

	<b>Policy:</b>	<b>Dealing with Bullying, Harassment, Aggression and Violence (Students)</b>
	<b>Originally Released:</b>	<b>2019</b>
	<b>Date for Review:</b>	<b>2022</b>

## 1. RATIONALE

St Clare's School has a responsibility to provide an educational environment that promotes the dignity and respect of the person and, therefore, aims to encourage the development of positive relationships between students to reduce all forms of bullying, harassment, aggression and violence. The policies and practices that a school employs should enhance the dignity of the human person and reflect the Principles of Pastoral Care as espoused in the Pastoral Care Framework (2007).

Learning outcomes, physical health, emotional, psychological and spiritual wellbeing can be adversely affected by bullying, harassment, aggression and violence. Students who are bullied, subject to aggression or harassed tend to have poorer health, lower self-esteem, more interpersonal difficulties, higher levels of loneliness, depression, suicidal ideation and increased anxiety. They are also more likely to have a dislike of and want to avoid school, higher absenteeism and lower academic competence. The effects of bullying can begin early in life and, for some, last a lifetime.

The Australian Government's National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF) adopts a whole school approach to safety and wellbeing. It provides a comprehensive range of evidence-informed practices to guide schools in preventing and responding to incidents of harassment, aggression, violence and bullying and to implement their responsibilities in relation to child protection issues.

The National Safe Schools Framework is based on the following overarching vision:  
All Australian schools are safe, supportive and respectful teaching and learning communities that promote student wellbeing.

In the NSSF, a safe and supportive school is described in the following way:  
In a safe and supportive school, the risk from all types of harm is minimised, diversity is valued and all members of the school community feel respected and included and can be confident that they will receive support in the face of any threats to their safety or wellbeing.

The Guiding Principles of the National Safe Schools Framework  
This Framework is underpinned by the following guiding principles that represent fundamental beliefs about safe, supportive and respectful school communities. These guiding principles emphasise the importance of student safety and wellbeing as a pre-requisite for effective learning in all school settings.

St Clare's school, Lathlain, along with all Australian schools:

- affirm the rights of all members of the school community to feel safe and be safe at school
- acknowledge that being safe and supported at school is essential for student wellbeing

and effective learning

- accept responsibility for developing and sustaining safe and supportive learning and teaching communities that also fulfill the school's child protection responsibilities
- encourage the active participation of all school community members in developing and maintaining a safe school community where diversity is valued
- actively support young people to develop understanding and skills to keep themselves and others safe
- commit to developing a safe school community through a whole-school and evidencebased approach

The nine key elements that schools need to have in place to implement the NSSF are described in the Framework as:

1. Leadership commitment to a safe school
2. A supportive and connected school culture
3. Policies and procedures
4. Professional learning
5. Positive behaviour management
6. Engagement, skill development and safe school curriculum
7. A focus on student wellbeing and student ownership
8. Early intervention and targeted support
9. Partnerships with families and community

## **2. DEFINITIONS**

Bullying is when, over a period of time, an individual or a group intentionally harm a person, who finds it hard to stop this behaviour from continuing.

Additionally, bullying can be characterised as: causing distress, not only at the time of the attack but also, by the threat of future attacks; and, an imbalance of power (that is inappropriate and where there is an intention to hurt).

Its nature may be:

- verbal - name-calling, put-downs, threats (spoken, written, electronic or cyber which may also apply to the following points)
- physical - hitting, tripping, punching, throwing objects, stealing
- social – ignoring, hiding, ostracizing
- psychological – stalking, threatening looks, spreading rumours, damaging possessions

Harassment is any unwanted, unwelcome or uninvited behaviour which makes a person feel humiliated, intimidated or offended. Harassment can be seen as one form of bullying.

Bullying and harassment are often thought of separately, however, both involve a more powerful person or group oppressing a less powerful person or group, often on the grounds of 'difference'. These differences can be related to culture, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, sexual orientation, ability or disability, religion, body size and physical appearance, personality, age, marital status, parenting status or economic status. (*Bullying. No Way!* website cited in the National Safe Schools Framework, 2003).

Unlike bullying and harassment, violence is not necessarily associated with an imbalance of power. It can occur between people of equal power. It implies extreme forcefulness, usually (but not always) of a physical kind. (Rigby, cited in the NSSF, 2003).

## **3. SCOPE**

This policy applies to all students and has implications for all staff at St Clare's School, Lathlain.

