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## **Student Bullying and Harassment Policy**

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| <b>Effective Date</b>            | September 2018  |
| <b>Review (Date &amp; Staff)</b> | September 2020  |
| <b>Associated Documents</b>      | Pastoral Care Policy<br>Welfare and Discipline Policy |

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### **What is Bullying?**

Bullying is the deliberate intention to harm someone who does not have the power to stop it.

- Bullying, harassment or any form of discrimination, is immoral and can be unlawful because it interferes with the right of a person to feel safe and valued as a member of a community.
- Bullying takes many forms. It can be:
  - Face-to-face such as fighting, pushing, taunting, insulting, embarrassing, intimidating and invading personal space, AND Behind-the-back such as writing threatening or offensive messages, sending distressing emails and writing anonymous notes that are hurtful.
  - Done individually such as a person mocking or teasing someone, AND It can be done as a group by such means as social exclusion or hate group recruitment.
  - Physical, AND Psychological.
  - Sexual harassment which involves behaviours such as unwanted sexual touching, inappropriate joking, exposure, making sexual advances or demeaning someone due to their sexual orientation, AND Racial harassment which involves behaviours such as social exclusion, teasing, taunting and threats based on another person's race.
  - The causing of hurt by traditional methods such as punching, kicking and spreading hurtful rumours, AND The causing of hurt by contemporary means such as cyber bullying, sexting, engaging in identity theft or by trashing someone on social networking sites.

### **The key features of bullying are that it:**

- causes hurt and distress,
- is repeated,
- involves the use of power in an unfair way.

Bullying need not always be done by the older or stronger. "Bullying up" is bullying done by the smaller, the younger and the weaker, who either use anonymous means to bully, such as cyber bullying, or overt means to bully, knowing that any retaliation would make the provoked person look like they are the bully.

### **Symptoms of Bullying**

For behaviour to be classified as bullying, it needs to involve repeated actions that are designed to cause hurt. Not having friends or not being popular isn't necessarily a sign that a person is being bullied. It may simply mean a person lacks interpersonal skills. There is a difference between bullying behaviour and what can be described as normal interpersonal conflict.

The symptoms associated with bullying include, but are not limited to; not wanting to go to school, anger, tears, depression, low self-esteem and a raft of psychosomatic symptoms such as

headaches and stomach aches. Bedwetting and sleeplessness can also be symptoms of bullying, particularly in the young. Withdrawal and reluctance to 'join in' can be a warning sign, as can truancy, misbehaviour and aggressive behaviour. Cuts, bruising, torn clothing, requests for extra food or money as well as a decline in academic performance can also be clues that a student may be suffering from bullying.

## **Cyber Bullying**

Cyber bullying is causing hurt via modern technologies such as the Internet and other forms of social media, and through the use of smartphones and other mobile devices.

Cyber bullying is a growing problem in society. Modern technologies empower the individual, even the most unlikely of individuals, with an immense capacity to cause harm. It is also an attractive means of bullying for it can, under certain conditions, be carried out with relative anonymity.

Cyber bullying can be particularly damaging because of the capacity it has to humiliate, hurt and harm a person in front of a huge 'audience'.

A dangerous feature of cyber bullying is that it can be done quickly and easily. On an impulse, a person can create emotional havoc for another and do so before the voice of reason hints at the inappropriateness of the action.

A further problem with cyber bullying is that the bully is often unaware of the extent of the harm they are causing because cyber bullying seldom occurs face-to-face. The feedback is muted by distance so that the bully is protected from an understanding of the awfulness of their behaviour.

Cyber bullying represents unlawful activity that may result in police laying charges. Cyber bullying has been linked to depression, self-harm and even suicide.

### **Examples of Cyberbullying:**

- Sending hateful or threatening comments or pictures via MSN, mobile phone or the Internet and by social networking sites.
- Using modern technologies to engage in the social exclusion of someone and in hate group recruitment.
- Posting rude, explicit or embarrassing messages or pictures about someone on the Net.
- Stealing someone's identity in order to harm them in some way.
- Putting pressure on a person to send revealing or compromising pictures of themselves.
- Covertly filming, recording or taking a picture of someone and posting the images on the Net to cause hurt.
- 'Outing' and disseminating confidential information about someone.
- 'Flaming' and multi-messaging to clog up a person's electronic system and to cause them distress.
- Using aliases and pseudonyms in chat rooms and on social networking sites in order to harass and upset.
- Engaging in cyber-stalking and the invading of privacy.
- Referring to your school in a negative or disparaging way on the Net.

### **Sexting**

Another expression of cyber bullying is sexting.

Sexting is taking sexually explicit photos and making them available for others to see via a carriage service such as mobile phone or computer.

Sending explicit images of anyone, including yourself, is a crime if you are under the age of 18

years. If the person in the picture is under 16 years, it can be a very serious crime resulting in charges of paedophilia.

### **Cyber anonymity**

Students need to remember that something sent electronically can never be entirely removed even with a press of the 'delete' button. The image may emerge at any stage in their future life and lead to serious consequences.

