

Anti-Bullying and Harassment (including Cyberbullying) Policy

St Peter's Lutheran School



Scope	All School community members - staff, students, parents / guardians, School Board members.
Responsible Officer	Principal
Contact Officer	Principal
Authorisation	School Board
Date Introduced	June 2008
Next Review Date	July 2021 This policy will be reviewed every three years, or as required by legislation.
Relevant Legislation or Source	Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic) Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)
Linked GSC Policy	Behaviour Management, Student Code of Conduct, Staff Code of Conduct, Parent Code of Conduct
Linked GSC Procedure / Guidelines / Plans	
Linked GSC Forms / Checklists / Registers	
Key Words	Bullying, Harassment, Cyberbullying
Destination / Storage	School Website, Shared Google Drive, Enrolment Application
Communication	Staff induction, cyclical staff training/meetings, Assemblies

Revision / Modification			
Date	Version	Summary	Policy/Procedure
19/11/2008	1.0	New policy	Bullying and Harassment Policy
01/09/2011	1.1	Reviewed by School Council	Bullying and Harassment Policy
01/09/2013	1.2	Reviewed by School Council	Bullying and Harassment Policy
01/07/2017	2.0	Name change to "Anti bullying: and expanded to include Cyberbullying	Anti Bullying and Harassment (including Cyberbullying) Policy
14/01/2022	3.0	New Policy format; changes made	Anti Bullying and Harassment (including Cyberbullying) Policy

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POLICY STATEMENT

1. RATIONALE

St Peter's Lutheran School is committed to providing a safe and caring environment and culture which enables positive relationships to be formed amongst all students and staff and which encourages self-esteem, cooperation, personal growth and a positive attitude to learning and teaching. It also has a legal and moral responsibility to ensure that staff, students, volunteers and visitors are not subjected to behaviours, practices or processes that may constitute harassment, discrimination, vilification or victimisation and is therefore committed to developing an environment which promotes respect of persons, integrity, equitable treatment and natural justice.

Bullying, harassment and cyberbullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated at St Peter's Lutheran School.

St Peter's Lutheran School is committed to using Restorative Practices to resolve conflict, repair harm and restore relationships. Through these practices we seek to educate our staff, students and parent community in the skills of peace-making and conflict resolution.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- reinforce within the school community that no form of bullying is acceptable;
- ensure that everyone within the school community is alerted to signs and evidence of bullying;
- ensure that all community members understand their responsibility to report any form of bullying, harassment or cyberbullying to staff.
- ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up and that support is given to both victim and perpetrator.
- seek parental and peer-group support and cooperation at all times.

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1 Bullying

3.1.1 Definition of Bullying

Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, who have more power at the time, deliberately upset or hurt another person, their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion.

3.1.2 Types of Bullying

There are three broad categories of bullying:

1. Direct physical bullying – e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.
2. Direct verbal bullying – e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.
3. Indirect bullying – this form of bullying is harder to recognise and often carried out behind the bullied student's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Indirect bullying includes:
 - lying and spreading rumours
 - playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
 - mimicking
 - encouraging others to socially exclude someone
 - damaging someone's social reputation and social acceptance
 - cyber-bullying, which involves the use of electronic means to humiliate and distress

Bullying can involve:

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- grabbing, aggressive staring, hitting, pinching kicking, pushing and shoving
 - publicly excluding a person from your group
 - knocking a person's books or belongings out of their hands or off their desk
 - teasing a person because of their looks

3.1.3 What Bullying is Not

Many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management. There are two socially unpleasant situations that are often confused with bullying:

3.1.3.1 Mutual Conflict

In mutual conflict situations, there is an argument or disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the problem. However, unresolved mutual conflict sometimes develops into a bullying situation with one person becoming targeted repeatedly for 'retaliation' in a one-sided way.

3.1.3.2 Social Rejection or Dislike

Unless the social rejection is directed towards someone specific and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others, it is not bullying. Single-episode acts of nastiness or meanness, random acts of aggression or intimidation, or single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If a student is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied. Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different students is not the same as bullying.

3.2 Cyber-bullying

Consists of covert, psychological bullying, conveyed through the electronic mediums such as cell-phones, web-logs and web-sites, on-line chat rooms, 'MUD' rooms (multi-user domains where individuals take on different characters) and Xangas (on-line personal profiles where some adolescents create lists of people they do not like). It is verbal (over the telephone or mobile phone), or written (flaming, threats, racial, sexual or homophobic harassment) using the various mediums available.

