



St Joseph's School

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

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1. Rationale

St Joseph's believes that every member of the school community deserve respect. A safe school environment allows everyone to maximize learning and growth to become contributing members of God's creation.

St Joseph's believes that every student and family member has the right to feel safe and be safe; therefore bullying will not be tolerated. This extends **to parents approaching someone else's child** to deal with incidents that have occurred between children.

At St Joseph's School it is recognised that we have a responsibility to address issues related to both those who experience and are engaged in bullying behaviour. Short-term and long-term effects on mental health and well-being are significant. If unresolved, anti-social behaviour, both aggressive and submissive, can perpetuate throughout a person's life affecting future relationships and their ongoing contributions to society.

2. Definition of Bullying

Bullying occurs when somebody who is less powerful than another person or a group is deliberately and (typically) repeatedly hurt without in anyway deserving that treatment (Rigby, 2003). The behaviours are maintained by secrecy that develops resulting from threats and fear.

According to Professor Ken Rigby bullying includes:

- i) A desire to hurt and this desire is acted on;
- ii) The action is hurtful;
- iii) There is an imbalance of power;
- iv) There is no justification for the action;
- v) It is (typically) repeated;
- vi) The person engaged in the bullying behaviour gains satisfaction from it.

Bullying can be:

- i) Physical - Hitting, punching, pushing or kicking.
- ii) Verbal - Name calling, laughing and joking about someone, using hurtful and racist names, teasing or threatening someone.
- iii) Emotional/Psychological - Excluding someone from play, hiding or breaking someone's belongings, ignoring someone.
- iv) Cyberbullying – the use of social media such as Facebook, MSN, email, texting, blogging etc

3. Bullying vs. Conflict

Bullying is different from other forms of aggression as it has the following unique characteristics:

- i) a power imbalance must be present;
- ii) the aggressive act is unprovoked by the victim or perceived as unjustified by others; and
- iii) the action is repeated between the same individuals.

Is Fighting Bullying?

While **fighting** between **two students of equal power** is of concern, it is **not bullying**. It is the presence of a power imbalance that distinguishes bullying from fighting, conflict, violence and disagreement. It is this imbalance that makes mistreatment of the victim possible.

Is Teasing Bullying?

Teasing, done in **mutual fun and jest**, where all individuals are involved and feel **capable of responding**, is **not bullying**. However, **teasing that is done in a mean and hurtful way**, that involves a **power imbalance** whereby one individual feels **powerless to respond** or to stop what is happening **is bullying**.

4. Rights of Students

- Students have a right to be happy and to be treated with kindness
- Students have a right to be treated fairly by all members of the school community
- Students have the right to feel safe
- Students have the right to learn without harassment
- Students have a right to a system that deals effectively with harassment and bullying
- Students have a right to be exposed to prevention strategies initiated by the school through class programs i.e. values teaching, anti-bullying strategies

5. Responsibilities

It is an expectation that:

- **All adults within the school community**, including staff, parents and friends of the community, behave in a socially responsible manner.
- Staff towards parents, parents with parents, parents with other students must, at all times, show courtesy in all interactions with each other.
- Everyone is aware of the correct procedures that must be followed in relation to our Safe Schools Policy and school curriculum.
- The entire school community must be observant to signs of bullying.
- All signs of bullying must be reported, in the case of staff- to the Harassment Officer, and in the case of children, to the teachers of all parties involved and parents where deemed necessary. Records should also be kept in the student's behavior file.
- All reports of bullying will be treated seriously.
- Students' confidentiality will be maintained at all times.
- Any intervention relating to bullying incidents endeavours to shift the power balance away from the individual/s who are doing the bullying.

- When bullying is a workplace issue, it must be identified, acknowledged and managed.

6. School Response to Incidents of Bullying

Children are not expected to tolerate bullying or suffer in silence. They will be encouraged to disclose problems in an environment in which they feel safe and have the confidence to speak up. Early intervention is important if behaviour is to be changed.

The management of all incidents of bullying will use a team approach i.e. child, parent, teacher. The following '*Procedure for Intervention*' explains the actions the school will take in response to incidents of bullying.

Support materials and resources can be found on the Bullying. No Way! Website <http://www.bullyingnoway.gov.au/teachers/classroom-resources/primary.html>

A folder with this link can also be found in T:\13 Behaviour\ Anti-Bullying Resources

It is important to note that parents are not allowed to approach another child to discuss any alleged bullying or conflict between children, theirs, or anyone else's. Parents aware of this happening should report this to an Assistant Principal immediately and allow them to deal with the matter.

Although this approach is not based on consequences or punishments, there are a range of measures available, up to and including suspension or exclusion that are in accord with the Safe Schools Policy, and which may be used in response to bullying.

