

ST MARY'S COLLEGE

EST.1869

COUNTERING BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. **Purpose** 3
2. **Scope of Policy** 3
3. **Policy Aims** 3
4. **Definitions** 3
   - Types of Bullying and Harassment 3
5. **Community Responsibility** 4
   - Responsibilities of Leadership 4
   - Responsibilities of Teachers 4
   - Responsibilities of Students 5
   - Responsibilities of Parents and Carers 5
6. **Response to Bullying and Harassment** 5
7. **Supporting Policy and Procedure Documents** 5
8. **Revision Record** 6

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to articulate the position of St Mary's College in relation to countering bullying and harassment. It aligns with our commitment to respectful relationships within our community.

2. SCOPE OF POLICY

The *Countering Bullying and Harassment Policy* should be understood in conjunction with the:

- Building Respectful Relationships: Behaviour Education and Student Behaviour Support Policy.
- Restorative Practices Procedure.

This policy applies to all members of the St Mary's College Community.

3. POLICY AIMS

St Mary's College is committed to a community where:

- A safe, supportive and inclusive learning environment is provided to all students, supported by our Catholic Dominican Tradition, in which our values of truth, justice, and community are foundational.
- Leadership is visible and inspires the whole community to feel safe, included, connected and respected.
- High quality teaching and learning in behaviour education and positive behaviour support processes, enhance the personal and social capabilities of all students.
- Strategic and effective partnerships between school leaders, staff, students, families and allied health services, enhance respectful relationships and inform behaviour support initiatives.
- Restorative practice and procedural fairness inform our duty of care and pastoral care responses to prevent or resolve conflict, repair harm and to heal relationships.

4. DEFINITIONS

Bullying is a systematic and repeated abuse of power. In general bullying may be defined as:

- An action towards another person with the deliberate intent to cause them harm.
- Dominating or hurting someone in a way that leads to psychological harm.
- 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.

(Dr Ken Rigby, 2010)

Harassment is repeated, unwanted behaviour that is annoying and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons.

Behaviours can be impolite or rude such as inadvertently saying or doing something that offends someone or forgetting to use our manners. At other times children can be deliberately mean and purposefully say or do something to hurt another person.

Both these instances can be hurtful and damaging to relationships and can be addressed through restorative processes. These are not the same as bullying which is intentional and repeated behaviour involving an imbalance of power.

Understanding imbalance of power can be complex. In a school setting it could be an older person towards a younger one; someone in a majority group against someone in a minority; a 'popular' student against someone who is socially isolated; a group against an individual.

Types of Bullying and Harassment

Physical

Physical bullying and harassment are any deliberate physical action such as:

- Invading personal space.
- Physically harming or making a person feel threatened or offended.
- Using another person's possessions without their consent.
- Graffiti or damage to others' possession or property.

Cyber bullying

Cyber bullying and harassment refer to bullying with information communication technologies such as email, social media and group chats.

Examples of cyber bullying include:

- Unwanted statements about another person that can be explicit or implied.
- Excluding others.
- Imitation of others.
- Spreading rumours and gossip about another person.
- Stalking or harassing others.
- Sharing images or online content without a person's knowledge or consent.

Emotional/Verbal

Emotional bullying and harassment involve using any words or actions that are unwanted and repeated and which a person finds offensive, such as:

- Excluding others.
- Acting in a disrespectful or mean way e.g. rolling eyes, body language that excludes or intimidates, moving, hiding or destroying another person's things.
- Verbal threats.
- Threatening someone by using stand over tactics.
- Intentionally making others feel insecure.
- Using emotions to try and control others.
- Name calling.
- Offensive language, notes or images.
- Putting people down.
- Targeting people because of their race, gender, sexuality, religious belief, physical appearance or intellectual capacity.

Sexual

Sexual bullying and harassment are behaviour of a sexual nature which a person finds offensive. This type of harassment can be verbal or nonverbal, such as:

- Touching or brushing against a person in a sexual manner.
- Sexually oriented jokes, drawings, literature or online material.
- Commenting negatively on a person's physical appearance.

5. COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY

The development of a whole school restorative culture that is inclusive and safe for all students is the responsibility of all community members.

Responsibilities of Leadership

In addition to the responsibilities outlined in the *Building Respectful Relationships: Behaviour Education and Student Behaviour Support Policy*, leadership will:

- Develop a system of shared understanding and common practices for addressing bullying and harassment that will be revisited and addressed each year.
- Ensure a sequential and consistent approach to the identification and impact of bullying behaviours.
- Ensure awareness of bullying and harassment and responses for students is included through the curriculum.
- Identify bullying behaviours and the role of the bystander.
- Respond to issues at the earliest opportunity, consistently and regarding the uniqueness of each situation, the stage of development of those involved and the opportunities for continued growth in developing personal and social responsibility.
- Ensure that bullying and harassment is identified and responded to through the school's restorative processes.
- Be aware of relevant policies and legal obligations.

Responsibilities of Teachers

In addition to the responsibilities outlined in the *Building Respectful Relationships: Behaviour Education and Student Behaviour Support Policy*, teachers will:

- Teach for and about diversity.
- Support students to identify and name behaviour that is mean, rude or unkind and understand how such behaviour can be connected with and also different to, bullying and harassment.

- Explicitly teach anti-bullying programs in order to understand:
  - » The role of the bystander.
  - » How to identify bullying behaviours.
  - » Skills to deal with bullying behaviours.
  - » Developing resilience.
- Ensure that bullying and harassment is responded to through the school's restorative processes.
- Notify leadership when there are issues of bullying and harassment.
- Be aware of relevant policies and legal obligations.

Responsibilities of Students

In addition to the responsibilities outlined in the *Building Respectful Relationships: Behaviour Education and Student Behaviour Support Policy*, students will:

- Report any bullying behaviours that are observed or experienced.
- Understand bystander behaviour and refuse to participate.
- Understand bystander behaviour and speak up when bullying and harassment occurs.



Responsibilities of Parents and Carers

In addition to the responsibilities outlined in the *Building Respectful Relationships: Behaviour Education and Student Behaviour Support Policy*, Parents and Carers will:

- Report any bullying behaviours that are observed or experienced.
- Avoid getting directly involved in conflict that is happening between students.
- Monitor safe and appropriate use of social media including:
  - » Awareness and supervision of social media use.
  - » Age-appropriate access to social media sites.
  - » Application of time limits and set breaks from social media.
  - » Report inappropriate use, gather evidence and support young people to block.
- Encourage the young people in your care to exhibit safe behaviour online and not participate in being a bystander.
- Model appropriate behaviour for resolving conflict that is consistent with restorative practices.

6. RESPONSE TO BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

The response to bullying and harassment is aligned with our restorative practice philosophy which encompasses relationships within a community of respect and the development of personal responsibility. All parties involved in and impacted by instances of bullying and harassment need to be involved in the resolution and response.

The *Restorative Practices Procedure* outlines the response to issues of bullying and harassment.

7. SUPPORTING POLICY AND PROCEDURE DOCUMENTS

Supporting documents include:

- Building Respectful Relationships: Behaviour Education and Student Behaviour Support Policy.
- Restorative Practices Procedure.
- Learning and Wellbeing Map.
- Restorative Plan.
- Student Grievance Procedure.
- Student Wellbeing Framework.

8. REVISION RECORD

DOCUMENT TITLE	Countering Bullying and Harassment Policy
DOCUMENT TYPE	Policy
POLICY OWNER	St Mary's College
CONTACT	**Principal** 8216 5700 principal@stmarys.sa.edu.au
APPROVAL AUTHORITY	Principal
REVIEW DATE	Created April 2021 Updated August 2022
REVIEW PERIOD	3 Years
REVISION HISTORY	**This policy is under review during 2026/2027 for alignment with the Veritas Way Framework.**