Contact		Telephone number
Head of House McAuley		9683 3300
Head of House Doyle		
Head of House Clare		
Head of House Callan		
Head of House Stanley		
Head of House Kavanagh		
Head of House Mercedes		
Head of House Callaghan		
College Counsellor		
Leader of Student Wellbeing		
Director of Student Wellbeing		
Deputy Principal		
Principal		
<b>Support Services</b>		
NSW Police School Liaison Officer		9633 0799
NSW Youth Liaison Officer		9633 0756
<b>Community Service/Support Groups</b>		
Children's Hospital Westmead		9845 0000
Westmead Hospital		9845 5555
Child Protection Helpline	General public helpline	132 111 (24 hours/7 days)
Kid's Helpline	<a href="http://www.kidshelpline.com.au">www.kidshelpline.com.au</a>	1800 55 1800
Headspace	<a href="http://www.headspace.org.au">www.headspace.org.au</a>	1300 737 616
Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner	<a href="http://www.esafety.gov.au/complaints-and-reporting">www.esafety.gov.au/complaints-and-reporting</a>	1800 880 176
Australian Reach Out	<a href="http://www.reachout.com.au">www.reachout.com.au</a>	
Beyondblue	<a href="http://www.beyondblue.org.au">www.beyondblue.org.au</a>	1300 22 4636 (24 hours/7 days)
Bullying No Way	<a href="http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au">www.bullyingnoway.com.au</a>	
NSW Department of Education Anti-Bullying Resources	<a href="http://www.antibullying.nsw.gov.au">www.antibullying.nsw.gov.au</a>	



## 6 Responsibilities

### 6.1 Director of Student Wellbeing

The Director of Student Wellbeing has the responsibility of oversight of the implementation of this policy and procedures.

### 6.2 Staff, Contractors and Volunteers

- **Teachers have the right to:**

- Know that they can work in a healthy and safe environment conducive to teaching and learning;
- Know that they will be supported by Middle Leaders and the College Leadership Team in responding to reported incidents of student bullying; and
- Access resources and professional learning which enhance their ability to identify and deal with student bullying and digital citizenship in caring for students.

- **Teachers have the responsibility to:**

- Model and promote appropriate behaviour at all times;
- Respect and support students;
- Ensure students are always well supervised;
- Create a positive classroom environment in which 'put down' statements are not tolerated and be aware of any continual verbal or non-verbal harassment of particular students in class;
- Provide curriculum and pedagogy that supports students to develop an understanding of bullying and its impact on individuals and the broader community;
- Watch for early signs of distress and suspected incidents of bullying
- Have knowledge of College policies relating to bullying behaviour;
- Undertake formal and informal training regarding identifying and dealing with bullying and digital citizenship at induction meetings, professional learning meetings, Staff development days, Staff briefings and via the Staff portal;
- Treat complaints seriously;
- Respond in an appropriate and timely manner to incidents of bullying according to the College's Positive Peer Relationships (Anti-Bullying) Policy and Procedures i.e. report suspected incidents of bullying to the relevant Head of House;
- Ensure any investigation preserves the dignity, privacy and respect of all involved whilst following due process and procedures;
- Allow students to deal with conflicts openly, peacefully and respectfully; and
- Encourage students to be involved in co-curricular activities to build confidence, social skills and feel a sense of belonging.



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### 6.3 Parents/Carers and Members of the College Community

- **Parents/Carers have the right to:**
  - Know their daughter will feel safe and secure at school;
  - Know their concerns regarding bullying will be dealt with as a matter of priority and investigated in a timely manner that respects the dignity and the privacy of those involved, whilst observing due process and procedural fairness;
  - Know that their daughter will be given appropriate support;
  - Know of any allegations against their daughter, giving them the right to be heard and ensure that the decision making process is fair and reasonable, based on relevant evidence.
  - Know that they can appeal to the Director of Student Wellbeing, then the Deputy Principal and finally the Principal if they feel the response is inadequate for any course of action taken to stop an incident of bullying.
  
