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## STUDENT ANTI-HARASSMENT AND BULLYING POLICY

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### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 At St Catherine's School, we value the uniqueness and worth of each individual. We value the cultural richness within the School community and aim to develop an understanding and acceptance of difference.
- 1.2 Bullying and harassment of any kind are inconsistent with the values of our School and will not be tolerated.
- 1.3 It is not acceptable for any student to experience bullying within the learning and social environment of the school.
- 1.4 In rejecting bullying and harassment, the school is committed to the development and the reinforcement of a culture of positive behaviour, respect and tolerance.

### 2. Principles

- 2.1 The school rejects all forms of bullying and takes a zero tolerance stance in response to bullying wherever and whenever it occurs within the school community.
- 2.2 The school believes that, in order to reduce and eliminate bullying behaviour, it is essential to create a culture of positive behaviour, respect and tolerance.
- 2.3 Underpinning the school's zero tolerance stance in response to bullying is a belief that all students, no matter what their background, race, ethnicity, gender, physical and intellectual attributes, are to be valued and respected.
- 2.4 The school is committed to the importance of students both being and feeling safe within the school.
- 2.5 The school, in discharging its duty of care, understands that it has a responsibility to enable students to flourish in relation to their emotional, mental and physical health.

### 3. Scope

- 3.1 All members of our School community have the right to:
  - a. learn in a safe and caring environment where they are able to speak out and receive support;
  - b. be treated fairly and with respect in person and online;
  - c. expect that personal property will be respected;



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## STUDENT ANTI-HARASSMENT AND BULLYING POLICY

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3.2 All members of our School community have the responsibility to:

- a. Contribute positively to the teaching and learning environment;
- b. Treat others fairly and with respect;
- c. Take care of personal property, and seek permission if wishing to use someone else's property;
- d. Respect school property.

3.3 This policy relates specifically to student behaviour and applies to all students enrolled at St Catherine's School. The application of the policy is relevant to the governing board, principal, to school staff, students and parents.

### 4. Definitions

#### 4.1 [Bullying]:

[Bullying is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening. Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records).

#### 4.2 [Covert Bullying]:

[Covert bullying can include hand gestures and threatening looks, whispering, excluding or turning your back on a person, restricting where a person can sit and who they can talk with. Social bullying (spreading rumours, manipulation of relationships, excluding, isolating) is often covert bullying.]

#### 4.3 [Cyber Bullying]:

[Cyberbullying includes any form of bullying behaviour that occurs online or via a mobile device. It can be verbal or written, and can include threats of violence as well as images, videos and/or audio.]

#### 4.4 [Physical Bullying]:

[Physical bullying includes hitting, pushing, shoving or intimidating or otherwise physically hurting another person, damaging or stealing their belongings. It includes threats of violence.]

#### 4.5 [Social Bullying]:

[This is sometimes called relational or emotional bullying, and includes deliberately excluding someone, spreading rumours, sharing information that will have a harmful effect on the other person and/or damaging a person's social reputation or social acceptance]



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## STUDENT ANTI-HARASSMENT AND BULLYING POLICY

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### 4.6 [Verbal and written bullying]:

Verbal and written bullying includes name-calling or insulting someone about an attribute, quality or personal characteristic.]

4.2 [Harassment]: [The exertion of power by one person over another – often presenting in bullyish behaviour which makes another person feel embarrassed, offended, upset, devalued, degraded, afraid, frustrated or angry. It is unwelcome, unreciprocated, uninvited and usually repeated]

## 5. Aims of the policy

5.1 To set out the school's clear expectations in relation to positive student behaviour and in so doing to define what constitutes unacceptable bullying behaviour.

5.2 To support the school and its employees, parents and students themselves in creating a climate characterised by respectful and positive relationships.

5.3 To comply with the requirements of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.), to implement anti-bullying (including cyberbullying) and harassment strategies and procedures as part of the school's responsibility to provide a safe environment where the risk of harm is minimised and students feel physically and emotionally secure.

## 6. Policy Statement

### What is bullying?

6.1 Bullying is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening. Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records).

### Types of Bullying Behaviour

6.2 The following behaviours constitute bullying:

- a. **verbal or written abuse** - such as targeted name-calling or jokes, or displaying offensive posters
- b. **violence** - including threats of violence
- c. **sexual harassment** - unwelcome or unreciprocated conduct of a sexual nature, which could reasonably be expected to cause offence, humiliation or intimidation



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## STUDENT ANTI-HARASSMENT AND BULLYING POLICY

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- d. **homophobia** and other hostile behaviour towards students relating to gender and sexuality
- e. **discrimination including racial discrimination** - treating people differently because of their identity
- f. **cyberbullying** is bullying using digital technologies, including mobile phones, email and social media tools.

