St John’s Primary School
Lambton

ANTI BULLYING POLICY

October, 2015

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St John’s Vision:

In the tradition of Mercy,
Inspiring minds,
Growing in Christ.
St John’s Primary School Lambton

Anti – Bullying Policy

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to detail the beliefs and practices of St John’s Catholic Primary School relating to bullying behaviour.

“Catholic schools have the responsibility to promote cultures of trust, cooperation and respect in the lived experience of the Catholic Christian setting. Bullying in a school mitigates such a culture and inhibits the development of positive relational outcomes for the common good of students, teachers and caregivers.”

CSO Anti-Bullying Policy 2012

CATHOLIC PERSPECTIVES

St John’s has the responsibility to promote cultures of trust, cooperation and respect in the lived experience of the Catholic school setting. Bullying in a school mitigates such a culture and inhibits the development of positive relational outcomes for the common good of students, teachers and caregivers.

St John’s school community fully supports the Catholic ethos of respect for the dignity of all human persons. As such the school demonstrates a strong stance against bullying as it erodes the dignity of those affected. Bullying is not acceptable at St John’s.

Bullying can:

- Impact the capacity of children to achieve their God-given potential:
- Seriously harm a child physically and emotionally: and
- Negatively impact relationships.

Students at St John’s Lambton have the right to be treated with respect, have the right to be safe and have the right to learn in an environment free of harassment, fear and intimidation.

RATIONALE

The role of St John’s school, in partnership with parents and caregivers, is to nurture and grow young people by providing optimum levels of support in learning, positive interpersonal relationship experiences and growing social support networks.

The culture and atmosphere of the school plays a significant role in students developing a balanced approach to life and learning. Bullying needs to be recognised, named and addressed to ensure the school works towards an authentic Mercy culture.
St John’s is committed to a consistent and whole school approach responding to and managing bullying. The formulation of the Anti-Bullying Policy has involved stakeholders in the school community, staff, students and members of the Parents & Friends Association (P&F).

**POLICY STATEMENT**

This Policy aims to:

- Ensure the provision of a safe environment, enabling all individuals to grow and develop.
- Define bullying and establish the expectation that it is unacceptable in any way, shape or form.
- Promote a proactive approach to bullying, encouraging all members of the school community to be alert to the signs of bullying and to accept a responsibility to report it to staff (whether an observer, bystander or victim).
- Implement a consistent and transparent approach to the management of alleged bullying incidences including reporting, investigating, responding, repairing and reflecting.
- Facilitate a consistent approach to the management of school record keeping processes in relation to bullying investigations.
- Provide structures and practices which can help to maintain consistency of decisions and action related to bullying.
- Ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up appropriately and that support is given to both victims and perpetrators.
- Ensure the right of students and staff to expect a school that is actively promoting a school environment free from the fear of bullying, harassment, intimidation and victimisation.
- Fully implement the CSO Policy Anti Bullying: Prevention and Response.

**DEFINITIONS**

The National Safe Schools Framework (2012) defines bullying as *repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons.*

*Bullying* is characterised by an abuse of power and is made up of a variety of behaviours intended to deliberately hurt, threaten, frighten or exclude someone by physical and non-physical means.

An individual or group may direct these behaviours toward another individual or group

*Cyberbullying* is any form of bullying that uses technology such as instant messaging, online social networking sites, online chat rooms, online bulletin boards and email.

Bullying differs from harassment in terms of occurrence; harassment can occur as a single incident whereas bullying is characterised by repeated attacks.
**SCOPE**

This policy applies to all members of the community of St John's Primary School Lambton.

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Principal will:

- Develop a shared understanding with staff and community members of bullying behaviour that involves all forms of bullying (including cyberbullying).
- Ensure the development, implementation and evaluation of preventative strategies and programs to promote student safety and wellbeing.
- Provide support to any student who has been affected by, engaged in or witnessed bullying behaviour.
- Be responsible for the implementation of the school’s anti-bullying policy and procedures.
- Initiate police support (Police liaison officers) and or intervention when required.
- Provide regular updates to parents or caregivers regarding the management of specific incidents.
- Ensure that an annual communication of the contents of the policy be made to the school community.
- Maintain an ongoing evaluation process of the policy with students, staff and caregivers.
- Monitor student understanding and satisfaction of school processes.
- Identify any patterns of bullying behaviour and initiate school action to address them.
- Engage students in the evaluation of anti-bullying processes within the school.

