



# STUDENT BULLYING AND HARASSMENT PREVENTION POLICY (including Prevention Measures)

## 1. Vision

The vision for Catholic Education Sandhurst Limited (CES Limited) is to provide, in partnership with our families, stimulating, enriching, liberating and nurturing learning environments in each of the Catholic school communities within the Diocese. At the heart of this vision is our commitment to the ongoing duty of care that we have for the safety, wellbeing, and inclusion of all children and young people.

We believe:

- that the values of the Gospel are central to who we are, what we do, and how we act
- in leadership encompassing vision, innovation and empowerment.

## 2. Introduction

This school is a Sandhurst Catholic School which operates with the consent of the Bishop of Sandhurst and is owned and operated by Catholic Education Sandhurst Limited (CES Limited). This Policy forms part of the Duty of Care Framework which is available at [www.sfwodonga.catholic.edu.au](http://www.sfwodonga.catholic.edu.au)

## 3. Purpose

The dignity of the human person is inherent to the ministry of Catholic education and all members of the school community share the responsibility to teach, foster, promote and encourage positive student behaviour.

In Sandhurst Catholic School communities, there are also important expectations on each person to seek to maintain positive relationships with one another and to resolve conflict in a respectful and dignified manner. Bullying, in all forms, disregards the core values of our Catholic faith and is unacceptable.

All Sandhurst Catholic Schools have a shared responsibility for the pastoral care of their

students. This policy outlines the framework used to develop the practices and procedures within each school to promote respectful relationships to prevent and address issues of student bullying and cyberbullying.

All students, their families and CES Limited staff have the right to a safe and supportive learning and work environment. There are specific provisions in law for this for each and every member of the school community.

Teaching staff in Sandhurst Catholic Schools have a duty of care for the safety and wellbeing of students while they are at school or involved in school activities. They need to foresee possible harms that may arise and take reasonable preventative measures. A safe environment for students is one where the risk of harm is minimized and students feel safe. This harm relates not only to the dangers in the built environment, but also to violence, physical threats, verbal abuse, threatening gestures, sexual harassment and racial vilification.

## Definitions

**Bullying** is defined as **an ongoing misuse of power in social relationships (by an individual or group) involving repeated** verbal, physical, or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm towards one or more persons. Conflicts or fights between equals and single incidents are generally not defined as bullying. Bullying can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.

Bullying can be obvious (**overt**) or hidden (**covert**) and can happen in person or online (cyberbullying).

**Cyber-bullying** is bullying, which is enabled, enhanced, or in some way transmitted through digital technologies. It may include:

- sending abusive texts or emails
- posting negative, inappropriate or private messages or images on social networking sites
- assuming the identity of a target online and representing them in a way that may be harmful to them or cause them distress
- cyber-bullying provides more opportunity for covert bullying as it is easier to act anonymously. Additionally, digital information can be:
  - rapidly duplicated, distributed, and accessed
  - stored in multiple locations (with varying levels of 'discoverability')
  - created and communicated automatically
  - leave a permanent record (e.g. photos posted on the internet)

**Harassment** – Harassment is behaviour that targets an individual or group due to their identity, race, culture or ethnic origin; religion; physical characteristics; gender; sexual orientation; ability or disability.

## Scope

This policy applies to all students and staff in Sandhurst Catholic schools. It should be read in conjunction with other school policies including those for ICT Usage, Codes of Conduct, Student Behaviour Management and Pastoral Wellbeing.

The Bullying Prevention Policy and school guidelines apply to the behaviour of students either as individuals or collectively, during school hours or at school events. When a Sandhurst Catholic school becomes aware of serious out of school hours bullying and cyberbullying that is outside the scope of this policy, it will report the matter to parents, guardians and/or carers, the Victoria Police or other appropriate authorities, such as Internet service providers.

## Principles

bullying in any form is unacceptable behaviour at all Sandhurst Catholic schools

- each person is created in the image and likeness of God and the dignity of every member of the school community is respected
- Sandhurst Catholic school communities promote inclusivity and reflects a culture of hope, faith and belonging for students and their families
- wellbeing and learning are enabled in an environment that is safe, inclusive and respectful
- students have an authentic voice and are active agents in their learning and wellbeing
- all members of Sandhurst Catholic school communities take personal responsibility for actions and demonstrate respect for self and others by acting with honesty, courtesy and fairness
- a culture of collaboration and partnership is evident within and beyond the school
- effective record-keeping is a crucial and expected component of a school's response to the issue of bullying
- where appropriate, Sandhurst Catholic schools will collaborate with outside agencies on matters concerning bullying to the extent necessary and permitted by law to resolve the matter.

## Responsibilities

At St Francis of Assisi we will:

- Openly talk about bullying – what it is, how it affects us and what we can do about it.
- Teach our children the skills which will build their self-esteem and empower them to take responsibility for themselves – and give them the opportunity to practise these skills.
- Implement the policy which clearly states what actions we will take to deal with bullying behaviour.

### *Responsibilities of staff:*

- be role models in word and action at all times
- ensure that our classroom management practices support respect for others
- be observant to signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying
- deal with all reported and observed incidences of bullying as set out in this policy
- ensure that children are supervised at all times
- during yard duty make efforts to remove occasions for bullying by actively patrolling
- arrive at class on time and move appropriately between lessons including specialist lessons
- report incidences of bullying to the Deputy Principal/Principal if this is warranted

### *Responsibilities of children:*

- Know what constitutes as 'bullying'
- If children are being bullied, they are encouraged to do:
  - Have the right to feel safe and to operate in an environment free of bullying*
  - Tell the bully/ies that you want them to stop. Do this in a polite but firm way*
  - Tell a responsible adult about the bullying*
  - If it does not improve, seek further help.*
- Not bully other children
- If you see bullying occurring - tell an adult. Be an upstander!