#### 4. PRINCIPLES

- 4.1 St Clare's School is a safe and supportive environments where the 6 guiding principles and 9 key elements of the National Safe Schools Framework are practiced.
- 4.2 St Clare's School owes a duty of care to their students.
- 4.3 St Clare's School provides supportive environments which:  
act to prevent instances of bullying, harassment, aggression and violence
- encourage socially appropriate behaviour using positive behaviour management and direct teaching of curriculum in areas such as interpersonal and self-management skills
  - promote respect for self and other
  - develop physical/emotional well-being and resiliency
  - develop interpersonal skills and positive mental health
- 4.4 Responding to bullying, harassment, aggression and violence requires quality leadership and role modelling to facilitate strategy implementation and sustained change, together with a whole-school community approach that is consistent with the Pastoral Care Framework, the school's Pastoral Care practices and the school's Evangelisation Plan and which partners with parents and other agencies.
- 4.5 Bullying, harassment, aggression and violence may occur outside of the school. When these behaviours impact on a student's learning and behaviour in school, St Clare's School takes action to support the continued wellbeing of those involved.
- 4.6 All bullying, harassment, aggression and violence shall be responded to. When bullying, harassment, aggression and violence are ignored or overlooked, it serves to condone or reinforce the behaviour. Bystanders, (those who observe bullying) can encourage or assist those who bully simply by doing nothing.
- 4.7 While the aim is to promote and encourage positive behaviour, school policy and procedures shall contain clear statements regarding the range of appropriate consequences that may be applicable for unacceptable behaviour. In looking at consequences relating to specific issues, consideration should be given to other circumstances which may have bearing such as family or mental health matters.
- 4.8 All parties to incidents of bullying, harassment, aggression and violence are entitled to appropriate support.

#### 5. PROCEDURES

- 5.1 At enrolment stage, clarity will be given about the seriousness of an violence at St Clare's School.
- 5.2 Messages shall be provided on a regular basis from the school and student leadership teams of school values around bullying and harassment.
- 5.3 Explicit instruction about bullying, harassment and their effects will be given in the *Health, Keeping Safe*, and *Girls with a Purpose* Curricula. This will particularly address the role which bystanders play in incidents of bullying.
- 5.4 Parents will be included in school-approaches to bullying, and will be informed of the approaches used. Professional Learning for staff, and close supervision of students will be some of the protective strategies employed.
- 5.5 The School *Acceptable Usage of ICT* policy will include explicit references to cyber-bullying of various types.
- 5.6 The school physical environment will maintain high levels of visibility which act as a protective factor against negative social behaviours.
- 5.7 Classroom practice will explicitly develop social skills and practices to assist students in positive connections, and reduce the likelihood of bullying. Specifically, strategies from the *Berry Street Education Model* will be utilised to create a positive classroom climate.
- 5.8 Students will be encouraged to share experiences of bullying or harassment with a trusted adult at the school. Students' complaints will be taken seriously, acknowledging the potential threat which bullying can pose to a student's well-being. These reports will

generally be made to a member of the Student Support Team. The staff member will then conduct any necessary investigations into the claims, including contacting parents/guardians.

5.9 The Student Support team will employ a variety of strategies to assist students to resolve the occurrence of bullying. These may include a *shared-concern* approach, a restorative approach, mediation and counselling. Whilst working with all parties involved, the school will make it clear that it has a duty of care to students to protect them from bullying, harassment and aggression.

## 6. REFERENCES

Rigby, K (2001). *Stop the Bullying. A Handbook for Schools*. ACER, Australia

Curriculum Corporation (2000), *Mind Matters*, Commonwealth of Australia

National Safe Schools Framework (2003, revised 2011. Education Services Australia as the legal entity for the Ministerial Council on Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs [MCEECDYA]).

## 7. RELATED DOCUMENTS

CECWA Harassment, Discrimination and Bullying policy

CECWA Child Protection policy

CECWA The Management of Confidential Information in Schools policy

CECWA Exclusion of Students for Disciplinary Reasons policy

CECWA, *Framework for the Development of Pastoral Care in Catholic Schools (2007)*

*Framework for Schools Dealing with Bullying*

*Friendly Schools and Families (ACER Press)*

*The National Safe Schools Framework*

Bishops of Western Australia 2009, *Mandate of the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia: 2009-2015*

*Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1997, 2nd edition, Doubleday, New York*

*Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)*

*Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*

## 8. REVIEW HISTORY

Year of Review:	Reviewed by:	Amendments/Review
Created 2019	Principal, AP, Psychologist	

## 9. NEXT REVIEW

Year:	Sub-Committee Responsible
2022	Principal, AP, Psychologist