- **Parents have the responsibility to:**
  - Be aware of the College's Positive Peer Relationships (Anti-Bullying) Policy and assist their daughter to understand bullying behaviour;
  - Support their daughter to become a responsible citizen and to develop responsible on-line behaviour;
  - Support their daughter in developing positive responses to incidents of bullying consistent with the College Positive Peer Relationships (Anti-Bullying) Policy and procedures;
  - Advise their daughter to speak with a member of staff if she is being bullied;
  - Report incidents of school-related bullying behaviour to the school and speak with staff at the College if they suspect their daughter is being bullied;
  - Work collaboratively with the College to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur;
  - Be aware of behaviours that may indicate their daughter is being bullied
  - Be aware of the College's Expectations of Students; see College Diary and the Student Management Policy; see College website;
  - Be aware of the Acceptable Use of Technology Policy and Personal Electronic Devices Policy; see College Diary; and
  - Encourage their daughter to be involved in co-curricular activities to build confidence, social skills and feel a sense of belonging.

**N.B. Parents should never approach or contact students of the College or their parents or carers regarding any incident, as this could potentially breach child protection.**



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## 6.4 Students

- **Students have the right to:**

- Feel safe and secure at school;
- Seek assistance from a trusted adult without delay if they become aware of, or are involved in, a bullying or cyberbullying incident to maximise the effectiveness of the intervention;
- Know their concerns will be dealt with as a matter of priority;
- Know that they will be given appropriate support; and
- Appeal to the Director of Student Wellbeing, then the Deputy Principal and finally the Principal if they feel the response is inadequate for any course of action taken to stop an incident of bullying.

- **Students have the responsibility to:**

- Behave appropriately and respect individual's differences and diversity;
- Follow the College Expectations of Students; see College Diary;
- Behave as responsible digital citizens, adhering to the Acceptable Use of Technology Policy and Personal Electronic Devices Policy; see College Diary;
- Follow the College's Positive Peer Relationships Policy Procedures;
- Behave as responsible bystanders. No-one can remain blameless if they have allowed a situation to occur unreported;
- Accept responsibility for their words and actions;
- Report incidents of bullying to a responsible adult or teacher they trust; and
- Create a positive, inclusive school environment by being involved in initiatives and co-curricular activities.

## 7 Review

The Positive Peer Relationships Policy will be reviewed every 3 three years unless there is a legislative or regulatory requirement to do so earlier.

## 8 References

### 8.1 Related Policies, Procedures, Registers and Sites

NSW Registered and Accredited Individual Non-government Schools Manual

### 8.2 Related Legislation

Education Act 1990



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## 9 Communication








<b>Audience</b>	<b>Communicated by</b>	<b>Communication pathway</b>
<b>All staff</b>	Director of Student Wellbeing	General Staff Meeting
<b>All students</b>	Director of Student Wellbeing	Email, College Assembly
<b>Parents</b>	Director of Student Wellbeing	Newsletter and website

