



Bullying

“All Australian schools are safe, supportive and respectful learning and teaching communities that promote student wellbeing” NSSF (revised 2011).

A safe and supportive school is described in the following way:

“In a safe and supportive school, the risk for all types of harm is minimized, 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 and wellbeing”. (NSSF)

Brisbane Catholic Education promotes and aims to provide a safe and supportive learning environment for all students. We strive to ensure a culture where all acknowledge and understand that student safety and wellbeing is the responsibility of everybody.

All hurtful behaviour, irrespective of whether or not it meets the definition of bullying, is addressed at Marymount Primary School. Any behaviour that results in harm or is likely to result in harm to a student must be reported to the Assistant Principals and/or Principal and be responded to in line with BCE Student Protection processes.

Marymount Primary School and Brisbane Catholic Education take the issue of bullying and cyber safety very seriously. Providing safe and supportive environments for learning is essential to achieving school improvement, raising student achievement and attendance levels, promoting equality and diversity, and ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community. Through our PB4L system we establish a climate of respectful relationships where bullying or harassing behaviours are not tolerated and cannot flourish. Anti-bullying messages are incorporated into the curriculum area each year, including supportive by-stander behaviour and training, and all incidents recorded in the Student Behaviour Support System.

Marymount Primary School has developed clear procedural steps for responding to bullying/harassment incidents to:

- Prevent, de-escalate and/or stop any continuation of harmful behaviours – through intervention, calm discussions with all involved which state clearly that the behaviour must cease, teaching and modelling of productive behaviours, restorative practices, personnel resourcing and mediation

- React to the incident in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent manner
- Protect the student who has experienced the behaviour and provide appropriate support through referral to the guidance counsellors, in-class support, buddy systems and personnel resourcing on duty
- Ensure there is a positive outcome by following up after the incident and that relationships are restored for all

Definitions

National definitions have been developed by the MCEETYA 'Safe and Supportive School Communities' management group and used in the *National Safe Schools' Framework (2011)*, and form part of BCE's lexicon:

Aggression:

Aggression is words or actions (both overt and covert) that are directed towards another and intended to harm, distress, coerce or cause fear.

Bullying:

Definition for Teachers, Parents and Carers:

Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons.

- *Cyber bullying* refers to bullying through information and communication technologies.
- Conflict or fights between equals and single incidents are not defined as bullying.
- Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved including bystanders.

For use with younger students

Bullying is when someone targets another child again and again and tries to make them feel bad. They say or do many mean and hurtful things, make fun of them a lot, try to stop them from joining in or make others not like them.

Although it isn't nice if someone says or does something mean to someone else, we don't necessarily call that bullying. It also isn't bullying if children of the same age have a one-off argument.

For use with older students

Bullying is when one student (or a group) targets another student again and again to upset or hurt them. They might hurt them physically, try to socially isolate them or say and do many mean or humiliating things to them.

Although it's neither respectful nor acceptable if someone behaves in a mean or aggressive way on one occasion, it isn't considered bullying. A fight or disagreement between students of equal power or status isn't considered bullying.

What is NOT Bullying?

There are also some behaviours, which, although they might be unpleasant or distressing, are not bullying:

- **Mutual conflict** - which involves a disagreement, but not an imbalance of power. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.
- **Single-episode acts** of nastiness or physical aggression, or aggression directed towards many different people, is not bullying unless it becomes a pattern of behaviours.
- **Social rejection or dislike** is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

Conflict:

Conflict is a mutual disagreement, argument or dispute between people where no one has a significant power advantage and both feel equally aggrieved.

- Conflict is different to bullying because there is always an imbalance of power in bullying. However, poorly resolved conflict situations, especially those involving friendship break-ups or romantic break-ups sometimes lead to either aggression or bullying.
- Conflict can be a precursor to bullying where there are instances of repeated conflict and where the balance of power changes.

The BCE Student Behaviour Support System allows for frequent behaviour incidents to be tracked effectively and all high level incidents should be recorded within this database.

Keeping records of bullying and harassment incidents will enable the school to:

- Manage individual cases effectively;
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of strategies;
- Celebrate the anti-bullying work of the school;
- Demonstrate defensible decision making in the event of complaints being made;
- Engage and inform parents and other services as necessary.

Procedural steps in responding to bullying/harassment incidents:

The development of clear procedural steps for responding to bullying/harassment incidents are required to:

- Prevent, de-escalate and/or stop any continuation of harmful behaviour
- React to incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent manner
- Protect the student who has experienced the bullying/harassing behaviour and provide appropriate support for the student
- Apply the appropriate Student Behaviour Support procedure for the student/s who has engaged in bullying/harassing behaviour and ensure that there is a positive outcome, adequate follow up and that relationships are restored for all involved.

Appeals

Appeals by parents/caregivers, or students living independently, are made to:

- The Principal of the school: in relation to a decision to suspend a student for less than three (3) days. Parents/caregivers, or students living independently, who consider that either correct procedures have not been followed, or that an unreasonable decision has been made, may appeal a suspension that is less than three (3) days to the Principal.
- The Senior Leader – Learning & Identity: in relation to a decision to suspend a student for more than three (3) days from the school
- The Executive Director: in relation to a recommendation to exclude a student from the school

Note: The fact that an appeal has been lodged does not suspend the operation of the suspension or exclusion.