6.2.1 Students involved in bullying do so by playing a number of different **roles**:

- a. Engaging directly in bullying behaviour or assisting and actively joining in.
- b. Encouraging the bullying behaviour by giving, for example, silent approval, by smiling, by laughing or by making comments
- c. Standing by silently and passively, doing nothing when knowing or seeing bullying behaviour.

### What is not Bullying?

6.3 Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying. There are also some behaviours, which, although they might be unpleasant or distressing, are not bullying:

- a. **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.
- b. **single-episode acts** of nastiness or physical aggression, or aggression directed towards many different people, is not bullying
- c. **social rejection or dislike** is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

6.3.1 However, these conflicts will be addressed by the School's Student Behaviour Management Policy

### 6.4 If an individual is bullied:

Bullying of any form or for any reason can have immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.

- a. They might feel frightened, unsafe, embarrassed, angry or unfairly treated
- b. Work, sleep and their ability to concentrate may suffer
- c. Relationships with family and friends may deteriorate
- d. They may feel confused and not know what to do about the problem.

### Our approach to Bullying

6.5 St Catherine's School has a zero tolerance for bullying behaviours.



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## STUDENT ANTI-HARASSMENT AND BULLYING POLICY

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- a. No form of Bullying is acceptable, including cyber bullying;
- b. Everyone within the School community should be alert to signs and evidence of bullying and has a responsibility to report it to staff as an observer or victim;
- c. No parent or student is to deal with a bully directly. School procedures must be followed;
- d. The School curriculum will address issues related to bullying within in a supportive framework, e.g. as part of class discussions, in Health and Personal Development and in the Wellbeing Program. Strategies for independently solving problems will be explored;
- e. All reported incidents of bullying will be followed up;
- f. All facts will be clearly established by taking separate accounts from victims, bullies and witnesses;
- g. Comfort and support will be offered to victims;
- h. Bullies will be confronted with the seriousness of the offence and will also be offered support;
- i. Responses are based on the understanding that children and young people are in the process of learning how to be a member of the school and wider community;
- j. If bullying continues parents will be contacted and consequences consistent with the School's Behaviour Management Policy implemented.

6.5.1 It is important to note that as part of community living, there will be times when students annoy each other. Not all conflict is bullying. All students will be empowered to deal with unacceptable, low level behaviour with the following strategies listed below.

6.5.2 From time to time, differences do develop between our students, as they negotiate the need to share and spend time together.

### **Strategies for Managing Conflict**

6.6 The strategies that we advocate are as follows:

- a. Use own words (explain how the other person's actions make you feel and ask them to stop)
- b. Walk away from the situation and associate with someone else
- c. Find a teacher or older student to help you negotiate or sort out the issue.

### **Prevention of Bullying at St Catherine's School**

6.7 The School understands that reporting incidents of bullying is essential for the preservation of a safe environment for all.



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## STUDENT ANTI-HARASSMENT AND BULLYING POLICY

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### 6.8 Role of staff:

1. Model appropriate behaviours and emphasise the equal rights of all members of the School community. Encourage sensitivity towards diversity of individuals, culture and ideas in both the academic curriculum and in interpersonal relationships
2. Encourage students to be a positive resource in countering bullying and harassment in general and to take time to discuss the issues
3. Make efforts to remove occasions for bullying through active supervision of school grounds at breaks and before and after school
4. Watch for change in behaviour in students
5. Report suspected incidents to the Head of Year, Deputy Principal: Student Wellbeing, Head of Junior School, Head of ELC, or the School Counsellor, who will follow designated procedures
6. Take steps to help people who have been bullied and remove sources of distress without placing the individual at further risk.

### 6.9 Role of students

1. To behave in a considerate, courteous manner to all members of the School community
2. If present as an observer or as the student experiencing the bullying, the incident should be reported to a staff member, e.g. Class or House Tutor, Head of Year, School Counsellor, Deputy Principal: Student Wellbeing, or another staff member with whom they feel comfortable
3. If appropriate, the observer should attempt to take some form of preventative action such as alerting a staff member, asking for the behaviour to stop or helping to remove the individual from the situation.

