



DEALING WITH BULLYING, HARRASSMENT, AGGRESSION AND VIOLENCE (STUDENTS)

CECWA: Education 2 – B2

1. RATIONAL

Sacred Heart School has the responsibility to provide an educational environment that promotes the dignity and respect of the person, and therefore, aims to eliminate bullying, harassment, aggression and violence. The policies and practices that Sacred Heart School employs enhance the dignity of the human person and reflect the Principles of Pastoral Care as espoused in the Pastoral Care Framework (2007).

Learning outcomes, physical health, emotional, psychological and spiritual wellbeing can be adversely affected by bullying, harassment, aggression and violence. Students who are bullied, subject to aggression or harassed tend to have poorer health, lower self-esteem, more interpersonal difficulties, higher levels of loneliness, depression, suicidal ideation and increased anxiety. They are also more likely to have a dislike of and want to avoid school, higher absenteeism and lower academic competence. The effects of bullying can begin early in life and, for some, last a lifetime.

The Australian Government's National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF) adopts a whole school approach to safety and wellbeing. It provides a comprehensive range of evidence-informed practices to guide schools in preventing and responding to incidents of harassment, aggression, violence and bullying and to implement their responsibilities in relation to child protection issues.

The National Safe Schools Framework is based on the following overarching vision:

All Australian schools are safe, supportive and respectful teaching and learning communities that promote student wellbeing.

In the NSSF, a safe and supportive school is described in the following way:

In a safe and supportive school, the risk from all types of harm is minimised, 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 or wellbeing.

The Guiding Principles of the National Safe Schools Framework

This Framework is underpinned by the following guiding principles that represent fundamental beliefs about safe, supportive and respectful school communities. These guiding principles emphasise the importance of student safety and wellbeing as a pre-requisite for effective learning in all school settings.

Sacred Heart School:

- affirms the rights of all members of the school community to feel safe and be safe at school
- acknowledges that being safe and supported at school is essential for student wellbeing and effective learning
- accepts responsibility for developing and sustaining a safe and supportive learning and teaching community that also fulfills the school's child protection responsibilities.
- encourages the active participation of all school community members in developing and maintaining a safe school community where diversity is valued
- actively supports young people to develop understanding and skills to keep themselves and others safe
- commits to developing a safe school community through a whole-school and evidence-based approach

The nine key elements that Sacred Heart School needs to have in place to implement the NSSF are described in the Framework as:

1. Leadership commitment to a safe school

2. A supportive and connected school culture
3. Policies and procedures
4. Professional learning
5. Positive behaviour management
6. Engagement, skill development and safe school curriculum
7. A focus on student wellbeing and student ownership
8. Early intervention and targeted support
9. Partnerships with families and community

2. DEFINITIONS

Bullying is when, over a period of time, an individual or a group intentionally harms a person, who finds it hard to stop this behaviour from continuing.

Additionally, bullying can be characterised as: causing distress, not only at the time of the attack but also by the threat of future attacks; and 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, electronic or cyber which may also apply to the following points)
- physical - hitting, tripping, punching, throwing objects, stealing
- social – ignoring, hiding, ostracizing
- psychological – stalking, threatening looks, spreading rumours, damaging possessions²

Harassment is any unwanted, unwelcome or uninvited behaviour which makes a person feel humiliated, intimidated or offended. (Adapted from Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia Policy, Harassment in School, 1998). Harassment can be seen as one form of bullying.

Bullying and harassment are often thought of separately; however, both involve a more powerful person or group oppressing a less powerful person or group, often on the grounds of 'difference'. These differences can be related to culture, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, sexual orientation, ability or disability, religion, body size and physical appearance, personality, age, marital status, parenting status or economic status. (Bullying. No Way! website cited in the National Safe Schools Framework, 2003).

Unlike bullying and harassment, violence is not necessarily associated with an imbalance of power. It can occur between people of equal power. It implies extreme forcefulness, usually (but not always) of a physical kind. (Rigby, cited in the NSSF, 2003).

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Catholic schools in Western Australia.

4. PRINCIPLES

4.1 Sacred Heart School is a safe and supportive environment where the six guiding principles and nine key elements of the National Safe Schools Framework are practised.

4.2 Sacred Heart School owes a duty of care to our students.

4.3 Sacred Heart School provides a supportive environment which:

- acts to prevent instances of bullying, harassment, aggression and violence
- encourages socially appropriate behaviour using positive behaviour management and direct teaching of curriculum in areas such as interpersonal and self-management skills
- promotes respect for self and others
- develops physical/emotional well-being and resiliency
- develops interpersonal skills and positive mental health

4.4 Responding to bullying, harassment, aggression and violence requires quality leadership and role modelling to facilitate strategy implementation and sustained change, together with Sacred Heart

School's whole-school community approach that is consistent with the Catholic Education Office of Western Australia's Pastoral Care Framework, Sacred Heart School's Pastoral Care practices and Evangelisation Plan and which partners with parents and other agencies.

