



STUDENT BULLYING POLICY 2019

Student Bullying Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to protect students from bullying and to respond appropriately if bullying does occur

The basic beliefs underlying the policy are:

1. Every individual has value in a community.
2. Every individual has the right to feel safe from bullying or harassment in all its forms.
3. Every conflict can be resolved. Victims and bullies both need help to solve conflict.
4. Every individual in a community is responsible for the safety of other individuals in that community.
5. Every individual in a community is responsible for ensuring that other individuals in that community can reach their potential in a supportive and non-threatening environment.

Scope

Students, parents and employees, including full-time, part-time, permanent, fixed-term and casual employees, as well as contractors, volunteers and people undertaking work experience or vocational placements.

References

- *Australian Education Regulations 2013 (Cth)*
- *National Safe Schools Framework*
- *St. Michael's College Behavior Management Policy*

Policy

Bullying, whether physical or non physical, will not be tolerated at St. Michael's College and it is the responsibility of all members of the College community to help reduce its occurrence.

St. Michael's College is committed to taking action to protect students from bullying and to respond appropriately when bullying does occur.

In order to prevent bullying from occurring, St. Michael's College will implement the following actions:

- raise awareness of the school community's shared understanding of what bullying is, how it impacts on people and how bullying is responded to at the school
- develop and promote effective social skills and positive relationships amongst students.

In order to respond appropriately to any incidences of bullying, St. Michael's College will:

- develop an appropriate mechanism for students and parents to report bullying
- educate students and parents on how to respond, in the first instance, to incidences of bullying, and how to then report all incidences of bullying
- educate employees on how to appropriately respond to reports of bullying
- investigate and act upon all reports of bullying
- take appropriate action, which might include support for targets of bullying and perpetrators and/or disciplinary measures.

Definitions

BULLYING: is a systematic and repeated abuse of power.

In general bullying may be defined as:

- dominating or hurting someone
- unfair action by the perpetrator(s) and an imbalance of power
- a lack of adequate defence by the target and feelings of oppression and humiliation.

It can occur at any age, across cultures, genders and socioeconomic groups. It can happen in the playground, toilet areas, to and from school or in the classroom.



PHYSICAL BULLYING: this is when a person (or group of people) uses physical actions to bully, such as hitting, poking, tripping or pushing. Repeatedly and intentionally damaging someone's belongings is also physical bullying.

VERBAL BULLYING: repeated or systematic name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks and verbal abuse.

COVERT BULLYING: This form of bullying is harder to recognise and often carried out behind the bullied student's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation.

- lying and spreading rumours
- playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
- deliberately excluding someone
- mimicking
- encouraging others to socially exclude someone
- damaging someone's social reputation and social acceptance.

PSYCHOLOGICAL BULLYING: for example, threatening, manipulating or stalking someone.

CYBER BULLYING: using technology, such as email, mobile phones, chat rooms, social networking sites to bully verbally, socially or psychologically.

If bullying amounts to harm as referred to in the school's Child Protection Policy, then the matter must be dealt with under the Child Protection Policy.

What bullying is not

Bullying is different from ordinary teasing, rough-and-tumble or school yard fights. What makes it different is that the incidents are ongoing, and there is usually an imbalance of size, strength and power between the students involved. In formulating an effective approach to dealing with bullying it is helpful to note what bullying is **not**.

Bullying is not:

Mutual conflict where there is an argument or disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the problem. However, unresolved mutual conflict sometimes develops into a bullying situation with one person becoming targeted repeatedly for 'retaliation' in a one-sided way.

Social rejection or dislike – It is not feasible to think that every student must like every other student. Refusing to play with a particular child or, for example, not inviting them to a birthday party is not bullying, provided social rejection is not directed towards someone specific and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

Single-episode acts of nastiness or meanness, or random acts of aggression or intimidation. A single episode of nastiness, physical aggression, verbal abuse or an occasional push or shove is not bullying, neither is nastiness or physical aggression directed towards many different students. The difference is that bullying is, by definition, action that happens on **more than one occasion**. However, since St. Michael's College has a Duty of Care to provide a student with a safe and supportive school environment, single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression will not be ignored or condoned and will be dealt with in accordance with the St. Michael's College Behaviour Management Policy.

College and Employee's Responsibilities

St. Michael's College acknowledges its responsibility to:

- raise awareness of bullying and how the school will respond to it
- take action to help prevent bullying
- implement a reporting mechanism for students and parents
- educate students and parents on how to respond to bullying and how to report it
- educate employees on how to appropriately respond to bullying
- investigate and act upon all reports of bullying, including providing appropriate support and consequences.



At St. Michael's College, employees have the responsibility to:

- uphold and consistently apply this Policy
- respond appropriately to reports of bullying, including by investigating and acting upon reports of bullying, and by providing appropriate support and consequences in accordance with the Student Bullying Reporting Procedure
- watch for early signs of distress in students. This could be evident in any aspect of school life
- ensure they are familiar with the College's Behaviour Management and Bullying Policies
- educate all students with regard to their responsibilities as bystanders to a bullying incident
- ensure they do not model bullying behaviour in interactions they have with students, parents or other staff members.

