ANTI-BULLYING / HARASSMENT POLICY

Policy Statement

Catherine McAuley, Westmead celebrates the inherent dignity of each individual, made in the image of God and seeks to welcome and care for all members of the school Community.

The school aims to create a supportive, secure environment to enhance an excellent standard of learning and teaching and to break down the code of secrecy which surrounds bullying.

Everyone at Catherine McAuley has the right to enjoy an environment free from harassment or intimidation of any type. Bullying denies this right to people and has no place or justification at Catherine McAuley.

All staff, students and parents are responsible for Catherine McAuley being a safe and secure place for everyone.

The objective when dealing with bullying is resolution. It is important that the situation is resolved and that the offender makes a real commitment that the harassing behaviour will not continue.

What is Bullying?

Bullying refers to behaviours intended to deliberately hurt, threaten, frighten or exclude someone by physical and non-physical means. An individual or group may do these behaviours to an individual or group.

Someone is bullying another person when:

- They repeatedly verbally abuse a person or group by calling them unpleasant names, by writing them nasty notes and/or messages or by using unpleasant/foul gestures.
- They repeatedly physically harm a person or group or physically intimidate them by threatening physical harm or by destroying/taking their belongings without permission.
- They repeatedly encourage their friends or people they know to verbally, physically threaten a person or group; or ask them to harass, embarrass, ignore or exclude that person or group from activities.

Types of Bullying/Harassment

- **Physical**: Fighting, pushing, shoving, negative gestures, invasion of personal space, threats of a physical nature.
- **Verbal**: Name-calling, offensive language, slander, putting people down, targeting people because of race, malicious rumours, threatening to harm.
- **Visual**: Offensive notes or offensive material. Defacing others’ possessions, inappropriate use of email, text messages and internet.
- **Victimization**: Demanding money, standover tactics, threats, taking or interfering with another person’s possessions or property, repeated exclusion, setting up humiliating experiences.
- **Sexual Harassment:** Sexually orientated jokes, drawing or commenting about someone’s body, touching or brushing against someone in a sexual manner, unwanted behaviours of a sexual nature, asking questions about one’s private life.

Bullying may take one, two or all of these forms. Repeatedly means that they do these things to that person or group the majority of the time they talk about them see them or spend time around them.

Bullying, therefore, is the deliberate act of intimidating and humiliating another person or group. Research has shown that bullying has negative, long-term consequences for all involved. As such, bullying behaviours have no place at Catherine McAuley. This policy outlines our responsibilities as a school community to make certain that we act in such ways that can promote better relationships among ourselves and in the long-term reduce and prevent bullying from happening in our school.

**Practice of Hands-Off**

As a Catholic school, we have a responsibility to promote peace and harmony within our school community. All members of the Catherine McAuley community realise the importance of respecting the rights of others. The practice of ‘Hands-Off’ is to promote an atmosphere which encourages respect and integrity amongst all members of the school community. Therefore, NO student is to use any form of physical violence against other students, even in ‘fun’ or as a ‘practical joke’.

**Strategies**

- Involve and inform the whole school community of the policy and procedure: whole school assemblies, Pastoral Care lessons, Form meetings and class where necessary
- Provide self-esteem building activities and teach skills dealing with assertiveness and non-violent methods of conflict resolution; Pastoral Care lessons, Year 8 Resourceful Adolescent Program (RAP). Peer Support.
- Provide continual education on Anti-Bullying/Harassment and its consequences.
- Provide counselling and support for school members who experience bullying.
- Provide the school with a set of guidelines, which are readily accessible to all when action is necessary: school diary, staff handbook.

**Student Responsibilities**

A strong anti-bullying stance by students contributes in a major way to making the school a safe place. This is why we expect all students to:

- Be aware of what bullying is and how to prevent it.
- Contribute to a safe learning environment by respecting others and their differences
- Assist those who are the targets of bullies. Ways of doing this include:
  - offering to help the target of the bully;
  - being vocal and showing your disapproval of bulling.
- If you suspect that your friends are bullying someone bring it to their attention. If you know someone is being targeted get support for her.
- Report all incidents to a trusted adult. All incidents of bullying will be taken seriously and the school will do its best to seek a solution to the problem.
Staff Guidelines

All staff should:

- Know and understand the school’s Anti-Bullying/Harassment Policy.
- Watch for early signs of distress in students eg.
  - Emotional outbursts/tears
  - Complaints of illness
  - Avoidance of the playground
  - Frequent visits to Sick Bay
  - Absences from school
  - Drop in academic performance
  - Change in behaviour
- Create a positive environment in which ‘put down’ statements are not tolerated and be aware of any continual verbal harassment of particular students in class.
- Treat complaints seriously.
- Listen with empathy.
- Offer immediate help and support.
- Ensure that all areas of the school yard have maximum staff presence at breaks, before and after school.
- All staff at Catherine McAuley has the responsibility to promote the ideal of racial equality and to develop and implement anti-racist education and sanctions against racial discrimination, prejudice and harassment when they occur within the school community.
# Student Information

‘If you or someone else is being bullied’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPTIONS</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ask yourself is this person joking or are they really trying to hurt me?</td>
<td>Check it out! Does this group or person behave in this way just about every time you are near them?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Predict</td>
<td>Consider places and situations where you feel safe.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consider your behaviour</td>
<td>Are you doing anything which may be unhelpful to the situation?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seek solutions</td>
<td>Talk to someone you trust (this might be a friend, a school leader, counsellor or an adult.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phone Kids help line – 1800 55 1800 - (see help page in the diary).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Talk to the School Counsellor.</td>
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<td>Talk to your parents or an adult who you trust</td>
<td>Discuss the situation with your parents.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If you need further assistance encourage your parents to contact the Year Coordinator.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don't say &quot;I'll keep it all to myself&quot;.</td>
<td>If you do, you will feel alone and the problem may get worse. (The school will help you if it knows the problem).</td>
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### Possible Consequences for Bullying Behaviour

Catherine McAuley regards all forms of bullying, physical and non-physical, as unacceptable behaviours.

#### Possible Consequences for Bullying Behaviour

- Warnings
- Interview with Year Co-ordinator
- Parent contacted
- Detentions
- Parent interviewed at school
- Internal Suspension
- Contracts
- External Suspension

*Revised May 2012*