- 4.5 Bullying, harassment, aggression and violence may occur outside of Sacred Heart School. When these behaviours impact on a student's learning and behaviour in school, Sacred Heart School shall act to support the continued wellbeing of those involved.
- 4.6 All bullying, harassment, aggression and violence shall be responded to. When bullying, harassment, aggression and violence are ignored or overlooked, it serves to condone or reinforce the behaviour. Bystanders, (those who observe bullying) can encourage or assist those who bully simply by doing nothing.
- 4.7 While the aim is to promote and encourage positive behaviour our school policy and procedures shall contain clear statements regarding the range of appropriate consequences that may be applied for unacceptable behaviour. In looking at consequences relating to specific issues, we will consider other circumstances which may have bearing such as family or mental health matters.
- 4.8 All parties involved in incidents of bullying, harassment, aggression and violence are entitled to appropriate support.

5. PROCEDURES

- 5.1 Sacred Heart School shall develop a school-based policy on bullying, harassment, aggression and violence, based on a comprehensive risk and needs assessment, which includes:
 - 5.1.1 An expanded definition statement which states that the school shall not tolerate bullying, harassment, aggression and violence and which encourages all members of the school community to take a pro-active stance that promotes safety and wellbeing
 - 5.1.2 Examples of behaviours that are considered to be bullying, harassment, aggression and violence
 - 5.1.3 Specific statements relating to cybersafety including cyberbullying, cyber-harassment and sexting
 - 5.1.4 Statements of school and student rights and responsibilities in relation to safety issues (including cybersafety, bullying, harassment, aggression and violence) that occur outside of school hours and off school grounds that involve or affect students and staff
 - 5.1.5 Statements, and where possible, flowcharts defining and advising the responsibilities of each of the major parties to the policy, the Principal, staff, students, parents and families, and, encouraging help-seeking through designated staff members when bullying, harassment, aggression or violence is experienced or witnessed
 - 5.1.6 Sacred Heart School shall develop strategies and responses (including curricula, programs and pedagogy and, where our resources are limited, forming partnerships with parents, families and the wider community) to address:
 - the development of supportive environments, positive relationships and student connectedness to the school
 - social decision making and empowerment of students
 - skills in conflict resolution
 - promotion of tolerance and understanding, the encouragement of inclusion and the celebration of difference
 - acceptance of difference and a culture of cooperation, empathy and respect
 - the resolution of bullying incidents involving those who bully or aggress and those who are bullied or subject to aggression and which includes the early and appropriate involvement of parents

- the support and restoration to wellbeing of students who have been harmed by hurtful behaviour. This includes working with parents and families to assist in retaining a connectedness to school and facilitating reintegration in those whose attendance may have lapsed as a consequence of bullying, harassment, aggression or violence
- the improvement 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 to promote safety and wellbeing
- teaching and learning programs to support the strategies and promote good Citizenship skills in students, staff and parents

5.1.7 Sacred Heart School support systems that promote positive social health, mental health, safety and wellbeing

5.1.8 Sacred Heart School shall use reporting, recording and data collection procedures to be used when investigating incidents, as a basis to facilitate evaluation and justify any modification to approach, and to inform prevention and management activities

5.1.9 Sacred Heart School may use a case management model to be used when bullying, harassment, aggression or violent behaviours persist

5.1.10 Sacred Heart School will have a statement on appropriate confidentiality

5.2 The school-based policy shall be developed using a broad consultative and educative process involving students, staff, parents and families. The completed policy should refer to any other relevant policies or procedures and should be disseminated and promoted to the school community.

5.3 Sacred Heart School shall provide professional development and appropriate resourcing to meet the needs of their staff in implementing the school policy.

5.4 The policy developed by Sacred Heart School shall be monitored and regularly reviewed every 3 years or immediately following any incident that raises issues in respect to policy and practice.

- At the commencement of each year the Dealing with Bullying and Harassment (Students) Policy will be sent home via email to every family and staff member. The policy will also be posted on the Sacred Heart School website
- In the event of an incident the staff member on duty or the teacher in the classroom will record the incident involving bullying, harassment or violence using the **Reporting of an Incident by Teachers Form**.
- A member of the Leadership Team will interview the child reported for bullying behaviours which will include the following elements during the meeting:
 - the student is given the opportunity to tell his/her story,
 - during the discussion the student is encouraged to talk about his/her feelings, leading towards what appropriate actions they should have taken,
 - recommend strategies to be discussed and support for the student to be put in place to encourage positive behaviour, and
 - when necessary, bystanders are interviewed to confirm the child's story and actions.