### 6.10 Role of parents

1. Watch for changes in behaviour and signs of distress in their daughter, e.g. Unwillingness to attend School, a pattern of headaches or stomach aches, emotional mood swings, withdrawal from peer group, not sleeping, requests for extra pocket money, damaged possessions or clothing, bruising;
2. The signs of possible bullying online can be the same as signs of other bullying, but include other behaviours with phones and computers, for example:
  1. being hesitant about going online
  2. seeming nervous when an instant message, text message or email appears
  3. being visibly upset after using the computer or mobile phone, or suddenly avoiding it





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## STUDENT ANTI-HARASSMENT AND BULLYING POLICY

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4. closes the screen, or hides the mobile phone when others enter the room
5. spending unusually long hours online in a more tense, pensive tone
6. receiving suspicious phone calls, emails or packages.

*(Parents should note that some changes in behaviour may also be a result of other student issues which may require a different response. Parents are advised to contact the Head of Year Level, the School Counsellor or the Deputy Principal: Student Wellbeing if they have a concern.)*

3. Encourage their daughter to talk freely;
4. Take an interest in their daughter's social life, acquaintances and online interactions. It is important to note that the School cannot monitor student use of private social media platforms, so it is imperative that parents have an awareness of their child's online behaviour and connections;
5. Encourage their daughter to talk to a teacher with whom she feels comfortable;
6. Inform the School if they believe their daughter, or another student, is being bullied or harassed;
7. Be willing to attend interviews at School if their daughter is involved in any bullying incident and support the School policy against bullying/harassment;
8. Treat all members of the community fairly and with respect.

### **Procedure for Managing Bullying**

- 6.11 Persons involved in a bullying incident (e.g. alleged victim, bully, observer(s)) will be required to describe the alleged incident and its context by interview and/or written report to a staff member;
- 6.12 Following this initial investigation and depending on the nature and severity of the allegation, a fair resolution process will be implemented using one of the ['Six Methods of Intervention'](#) recommended by Bully Stoppers;
- 6.13 A range of responses may be employed; follow up interviews with a staff member, parental contact, mediation, application of sanctions such as restitution, withdrawal from an activity, detention, suspension or withdrawal from School for serious or repeated offences;
- 6.14 Reports of bullying or harassment will be recorded confidentially in the Pastoral Records on the Schoolbox online management system. This enables the collection of aggregated data, in addition to questions relating to bullying on school surveys;
- 6.15 The School Counsellor is available to help individuals deal with bullying and other associated issues;



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## STUDENT ANTI-HARASSMENT AND BULLYING POLICY

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- 6.16 Any case of retaliation against a person for reporting bullying will be treated very seriously;
- 6.17 Serious cases of cyber bullying may be reported to the Office of the e-Safety Commissioner unless a suitable resolution is reached.

### 7. Responsibility

- 7.1 All members of the School Community must make a commitment to safety and the provision of a supportive school environment. All students and staff are required to adhere to the School's expectations regarding respect and behaviour. All teachers take a responsibility for supporting this policy and to act upon, report or seek guidance from Senior Staff when they become aware of an incident or harassment is reported. The Grievance Policy outlines the complaints procedure if the school's response to a bullying incident is thought to have been inadequate or unsatisfactory.

### 8. Compliance requirements

#### 8.1 Federal

- a. Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- b. Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) Act 1986
- c. Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- d. Racial Hatred Act 1995
- e. Sex Discrimination Act 1984.

#### 8.2 State

- a. Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- b. Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001
- c. Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
- d. Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.) and the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007 (Vic).
- e. Duty of Care
- f. Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.)
- g. Education and Training Reform Regulations (2007)
- h. Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) Minimum Standards

### 9. Associated Documents

- a. St Catherine's School Community Code of Conduct
- b. St Catherine's School Student Behaviour Management Policy
- c. St Catherine's School ICT Users' Policy
- d. St Catherine's School Acceptable Use of Technology Agreement
- e. St Catherine's School Remote Learning Code of Conduct
- f. Department of Education: Advice to Parents: *Bully Stoppers Parents Advice*  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/parents.aspx>
- g. Department of Education Parent advice – Cyber Bullying -  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/advicecyberbully.aspx>
- h. Department of Education 'Method of Concern'  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/methodconcern.aspx>
- i. Bullying No Way <https://bullyingnoway.gov.au>

Office of the e-safety Commissioner <https://www.esafety.gov.au/>