Student Responsibilities

Students at St. Michael's College have the responsibility to:

- not engage in bullying behavior towards others
- report all incidents of bullying to a trusted teacher or other staff member
- actively support students they know are being bullied
- refuse to become involved in bullying, including as a bystander.

Parent Responsibilities

Parents at St. Michael's College have the responsibility to:

- encourage their child not to bully others
- encourage their child to report bullying to themselves or others
- watch for signs of distress in their child, such as, unwillingness to attend school, a pattern of headaches or stomach aches, equipment that has gone missing, request for extra pocket money, damaged clothing or bruising. Early contact is essential at this point
- take an active interest in their child's social life
- report to the Principal or any other member of College staff if they know, or think, their child is being bullied
- keep a written record if the bullying persists: Who, What, Where and When?
- advise their child to tell a trusted teacher
- tell their child that there is nothing wrong with them
- NOT encourage their child to hit back or respond verbally
- ensure they do not model bullying behaviour in interactions they have with employees at St. Michael's College.

Student Bullying Reporting Procedure

The College' approach to bullying, recognises that both the victim and the bully are experiencing social problems and must be supported to learn more effective ways of interacting effectively with peers. The main aim is to stop the bullying, and support both the bully and victim, although that does not preclude punishment of the bully if bullying persists.

Identification.

A student, parent or staff member reports bullying incidents/problems to a staff member who notifies the Principal or Deputy Principal. The Principal or Deputy Principal will interview all stake-holders in order to establish the existence of a bullying situation with regard to the definition of bullying.

Step 1.

The Principal, Deputy Principal or Dean of Pastoral Care interviews the victim and bully separately, and records the details of the incident in writing. The interviewer discusses the issues surrounding the particular incident. The interviewer works with the students to devise strategies for conflict resolution. The interviewer attempts to reach a position where both parties are satisfied with the outcome; i.e. the victim feels secure and the perpetrator is prepared to modify his/her behaviour in future. The victim understands that any further bullying must be reported immediately. The perpetrator understands that any further incidents will not be tolerated.

The strategy at this stage is to support the victim by affirming that bullying is not tolerated, and equipping the victim with adult support and social skills to assist in conflict situations. The bully is made aware of the behaviour change expected, and of the consequences if behaviour does not change.



Step 2.

If the incident is repeated or the problem continues - both parties record the incident/problem in writing, (with support if required). The Principal, Deputy Principal or Dean of Pastoral Care interviews the victim and perpetrator separately or together and discusses the problem; makes the bully aware of the feelings of the other person and the effects the conflict may be having; and makes suggestions of strategies for the resolution of the conflict. The interviewer may seek help from a qualified counsellor at any stage.

The Principal sends a letter to both sets of parents explaining the situation, outlining the strategies that have been determined and reinforcing the consequences that may flow from a repeat of bullying.

If a solution to a particular problem is not found, the College may consider the use of an outside person, such as a trained mediator, to assist in reaching a resolution.

Step 3.

If counselling by the Principal, or others, does not stop the bullying, sanctions may be imposed. These could include, but are not confined to:

- detention
- exclusion from certain areas of the College grounds
- suspension
- cancelation of Enrolment.

The College records all matters relating to bullying on TASS.

Bullying Prevention

Prevention of bullying is addressed through:

Curriculum

- teaching and learning styles ensure progress for all students
- interpersonal/co-operative/social skills
- curriculum content - Health/ PE
- extra curricular programs for selected students.

Playground Supervision

- lunchtime interest groups
- co operative play encouraged
- plan and layout of playgrounds and buildings determines supervision areas
- extra staff assigned when needed
- sports and play equipment available for lunchtime play
- trouble spots identified through surveying students and teachers
- before school, morning tea, lunch and after school supervision daily
- extra spot checks of trouble spots
- remind vulnerable children where to play, enlisting help of bystanders and using assertive strategies
- staff briefing on process for handling bullying
- opportunities to build friendship by friendship bench, organised team games, student led games, teacher led games.

School Structure

- classroom meetings
- quality circles (peer/teacher problem solving)
- buddy system
- class buddies welcoming new students
- peer mediation
- home-school liaison
- regular assemblies that support, inform and promote positive school ethos
- relevant policies – Behaviour Management, Cyber - Bullying
- structures that invite family involvement
- parent helpers.



Policy Release Details

<i>Date of Policy:</i>	Jan 2018	<i>Supersedes:</i>	Previous
<i>Authorised by:</i>	Principal	<i>Date of Authorisation:</i>	Feb 2018
<i>Review Date:</i>	Annually	<i>Next Review Date:</i>	Jan 2020
<i>Policy Owner:</i>	St. Michael's College.		