

# Anti-Bullying Schools Policy



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Discipline Policy

# Catholic Education Diocese of Wagga Wagga

## Anti-Bullying Policy

### 1.0 Rationale

This policy provides a framework for school communities to work together to prevent and address issues of student bullying, in order to build respectful relationships that respond effectively and sensitively to the needs of each person.

A caring and supportive school culture that promotes positive relationships and reflects Gospel teachings is best equipped to prevent and respond to incidents of bullying, inappropriate use of technology and disrespectful behaviour in schools. Bullying and cyber-bullying disregard core values of the Catholic faith including dignity, respect, justice, equity, compassion, trust and courage. Bullying, including cyber-bullying, can adversely affect the wellbeing of students (bully, victim and bystanders) and is therefore unacceptable.

### 2.0 Guiding Principles

- 2.1. Each person is created in the image and likeness of God.
- 2.2. The dignity of every member of the school community is respected.
- 2.3. Bullying in any form is unacceptable behaviour in any CEDWW school.
- 2.4. All partners in Catholic education share a collective responsibility to identify and address bullying behaviour.
- 2.5. Parents/caregivers have an integral role to play in the prevention and resolution of bullying.
- 2.6. Explicit instruction on the school's policy and procedures for dealing with incidents of bullying is essential.
- 2.7. Effective record-keeping is a crucial and expected component of a school's response to the issue of bullying.
- 2.8. Where appropriate, schools should collaborate with outside agencies on matters concerning bullying, to the extent necessary and permitted by law to resolve the matter. Including making mandatory reports when required.

### 3.0 Policy

- 3.1. The Principal will ensure that the school has appropriate procedures and training in place to regulate a safe and supportive school environment and that these procedures are regularly monitored.
- 3.2. All incidents of bullying must be responded to in a timely manner and that ongoing review and monitoring occurs.
- 3.3. Each school will have, and enforce, responsible use of technology guidelines.
- 3.4. The Principal will provide regular opportunities for all school staff to be trained to recognise and respond effectively to bullying.

- 3.5. Anti-bullying training and familiarisation with the school's procedures are to be addressed in new staff and student induction processes.
- 3.6. School staff will regularly review their procedures for identifying and responding to bullying.
- 3.7. Records of incidents of bullying will be kept systematically by the school and regularly analysed to identify patterns and proactively support student wellbeing.
- 3.8. Students will receive regular explicit instruction on the school's procedures dealing with incidents of bullying.
- 3.9. Students will be educated on the meaning and application of this policy through the school's procedures at an age-appropriate level.
- 3.10. Parents/caregivers will receive regular advice on the existence of the school's procedures for dealing with incidents of bullying, and details on how they can access assistance if they have concerns in relation to bullying.
- 3.11. This Anti-Bullying Policy and school procedures will be placed on the school website.

## **4.0 Procedures**

### **4.1. Scope**

The school's student Anti-Bullying Procedures covers the behaviour of students, whether as individuals or collectively.

Where the school becomes aware of serious out-of-school hours bullying and cyber-bullying that is outside the scope of this policy and the school's procedures, it should report the matter to parents/caregivers, the police or other appropriate authority (such as the eSafety Commissioner).

### **4.2. Education Program**

Schools will ensure that there is ongoing education of students on the issues associated with bullying, including cyber-bullying, and that students are regularly reminded of the school's anti-bullying procedures. A recommended list of resources can be found at the end of this document

### **4.3. School-Based Procedures**

Each school will have its own plans, processes and procedures for implementing practices that build a safe and supportive learning and teaching environment that aims to reduce or minimise bullying incidents. Each school will include statements defining bullying, outlines of how to make a complaint, and will provide details on how to access counsellors and support services.

Students should regularly be 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 cyberbullying incident, and to follow the school's processes to ensure their safety and that of others.

#### **4.4. Responding**

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. This is clearly outlined in CEDWW's Complaints Handling Policy.

When assessing an appropriate response to potentially criminal acts, or alleged acts, strong consideration must be given to advice provided by NSW police. In some matters, Police advice must be sought and a mandatory report made.

#### **4.5. Reporting**

It is important that schools have systems to ensure that appropriate people (including year coordinators, home room teachers, class teachers, counsellors and support people) are aware of cases of bullying, so that students can be properly supported.

Students, parents, caregivers and members of the wider school community wishing to raise a complaint of bullying should in the first instance do so by first speaking to the homeroom or class teacher and/or the school Principal or member of the Leadership Team.