### *Responsibilities of parents*

- know what constitutes as 'bullying'
- to watch for signs that their child may be being bullied eg. unwillingness to attend school, a pattern of headaches, missing equipment, requests for extra money, damaged clothes or bruising
- to speak to someone on staff (classroom teacher first) if their child is being bullied, or they suspect that this is happening
- to encourage their child to 'tell' if they are bullied

### *Reporting Bullying*

Incidences of bullying can be reported to the classroom teacher, Deputy Principal or the Principal by children and their parents. Any bullying incidences that are dealt with will be recorded and this record will be kept.

## **4. Policy Statement**

### **7.1 Bullying Prevention Measures**

All Sandhurst Catholic schools ensure that there is ongoing education of students about respectful relationships and the issues associated with bullying, including cyber-bullying,

and that students are regularly reminded of the school's anti-bullying procedures. St Francis of Assisi Primary School has a number of programs and strategies in place to build a positive and inclusive school culture and relationships to promote wellbeing. We strive to foster a school culture that prevents bullying behaviour by modelling, encouraging and teaching behaviour that demonstrates acceptance, kindness and respect. Bullying prevention at St Francis is proactive and is supported by research that indicates that a whole school, multifaceted approach is the most effective way to prevent and address bullying.

At our school:

- Education and promotion of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Uphold the school motto 'Live Justly, Love Tenderly, Walk Humbly with God'
- Productive and respectful relationships established between all members of the school community.
- Using the Positive Behaviour Matrix as a teaching tool across the school.
- Positive classroom routines and processes negotiated and applied consistently.
- Buddy program between older students and younger students
- Buddy bench in the playground
- Social Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum
- Adequate supervision of students during break times
- Whole school digital citizenship education program
- Identify and implement evidence-based programs including the delivery of the Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships curriculum and reference to other programs like SafeSchools, Bully Stoppers and eSmart.
- We strive to build strong partnerships between the school, families and the broader community that means all members work together to ensure the safety of students.
- We participate in the Respectful Relationships initiative, which aims to embed a culture of respect and equality across our school.
- We celebrate the diverse backgrounds of members of our school community and teach multicultural education, including Aboriginal History, to promote mutual respect and social cohesion.
- Teachers are encouraged to incorporate classroom management strategies that discourage bullying and promote positive behaviour.
- In the classroom, our social and emotional learning curriculum teaches students what constitutes bullying and how to respond to bullying behaviour assertively. This promotes resilience, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.
- We promote upstander behaviour as a way of empowering our students to positively and safely take appropriate action when they see or hear of a peer being bullied.
- Students are encouraged to look out for each other and to talk to teachers and older peers about any bullying they have experienced or witnessed.
- We participate in Bullying. No Way Day

## 7.2 Bullying Intervention Strategies

Each Sandhurst Catholic school develops their own school bully prevention guidelines, plans, processes and procedures for implementing practices that build a safe and

supportive learning environment that minimises bullying. Students must be regularly reminded of their rights and obligations to seek assistance from a trusted adult without delay if they become aware of, or are involved in, a bullying or cyber-bullying incident, and to follow the school's processes to ensure their safety and that of others. Bullying Intervention may include:

- Counselling for those bullied and bullying
- Contacting parents to discuss strategies

#### Post Intervention Strategies

- Monitoring those bullied to ensure their continued safety and wellbeing
- Checking that the bullying has stopped
- If the bullying continues, teacher in collaboration with the Principal would interview the student and parents. The Principal to make clear consequences of the repeat occurrence. Counselling is recommend for the bully and further action such as suspension is determined by the Principal.
- Further monitoring for a 6 month period

### **7.3 Documenting Incidents of Bullying**

Complaints concerning bullying must be responded to and investigated in a timely manner that respects the dignity and the privacy of those involved, whilst observing due process and procedural fairness. A time frame for responding to the complaint is to be given at the outset. This will be consistent with the CES Limited Complaints Management Framework for managing complaints and grievances. When assessing an appropriate response to potentially criminal acts, or alleged acts, Victoria Police advice may be sought.

All documentation for bullying complaints are recorded on SIMON.

### **7.4 Reporting Incidents of Bullying**

Each Sandhurst Catholic school is required to have systems to ensure that the appropriate staff are aware of cases of significant bullying, so that students are supported.

### **7.5 Record-Keeping**

Sandhurst Catholic schools are required to keep records of incidents of bullying and interventions systematically. These incidents will be communicated to relevant staff, maintaining confidentiality as appropriate. School incident data is regularly analysed to identify patterns, known bullies and trends.

## 5. Appendices

### **APPENDIX:1 Steps the School will Take after a bullying complaint/incidences**

1. A complaint of bullying is made or a staff member suspects bullying is occurring
2. A meeting between the classroom teacher and victim (and parent if appropriate). The purpose of this meeting is to gather information and establish the facts.
3. A meeting is held with the bully (and parent if appropriate). The purpose of this meeting is to gather information and establish the facts.
4. A meeting is held with bystanders or witnesses. The purpose of this meeting is to gather information and establish the facts.
5. Once the facts have been collated on SIMON a team meeting with the teacher and Principal, Deputy Principal or the Inclusive Practice Instructional Leader is held. The purpose of this meeting is to determine whether bullying is occurring and determine the next steps for intervention
6. If in the team meeting bullying is verified refer to the Classroom Behaviour Management Flowchart - Level 4.
7. If in the team meeting bullying is not verified - a restorative conversation is led between the children involved.

## 6. External Resources

Bullying No Way <https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/>

Kids Helpline <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/bullying>

Student Wellbeing Hub <https://studentwellbeinghub.edu.au/>

eSafety Commissioner <https://www.esafety.gov.au/>