6A. Harassment

It is completely unacceptable for anyone, a parent, family member, staff member or any other person within the community, to approach a staff member or any other individual, and speak rudely or inappropriately to them. If someone has a grievance or issue against someone else, they need to make an appointment with the person involved to discuss the matter in a civil and responsible way. If necessary, a third party, an Assistant Principal should be present. It should be remembered that **at all times we are expected to model** respectful and considerate behaviour towards others, because it is the right thing to do and for the benefit of the students in our school.

7. Procedure For Intervention

- Respond** - Any staff member observing a bullying incident or approached by a child **must respond**.
- Remove** the child/ren from harm and attend to them if required.

- C. **Is this Bullying?** A decision needs to be made about whether or not this is an incident of bullying by speaking to the student who appears or alleges to be bullied.

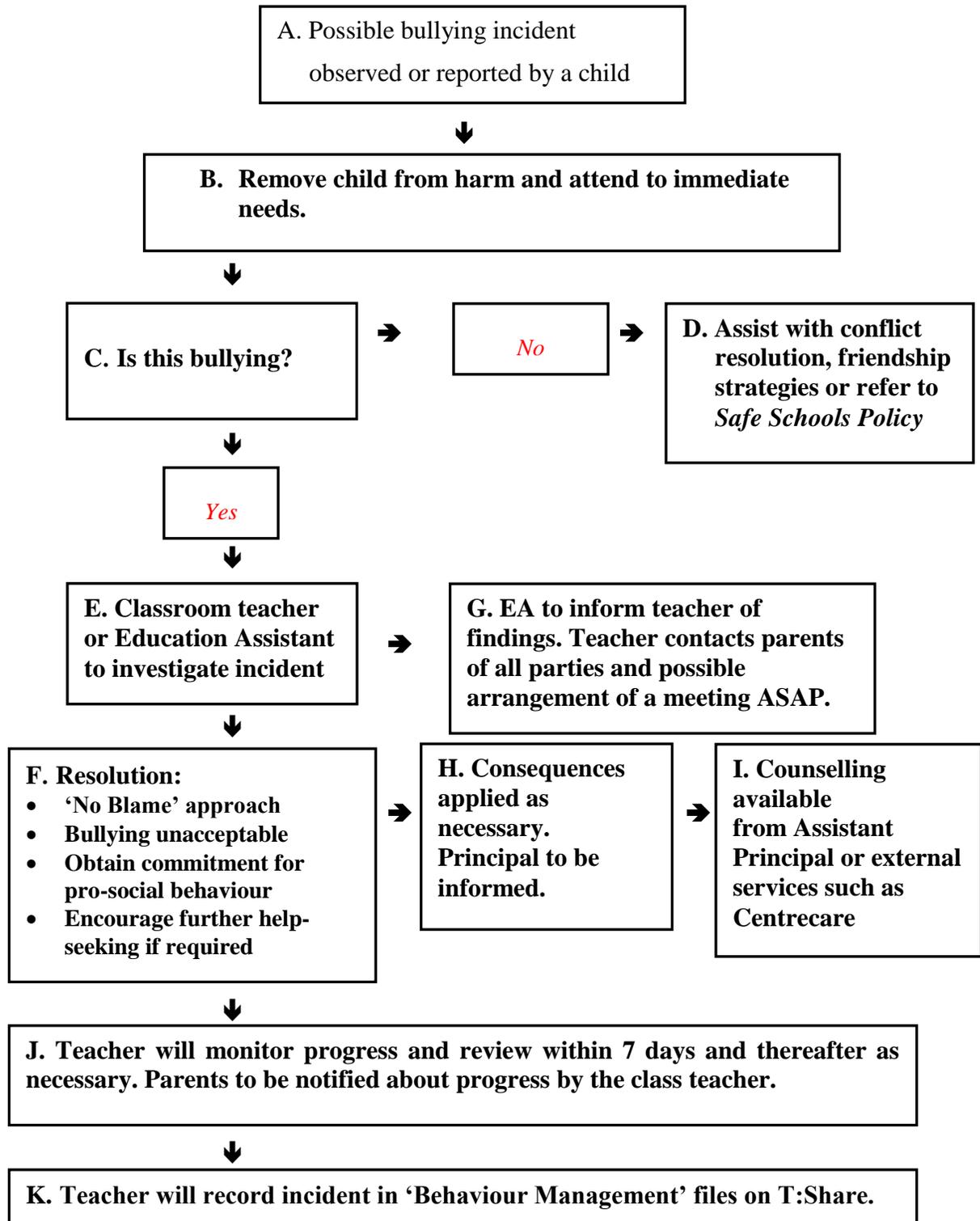
Definition:

- i) A desire to hurt and this desire is acted on;
 - ii) The action is hurtful;
 - iii) There is an imbalance of power;
 - iv) There is no justification for the action;
 - v) It is (typically) repeated;
 - vi) The person engaged in the bullying behaviour gets satisfaction from it.
- D. **Not Bullying** - If the incident is not bullying (eg. Conflict, 'she stole my ball', etc) the teacher can assist with conflict resolution, friendship strategies or refer to the *Safe Schools Policy* for appropriate action.
- E. **If Bullying, Investigate** - If it is deemed to be bullying, the relevant classroom teacher needs to be informed about the incident and the matter investigated with the assistance of the staff member (teacher or EA) involved :
- i) Gathering reports from all parties immediately after the event, where possible.
 - ii) Interviewing carried out using the 'No-Blame' approach. (*see Appendix 2*)
 - iii) Checking the 'behaviour management–student files' on T:share for any history.
 - iv) Carrying out enquiries **discretely**.
 - v) If necessary, asking for assistance from the relevant AP.
 - vi) If an EA is investigating the incident the results should be handed to the class teacher for recording and follow up.

Resolution – This may include the following:

1. Using a 'No Blame' approach with all parties to develop strategies for the incident to not occur again.
 2. A clear statement reinforcing that bullying is unacceptable at St Joseph's School.
 3. Encouraging children to ask for help if further issues occur.
- F. **Contact parents** – This can be done via phone.
- G. **Consequences** – In some cases when a serious bullying incident occurs, where a school rule has been broken or previous resolutions have been unsuccessful, consequences may need to be applied. A decision to apply consequences will be at the discretion of the teacher or AP involved and the Principal will be informed. Consequences will be applied in accordance with the school's *Safe Schools Policy* and will increase in severity in cases of repeated occurrences.
- H. **Counselling** and consultation is available from the Assistant Principals and/or external services such as Centrecare in cases where bullying is not resolved.
- I. **Follow-up** - The staff member involved must undertake the following:
- i) **Intervention will be reviewed within 7 days and again thereafter as necessary.**
 - ii) Parents will be notified about the progress of the intervention (via phone or letter) by the class teacher.
- J. **Record** - Each incident must be recorded in the school's 'Behaviour Management – student files' on T:share. Records to be in green font to differentiate from behaviour incidents.

8. PROCEDURE FOR INTERVENTION FLOW CHART



9. Parental Concerns about Bullying

Parents are encouraged at all times to communicate to the school any incidents of bullying, whether their child is a victim or has observed bullying occurring. After this

report has been assessed by the school, parents will be made aware as to whether this incident is deemed as bullying or a behavioural issue.

Parents may report incidents of bullying to the class teacher, Assistant Principal or directly to the Principal.

Parents are asked to provide the following information where possible:

- i) Who is involved in the bullying
- ii) How frequently the bullying is occurring
- iii) Where the bullying is taking place
- iv) Nature of the incident– kicking, name calling etc
- v) Effects on the child bullied
- vi) What they, the parents, and their child have already done

10. Proactive Strategies to Minimise Bullying

- i) The Anti-Bullying Policy will be discussed with students at the commencement of each school year and throughout the year.
- ii) Appropriate standards of behaviour and school rules will be explained with all students in class and at assemblies.
- iii) Students will be taught about the importance of bystanders in bullying incidents and encouraged to “ask for help” when they need to.
- iv) Information on bullying will be made available on request to parents, teaching and non-teaching staff in the form of literature, staff and parent newsletter articles, through discussion or by educational sessions as required.
- v) Students at risk will be identified and a high level of communication will be maintained. Management strategies will be explained to those staff involved.
- vi) Students experiencing ongoing difficulties will be referred, where appropriate, to the School Psychologist.
- vii) The school curriculum will provide opportunities for teaching students about bullying through the Health curriculum materials and ‘Keeping Safe’ program.
- viii) The school curriculum will provide additional opportunities for teaching social skills, anger management, resilience, assertiveness, conflict resolution and protective behaviours. Programs including SDERA’s ‘Challenges and Choices’ Resilience unit, applicable Religious Education units of work and ‘Keeping Safe’ must be integral components of the curriculum across each year level.
- ix) Cooperative learning will continue to be encouraged throughout the school.



NOTIFICATION OF BULLYING INCIDENT

Date: _____

Dear Parents,

This letter is to inform you that your child _____ has been involved in a bullying incident on _____ (date). Your child was:

- engaged in bullying behaviour
- the target of bullying behaviour
- a bystander to bullying behaviour

The school's philosophy in regard to any bullying incident is that of consultation with all parties involved, that all parties are responsible for improving their peer relationships, and solutions and commitments are made to resolve this situation.

The matter has been acted upon and all children involved will be monitored over the coming week. I will speak with all of the children involved as to how they feel the situation has progressed.

On this occasion, behavioural consequences have/have not been applied. This letter is not intended to result in punishment at home. It is for your information and may be useful in discussing better choices that your child may follow in future. We would appreciate your support and consultation with the school. Please contact me via the school office.

Yours sincerely,

Teacher monitoring the situation

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Please return this reply slip to _____ (above named).

To: _____

I have discussed this incident of bullying with my child.

Parent Name: _____

Signed: _____