

ST MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

DEALING WITH BULLYING POLICY



Released 2017
Review 2020

St Michael's Catholic Primary School has a zero tolerance on bullying.

Each student at our school has a right to learn in an environment free of harassment or bullying.

Definition

Bullying is the repetitive or deliberate decision to hurt others. Bullying can be categorised as Verbal, Physical and Psychological.

Bullying is an expression of power; it thrives on an audience - the bystander. Bystanders are a part of the problem because they reinforce the bully's behaviour by their laughter or their silent acknowledgement of the bully's power.

- **Verbal** ~ includes behaviours such as name-calling, racist taunts, threats or insults.
- **Physical** ~ includes behaviours such as punching, hitting, spitting, pushing and rude gestures.
- **Psychological/Social** ~ includes behaviours such as lying or spreading rumours about a person or social exclusion.
- **Sexual** - includes touching or brushing up against someone in a sexual manner, drawing or writing about someone's body.

Bullying may have both short and long term effects on children. These effects may include

- Depression
- Unwillingness to attend school
- Loss of confidence and self-esteem
- Decrease in academic performance

All Have a Responsibility

Teachers will:

- Act as role models of caring and tolerant behaviour.
- Listen and act upon reports of bullying.
- Protect the victim from further harm.
- Act to stop behaviour recurring.

Students who are bullied will:

- Speak to class teacher and give him/her full details of the event.

Student witness to bullying will:

- Verbally intervene if they are able
- Immediately seek teacher assistance if they *can't* intervene.

Parents are encouraged to:

- Listen sympathetically to reports of bullying.
- Speak to relevant school personnel.
- Work with the school in seeking permanent solution.

What the school will do:

- The school will protect and support the victim of bullying, and will assist the student in order to assure that he/she will not be bullied in the future.
- The school will assist the bully to change his/her behaviour.
- The school will work with the parents of the bully to establish joint strategies for behaviour modification.
- The school will apply consequences ranging from detention, through to suspension to expulsion for resisting behaviour changes and repeated offending.
- The school will offer individual or group counselling.

Proactive strategies to deter inappropriate behaviour

Within the classroom children will be introduced to the following concepts:

- If you want someone to like you, you must first like yourself.
- To have a friend you must be a friend.
- If you have a fight with a person, TALK instead of WALK.

Within our school programme, particularly in Religion and Health, we will endeavour to create social and learning environments which develop:

- Children who believe in themselves
- Children who feel more confident and resilient
- Children who know that no problem is too hard to solve and that nothing is so bad that they cannot talk about it
- Children who are reminded that there is a solution to each predicament in which they find themselves
- An environment which allows children to better handle their feelings
- Opportunities for students to learn how to change negatives into positives
- Positive behaviours
- Good role models through sporting activities, guest speakers etc
- Good conflict resolution skills.

Policy and Practice

For each case of bullying there has to be a consequence.

Health and Religion lessons are to be used to assist children to identify what bullying is and to teach them overt strategies to use if they are bullied or see others being bullied.

Strategies also include relationship / social skill development, active supervision and small group and individual counselling.

The MJR awards are used to recognise those students who are good school citizens and who contribute to a pleasant and positive school environment.

Individual Cases

An Action Plan will be developed. It must include goals, strategies to achieve goals, monitoring procedures and an indication of how the goal will be measured. It may be necessary to review the Action Plan at a later date. Individual cases may require different strategies to be implemented. It may also be necessary to involve the NGSPS in the resolution process.

School Action Plan

- The Bullying Policy will be clearly articulated to staff, students and parents. (*Teacher and Principal's responsibility*). This includes mid-year intakes (Principal responsibility)
- Bullying will be a topic in Health lessons.
- All staff to be aware of bullying in the school and willing to take action.
- Incidents of bullying are reported
- Steps of 'Shared Concern' are recognized as one strategy to deal with bullying
- Repetitive and deliberate bullying is to be reported to the Principal and the parents of the children will be involved.
- A three-way meeting is to be convened between the teacher, parents and child. It may also be necessary to include the Principal at this meeting.
- A Bullying incursion to be presented to the school once every three years
- A review of the Bullying Policy and anti-bullying action plan to take place on needs basis.

Student action plan

- Talk - tell the bully to stop, explain how you are feeling
- Walk - walk away, ignore, leave the situation.
- Use "I" statements - "I feel sad when you talk to me like that".
- Talk to a teacher - tell the teacher about the incident/s.
- Reporting a Bully is not being a 'dobber'.
- Teacher Talks to Bully - documentation and follow up.