Cyber-bullying can involve:

- Flaming – online fights using electronic messages with angry or vulgar messages
- Harassment – repeatedly sending nasty, mean and insulting messages
- Denigration – posting or sending gossip or rumours about a person to damage his/her reputation or friendships
- Outing – sharing someone's secrets or embarrassing information or images online
- Exclusion – intentionally and cruelly excluding someone from an online group
- Cyber-stalking – repeated, intense harassment and denigration that includes threats or creates significant fear

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3.3 Harassment

Is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome or offensive to a person. Harassment is usually directed at a person because of their gender, race, creed or abilities – it can be subtle or explicit

Subtle (the most common) they include:

- offensive staring and leering
- unwanted comments about physical appearance and sexual preference
- racist or smutty comments or jokes
- questions about another's sexual activity
- persistent comments about a person's private life or family
- physical contact e.g. purposely brushing up against another's body
- offensive name calling

Explicit (obvious) they include:

- grabbing, aggressive hitting, pinching and shoving, etc.
- unwelcome patting, touching, embracing
- repeated requests for dates, especially after refusal
- offensive gestures, jokes, comments, letters, phone calls or e-mail
- sexually and/or racially provocative remarks
- displays of sexually graphic material – pornography
- requests for sexual favours
- extreme forms of sexual harassment will lead to criminal prosecution

4. PRINCIPLES

St Peter's Lutheran School recognises that conflict and misuse of power can occur in any community. In light of this it is our intention that our policies and associated procedures:

- seek to minimise the occurrence of conflicts and misuse of power by staff and students;
- seek to minimise the harm caused by conflicts and misuses of power that occur;
- encourage a culture of transformation and restoration rather than a culture of blame and punishment;
- be educative for staff, students and our parent community in the skills of peace-making and conflict resolution;
- encourage personal values such as respect, compassion, responsibility, etc;
- reflect best practice as indicated by current research in relevant fields;
- provide clear guidelines and sufficient support for staff, students and parents to implement appropriate procedures that will provide community-building experiences, and also reinforce the ethos of St Peter's Lutheran School that embraces both the Law and the Gospel.

5. POLICY

A school-wide approach will be taken to deal with bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment in a consistent and systematic way.

All St Peter's Lutheran School students and staff will be informed of this policy and the Anti-Bullying (including cyber bullying) and Anti-Harassment procedures at the commencement of their enrolment at the school and via the Student, Parent and Staff Code of Conduct documents.

All complaints of harassment will be addressed in confidence and taken seriously.

St Peter's Lutheran School will organise preventative curriculum programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.

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Staff programs will occur periodically to keep staff informed of current issues and strategies for dealing with these issues.

There will be disciplinary consequences for those in breach of the Anti-Bullying (including cyber bullying) and Anti-Harassment Procedures.

6. IMPLEMENTATION

Constructive strategies to deal with harassment will include: education in coping strategies; assertiveness training; problem solving and social skills; counselling and behaviour modification. These strategies will be employed in preference to punitive sanctions and negative consequences.

The Anti-Bullying and Harassment procedures of the school will be widely promoted to students, staff, parents/carers and the community.

A summary of the policy will be included in the Student Enrolment process while new staff will receive extensive documentation as part of the school's induction process.

The School Leadership Team and the teachers will work together to ensure the safety of all school members in situations of bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment, by thoroughly investigating all complaints while respecting the need for confidentiality, notifying parents/carers and planning interventions.

If a teacher feels a student is at risk from bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment then it is their professional duty to pass on the information to an appropriate person in order to ensure relevant support for the student. It is important that teachers document fully their interaction with the student and to verify the actions taken.

Student programs will be organised to raise student awareness about bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment, to provide a forum for discussion of matters and to aid development of attitudes. Some matters will be dealt with formally in the curriculum and in peer support programs, leadership programs, extra-curricular programs and occasional activities run by outside experts and workers.

Professional development will be provided for staff relating to bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment and proven strategies to address these issues in classrooms will be shared with all staff.

The school will provide specialist resources such as books, videos, kits and off-site in-service activities to assist staff in responding appropriately to bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment issues.

Disciplinary consequences for bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment will comply with the Behaviour Management Policy. The principal or their nominee will provide disciplinary consequences including suspension in accordance with school guidelines.