St John’s School Staff will:

- Respond to a student’s call for assistance, after the reporting of inappropriate behaviours in relation to all forms of bullying. This includes the use of technology. (e.g. text messaging or social networking site usage). Failure to take action may indicate a breach in the duty of care owed to the student. *(see Welfare Response Chart)*
- Seek advice from executive staff if confirmation or clarification regarding an incident of alleged bullying behaviour is required.
- Implement school policies and procedures relating to bullying behaviour.
- Maintain records regarding bullying allegations and investigations.

St John’s Students will:

- Promote positive relationships that respect and accept individual difference and diversity.
- Follow St John’s school procedures reporting and responding to bullying behaviour.
- Work collaboratively with staff and peers to resolve incidents of bullying.
- Have an awareness and understanding of what constitutes bullying, while acknowledging the responsibility to being respectful of one another.
- Participate in the evaluation of school anti-bullying processes and procedures.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

St John's will treat all instances of bullying seriously investigating and responding to allegations of bullying in a prompt and thorough manner. The school expects the full support of parents in this important issue.

The school will take a pro-active approach to managing bullying through implementing student positive behaviour, resilience and anti-bullying education programs such as MJR, Bounceback and the KidsMatter framework, and by keeping parents informed of expectations and consequences through newsletters, meetings and regular reminders.

Where possible the school will follow the procedures for dealing with instances of bullying as outlined in the following procedures.

Records of instances of bullying and subsequent follow-up will be kept by the class teachers, executive staff and/or the school principal.

**PROCEDURES**

The following programmes and strategies will be implemented to promote positive behaviours and to prevent bullying at St John's Primary School Lambton.

**Preventative Programs** - include Bounce Back (implemented in classes from K-6), Positive Behaviour Framework, KidsMatter, Learning Assistance Partners and early intervention strategies. Students at Risk are a regular item on the staff meeting agenda. Strategies:
- Implement St John's Discipline Policy.
- Safe Hands, Safe Feet to be promoted.
- Consistent language (Bounce Back programme) to be used by staff when addressing an issue.
- Teachers are to refer to *Bullying Assessment and Action Flow Chart* when assessing alleged bullying.
- Certificates and awards - students awarded for positive behaviour - 10 Blueys equal a Principal Award.

**Reporting and Record Keeping**

Serious incidents to be recorded by staff involved. Class and executive teacher to be informed and to follow up if deemed necessary.

If required time allocated at each staff meeting to discuss reoccurring or serious incidents. Parents to be informed and responses documented.

Teachers are to record all interviews with parents and file in student folders.

**Alleged Bullying**

In cases of alleged bullying teachers are to document and inform executive staff. An investigation process will commence as soon as all information is gathered and necessary people are informed.

In the case of suspected bullying the executive will conduct interviews with the children and parents of those concerned as soon as possible.
**Procedural Steps - Students**
- All students are encouraged to report any incident of alleged bullying whether as a victim or witness to their classroom teacher and/or the teacher on playground duty.
- The teacher will investigate and decide if the incident can be handled at a classroom level or requires further investigation or reporting. *(Bullying Assessment and Action Flow Chart)*
- If, upon investigation by the teacher the matter necessitates higher level intervention the matter should be referred to the executive for further investigation (copies of all notes made by the teacher should be handed on).
- The executive will interview those involved and keep a copy of the incident reports.
- The student/s involved will be provided with the right of reply.

If upon adjudication the student/s are deemed to have been engaged in bullying behaviour the following processes will follow:
- Parents will be informed.
- Restorative justice procedures followed – attempts to repair the relationship.
- Consequences are implemented.
- Appropriate support measures are in place for victims of bullying and counselling is offered.
- Appropriate support measures are in place for any perpetrators of bullying.
- Disciplinary measures will be at the Principals discretion and with accordance to the current Discipline Policy. No corporal punishment will be administered.

**BUDGET**

Funding will be made available from the school budget for Anti-Bullying programs. Funding for professional development of staff will be made available as the need arises.

**EVALUATION**

The Anti-Bullying Policy will be reviewed regularly or when CSO documents are updated. This policy will reflect the current teaching and learning practices at St John's school.

**RESOURCES & SUPPORT DOCUMENTATION**

Anti-Bullying Strategies & Programs

- Assertiveness Training
- Restorative Practices
- Bystander Training
- Friendly Schools and Families resources
- Buddy Systems
- You Can Do It! Education
- Small Group Individual Conferences
- Classroom Conferences
- Bystander Training