



St Munchin's Catholic School

Dealing with Bullying and Harassment (Students) policy

RATIONALE

Created 2004
Revised 2007

Catholic schools have a responsibility to provide an educational environment that promotes the dignity and respect of the person and, therefore, aims to eliminate bullying and harassment in all forms.

Learning outcomes, physical health, emotional, psychological and spiritual well being can be adversely affected by bullying and harassment.

DEFINITION

Bullying involves:

- a desire to hurt
- hurtful behaviour (physical, verbal or relational)
- an imbalance of power
- an unjust use of power
- typically repetition
- is experienced by the target of the aggression as oppressive, and by the perpetrator as enjoyable. (Adapted from Rigby 2001)

Harassment is any unwanted, unwelcome or uninvited behaviour which makes a person feel humiliated, intimidated or offended. (Adapted from CEO Policy, Harassment in School, 1998).

Harassment can be seen as one form of bullying. The terms are often used interchangeable.

Bullying can be characterised as:

- Repetitive, causing distress, not only at the time of the attack but also by the threat of future attacks.
- 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 or electronic)
- Physical – hitting, tripping, punching, throwing objects, stealing
- Social – ignoring, hiding, ostracising
- Psychological – stalking, threatening looks, spreading rumours, damaging possessions (MindMatters 2000).

PRINCIPLES

1. Catholic schools owe a duty of care to their students.
 2. Catholic schools provide supportive environments, which promote respect for self and others, physical/emotional well being and positive mental health.
 3. Dealing with bullying and harassment requires a whole school approach within the school's Pastoral Care Framework.
 4. When bullying and harassment are ignored or overlooked, it serves to condone and reinforce the behaviour.
-

PROCEDURES

1. All schools shall develop a school based policy on bullying and harassment which includes:
 - 1.1 an expanded definition statement which states that the school does not tolerate bullying and harassment.
 - 1.2 examples of behaviours that are considered to be bullying and harassment.
 - 1.3 a statement defining and advising the responsibilities of each of the major parties to the policy: the Principal, staff, students and parents.
 - 1.4 strategies and responses to address:
 - the development of supportive environments and relationships, the promotion of tolerance and the acceptance of difference
 - the resolution of bully/victim problems
 - the support and restoration to well-being of children who have been hurt by abusive behaviour by their peers
 - the amelioration of the behaviour and attitudes of students who bully
 - the pro-active engagement of bystanders to discourage bullying behaviour
 - the broader needs of the school community
 - the prevailing attitudes within the school including the 'culture' of the school.
 - 1.5 school support systems that promote positive mental health.
 - 1.6 teaching and learning programs to support the strategies

- 1.7 reporting and recording procedures to be used when investigating incidents.
- 1.8 a case management model to be used when bullying and harassment behaviours persist.
- 1.9 a statement on appropriate confidentiality.
2. The school based policy shall be developed using a broad consultative process.
3. Schools shall provide professional development to meet the needs of their staff in implementing the school policy.
4. The policy developed by schools shall be monitored and have regular review.

References

- 1 Rigby, K. (2001) *Stop the Bullying. A Handbook for Schools*. ACER Australia.
- 2 Curriculum Corporation (2000), *Mind Matters*, Commonwealth of Australia.