- A member of the Leadership Team will record the interview in the Pastoral Care section of SEQTA. Parents notified of the incident.
- Duty staff will monitor children who have been identified with social or behavioural issues at recess and lunch times. They will feedback any observations to the Leadership Team.
- Parents are notified by the classroom teacher of a pattern of inappropriate behaviour and an interview will be arranged to discuss the modification of behaviour strategies to prevent the child escalating to bullying, harassment and violent behaviour.
- Interview with Parents, Teacher and Leadership Team Member for bullying/harassment incidents:
 - all parties involved will be encouraged to work collaboratively to address the child's inappropriate behaviour, and offer positive strategies the child will use in taking control of his/her own behaviour so as to become more self-disciplined.
 - the teacher, parents and the member of the Leadership Team will also make an appropriate decision regarding any further disciplinary action that may be necessary.
 - The minutes of the meeting will be recorded in SEQTA.
- The child who had bullying behaviours aimed at them, bystanders and the child displaying bullying behaviours will all receive appropriate counselling from the Social Worker if necessary, a teacher or a member of the Leadership Team, following the **Bullying Procedures Flow Chart**. The child, who the bullying behaviour was aimed at, will then be carefully monitored and supported in the classroom and in play areas. Any case of retaliation against a student for reporting bullying will be treated with the utmost severity.
- If the bullying is of a persistent nature, staff will discuss with the Principal and follow the procedures in the **Referral to Social Worker Flow Chart**. All parties will be interviewed and the incidents recorded by a member of the Leadership Team.
- The four major parties involved in the prevention of, and in dealing with cases of bullying, harassment or violence within the school (the Leadership Team, staff, students and parents) are to be made aware of their roles and responsibilities through:
 - Newsletters and notes sent home and to school through the Communication Books,
 - meetings with the classroom teacher,
 - classroom programs and appropriate duty of care carried out by all staff according to our Code of Conduct
 - whole school addresses by the Principal or a member of the Leadership Team at assemblies and other times as needed, and
 - staff meetings and professional development opportunities.
- In the management of sensitive information appropriate measures of confidentiality will be taken by those staff members involved in dealing with bullying, harassment or violent behaviour so as to protect the rights of both parties. In particular, there is a need to ensure that the child who had bullying behaviours directed at them does not become exposed to worse, or more frequent bullying behaviour, as a result of any incident already reported.
- Sacred Heart School will provide professional development to meet the needs of the staff in implementing this policy. Members of staff are also responsible to research current practice about what is effective when dealing with bullying, harassment and violence.
- Sacred Heart School will also provide, when possible, information for parents on important issues surrounding bullying, harassment and violence.
- This policy will be monitored and reviewed every three years or immediately following any incident that raises issues in respect to policy and practice.

6. REFERENCES

Rigby, K (2001). Stop the Bullying. A Handbook for Schools. ACER, Australia
 Curriculum Corporation (2000), Mind Matters, Commonwealth of Australia
 National Safe Schools Framework (2003) Curriculum Corporation

7. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia Policy 2-C4 Harassment, Discrimination and Bullying

Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia Policy 2-D3 Child Abuse

Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia Policy 2-D8 Management of Confidential Information in Schools

Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia Policy 2-D7 Exclusion of Students for Disciplinary Reasons

Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, Framework for the Development of Pastoral Care in Catholic Schools (2007)

Framework for Schools Dealing with Bullying Available on request:

- Sample School-based Policy on Bullying and Harassment. Available on request. Note that given the school-specific nature of these issues, this is not a pro-forma policy
- Friendly Schools and Families (Acerpress)
- The National Safe Schools Framework

8. REVIEW HISTORY

Year of Review:	Reviewed by:	Amendments/Review
1993	Working Party	Originally Released
1998	CEOWA Writing Group	Reviewed
2008	CEOWA Writing Group	Reviewed
2010	CEOWA	Reformatted (Review postponed)
2011	CEOWA	Ongoing to 2012

SACRED HEART SCHOOL

Year of Review:	Reviewed by:	Amendments/Review
2002	Staff & Parents	Originally Released
2005	Staff & Parents	Reviewed
2009	Staff & Parents	Reviewed
2010	Staff & Parents	Reformatted
2011	Staff & Parents	Reviewed
2012	Staff & Parents	Reviewed
2016	Staff	To be reviewed at end of PAVE
2019	Staff	To be reviewed after first year of assessing with SEW (ACER)

9. NEXT REVIEW

Year:	CEOWA Standing Committee Responsibilities
2017	School Personnel Committee

ACTION PLAN FOR BULLYING/HARASSMENT INCIDENT

Child/ren upset / having a disagreement

REFERRAL TO SOCIAL WORKER FLOW CHART

Children need help with conflict resolution at step 2a. of Bullying Procedures Flow Chart or another situation.