Parents/caregivers should be advised of bullying that has involved their children.

If the matter is not able to be resolved in a satisfactory manner then it can be escalated by following CEDWW's *Complaints Handling Policy*. As outlined by the policy, all complaints will be treated seriously, dealt with as soon as practicable and conducted in a fair, impartial and professional manner.

The Police Youth Liaison Officer may need to be advised of a significant bullying situation involving violence, threat of harm or alleged criminal conduct. NSW Department of Communities and Justice need to be notified when an incident involving manufacturing, possessing or distribution of child pornography has occurred.

#### **4.6. Record-Keeping**

Records of incidents of bullying and interventions are to be kept systematically by the school and regularly analysed to identify patterns, perpetrators and trends. These incidents should be communicated to relevant staff, maintaining confidentiality as appropriate.

#### **4.7. System Processes**

Where students are relocated to another school under the Suspension, Transfer and Exclusion Policy (September 2020), schools are entitled to, and should be provided with, the relevant student history such as violent behaviour, bullying, harassment, intimidation and/or threatening behaviour.

## 5.0 Explanatory Notes/definitions

### 5.1. Bullying

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.

Bullying can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and all forms of harassment including that based on sex, race, disability, sexual orientation or practice of religion. Bullying of any form, or for any reason, can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.

Bullying can happen anywhere: at school, travelling to and from school, in sporting teams, between neighbours, or in the workplace.

Bullying behaviour can be:

- verbal, e.g. repeated name calling, teasing, abuse, putdowns, sarcasm, insults, threats
- physical, e.g. repeated hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting
- social, e.g. repeated ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating, making inappropriate gestures
- psychological, e.g. repeated spreading rumours, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions, malicious SMS and email messages, inappropriate use of camera phones.

Conflict or fights between equals and single incidents are not defined as bullying. Bullying behaviour is not:

- children not getting along well
- a situation of mutual conflict
- single episodes of nastiness or random acts of aggression or intimidation.

### 5.2. Cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying involves the use of any information communication technology by an individual or group to carry out deliberate, isolated or repeatedly hostile behaviour that is intended to harm others, or is undertaken recklessly without concern for its impact on others.

### 5.3. Safe Environment and Duty of Care

A safe environment for students is one where the risk of harm is minimised and students feel secure. 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.

Schools and their teaching staff have a duty to take reasonable care for the safety and wellbeing of students while students are at school or are involved in a school activity. They have a duty of care to be able to foresee possible harms that might arise and take reasonable preventative measures.

#### 5.4. **NSW Police**

The Police Local Area Command (LAC) appoints a Schools Liaison Officer to schools. The Liaison Officer can provide advice on a wide range of areas associated with bullying. These could include understanding the best ways to address instances of bullying from the perspective of legal or criminal processes, or provide general advice on the burden of proof required for a bullying matter to be progressed through the legal system. Schools have a reciprocal obligation as responsible corporate citizens to provide the police with any relevant information they have on community members engaged in matters of interest to the police. Schools should keep in regular contact with their Schools Liaison Officer.

#### 5.5. **Parents/Caregivers**

For the purposes of this policy, a parent is deemed to be any biological parent, adoptive parent, or person who is formally the primary caregiver for a student enrolled in a systemic Catholic school in the Diocese of Wagga Wagga.

#### 5.6. **Student Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy**

Each school will implement the CEDWW [Student Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy](#) (2021)

## 6.0 **Supporting Documents**

- [Student Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy](#)
- [Suspension, Transfer and Exclusion Policy 2020](#)
- [Complaints Handling Policy 2020](#)

## 7.0 **Recommended School Based Resources**

### [Bullying No Way!](#) -

Supporting school communities with evidence-informed resources and activities for a proactive approach to bullying education and prevention.

### [Bully Stoppers](#)

(Victoria State Government Education & Training)- Bully Stoppers supports teachers, principals, parents and students in working together to help put a stop to bullying.

[Kids Helpline](#) - Bullying [Kids](#) [Teens](#) [Young Adults](#) [Parents](#)

Cyberbullying [Kids](#) [Teens](#) [Young Adults](#) [Parents](#)

[The Bully Project](#) for older students, schools and parents

[Reach Out](#) resources for classroom, parents/carers and students

[Best Practice Framework for Online Safety Education](#)