### Publishing this policy

Student Diary – in part
Staff Portal



**Appendix 1 – Anti-Bullying College Response Plan**

<b>1. ACCESS TO POLICY</b>		
The College's Anti-bullying Policy is located on the school's public website, in the student's College Diary and on the staff portal.		
<b>2. DISCLOSURE AND INITIAL RESPONSE</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If a student is being bullied they are to report the incident to any teacher at the College.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If parents/carers become aware of a bullying incident or suspect their daughter is being bullied they are strongly encouraged to contact their daughter's Head of House.</li> </ul> </li> <li>If staff observe patterns or unusual behaviour that fit the definition of bullying (see section 3 of the policy) they will take appropriate measures and discuss this with the relevant Head of House.</li> <li>The teacher's initial response where possible is to stop the bullying, ensure the student is safe and where necessary provides an environment where this is possible.</li> </ul>		
<b>LIFE THREATENING, RISK OF SIGNIFICANT HARM, &amp;/OR CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR</b>	NO 	YES Notify Principal Notify DCJ &/or Police  
<b>3. INITIAL REPORTING</b>		
Staff Member/ Head of House ask the student(s) to write an account of what has occurred. Staff Member/ Head of House discusses the situation as outlined in the student's account with the student to deepen understanding and clarify any points of ambiguity. The incident is recorded by the Head of House and kept with the student's reports.		
<b>IS THIS BULLYING?</b>	YES 	NO 
<b>FOLLOW THE COLLEGE'S STUDENT MANAGEMENT POLICY</b>		
<b>4. INFORM LEADERSHIP</b>		
In the event of bullying occurring the Director of Student Wellbeing and Leader of Student Wellbeing are informed as appropriate. Director of Student Wellbeing to keep the Deputy Principal and Principal abreast of the situation.		
<b>5. FORMAL INFORMATION GATHERING/RECORD KEEPING</b>		
The Head of House in consultation with the Director of Student Wellbeing collects written statements and any supporting evidence from all parties, the bullied, the alleged bully, and any witnesses. Once written statements have been collected the Head of House interviews all parties involved. All this information is recorded and filed, along with all student statements.		
<b>6. CASE MANAGEMENT</b>		
Director of Student Wellbeing works with Head of House to determine course of action. Parent are informed of , the incident and he College's response. Principal informed of response. Actions taken by the College will depend on each situation and may include one or more of the following: mediation, counselling, restorative practices, detention, in-school suspension, out-of - school suspension, parent interview.		
<b>7. DOCUMENTATION OF ANTI-BULLYING PLAN</b>		
Copies of the course of action, consequences and behaviour plan filed along with those already entered.		
<b>8. NOTIFICATION</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents of students being bullied are to be informed that the College is aware of the situation and an investigation and plan of action are pending at step 4.</li> <li>Once the course of action has been determined, students will be informed of the action the College will be taking</li> <li>Parents will be notified of the course of action via phone, in writing or interviews or a combination of all three</li> </ul>		
<b>9. MONITORING</b>		
The Head of House to check in with students involved at designated times to ensure the matter does not reoccur and to assist in the resolving of any issues that may arise.		
<b>IS PLAN EFFECTIVE?</b>	NO 	YES 
<b>RECORDED IN STUDENT FILE/MAINTAIN TRACKING/CASE CLOSED</b>		
<b>10. PRINCIPAL REFERRAL TO BOARD CHAIRPERSON</b>		
Principal to notify Board in the event of serious incidences of bullying where strategies have been unsuccessful and invokes the expulsion/transfer policy.		



**Appendix 2 – Student Incident Report**

**Your Details**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Homeroom: \_\_\_\_\_ Year Grade: \_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Incident Details**

Date and time of incident: \_\_\_\_\_  
Location of incident: \_\_\_\_\_  
Witnesses to the incident: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Is there a record of this? (e.g.: photo, video, message etc) Yes:  No:

Have you sighted/seen the photo or video? Yes:  No:

Who has the photo or video? \_\_\_\_\_

Where is the photo? \_\_\_\_\_

**Description**

Include all details about what happened, what you saw, what was said and by who it was said.

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Appendix 3 – Sample Anti-bullying poster

  
OUR LADY OF MERCY COLLEGE PARRAMATTA

# OLMC SAYS NO to bullying!

**AT OLMC WE DON'T STAND BY...**  
We stand up, stand strong and  
stand together against bullying.

OLMC Parramatta is a community built on respectful relationships where individual differences and diversity are accepted. We are a merciful community that displays genuine forgiveness. Bullying is repeated harassment or behaviour that is harmful.

**Bullying can be, but is not limited to:**

- Verbal e.g. name calling, racist remarks, sarcasm, threats;
- Social e.g. excluding, gossiping, inappropriate gestures; and
- Psychological e.g. spreading rumours, hiding possessions, cyberbullying.

If you are involved in, or become aware of instances of bullying, you have the responsibility to report it to a trusted adult immediately.