Using pseudonyms, passwords and avatars does not protect the identity of a cyber bully. Technologies exist to identify those who misuse modern technologies to harm others.

**Do not engage in cyberbullying. Do not post any image or comment that is designed to cause hurt. It is morally wrong and in many cases, it is also illegal.**

**Students need to remember that something sent electronically can never be entirely removed even with a press of the 'delete' button.**

It should also be noted that even if cyber bullying is engaged in while not at school, the matter will be taken up by the School because the moral welfare of its students is of importance to the College as is anything that brings the School into disrepute.

### **Students can protect themselves from some forms of cyber harm by noting the following advice:**

1. Never tell anyone, even your friends, your passwords, private details or access codes.
2. When speaking to someone you do not know on the Net, be aware they may not be who they say they are.
3. Be aware that there are predators who use the internet to lure young people into inappropriate sexual relationships. Others use tricks, such as pretending to be a bank, to get the victim to share their confidential financial details. This usually results in identity fraud and the stealing of money.
4. Never tell people you do not know well what your address is, or how they can meet up with you.
5. Always be careful what you say or what you show a person in confidence on the Net for it is never guaranteed to remain confidential. The information may be sent on to others.
6. Know that the most frequent use of the Net is for illegal activities such as scams, pornography and gambling.

Finally, if you find yourself the victim of cyberbullying, keep the evidence and report the bullying to an appropriate adult. It is generally best not to respond to the cyber bully, or give them any satisfaction they have caused you hurt. If you do respond to the bully, do not do so while hot with anger. This can result in mutual cyber bullying which means both parties become guilty of bullying.

**One's "digital footprint" may be accessed many years after material is posted online and used by others, eg. prospective employers and the media.**

### **How does the College discourage bullying?**

Bullying is totally against the mission and purpose of the College.

The College is committed to providing an educational environment in which students feel valued and secure. To achieve this end, the College will seek to create a school-wide culture that:

- Allows students to flourish free from discrimination, harassment or any form of bullying.
- Does not tolerate, condone or trivialise bullying behaviours.
- Is aware of what constitutes bullying behaviour.

- Conducts an annual bullying survey that is compulsory for all students to complete.
- Provides all students with the opportunity to report events anonymously.
- Supports the National Day of Action (Bullying; No Way!)
- Provides support to the victims of bullying.
- Deals firmly with bullies so that they either stop their bullying or leave the College.

The methods used by the College to discourage bullying will vary from time-to-time, with new initiatives being introduced when thought appropriate. The measures that have been used to discourage bullying at St Joseph's College include, but are not limited to:

- Employing a suitable range of sanctions to deal with and may discourage bullies. These sanctions include suspension and expulsion.
- Putting up signage about the College to promote a bully-free environment.
- Printing anti-bullying policies in student diaries and on the College's website.
- Promoting a bully-free environment in assemblies and Year level meetings.
- Promoting a bully-free environment in the staff handbook, in College policy documents.
- Promoting a bully-free environment in PDHPE classes.
- Undertaking confidential Year-level surveys of student well-being and bullying behaviour and following up on identified bullies and victims.
- Ensuring effective pastoral support for students through the appointment of Year-level Coordinators.
- Employing a school counsellor who has specialist skills in helping both victims of bullying and identified bullies.
- Training staff to detect bullying behaviours.
- Encouraging staff to adopt classroom management techniques that discourage opportunities for bullying behaviours.
- Encouraging staff to model tolerance, empathy and acceptance of individual differences.
- Encouraging staff to take their supervision duties seriously so that there is a pervasive sense of staff presence when on duty.
- Reviewing the School's anti-bullying policy from time-to-time, in order to ensure that it remains effective and relevant.

If you are being bullied, it is important that you talk to an adult who is in a position to help you.

There can be a reluctance to report bullying because of a fear of being labelled a 'dobber' and going against an unwritten code of student behaviour. This concern is understandable but must not prevent you from reporting bullying behaviour. Most students dislike bullying and would support your attempts to stop it.

Some students may not want to report bullying because they feel it might only make matters worse. Again, this fear is understandable, but most teachers are trained in ways to help victims of bullying in a manner that protects the victim.

**It can take courage to challenge the bully, to expose them for who they are and to play a part in improving our community by ridding it of bullying behaviour. The College expects its students to show this courage and not tolerate bullying as a bystander or as a victim.**

**If you are being bullied, you must tell a responsible adult who has the capacity to help. Options include:**

- Parents, guardian or adult relatives.
- Teacher, Year Coordinator.
- Counsellor.
- Principal, Deputy Principal, Welfare Coordinator.

If needed, further help can be obtained from:

- Kids Helpline – 1800 551 800
- Lifeline – 131 114
- Salvo Youth Line – 9360 3000
- Websites:
  - [www.bullyingnoway.com.au](http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au)
  - [www.kidshelp.com.au](http://www.kidshelp.com.au)

To report cyberbullying:

- [www.esafety.gov.au](http://www.esafety.gov.au)

**It can take courage to challenge the bully, to expose them for who they are and to play a part in improving our community by ridding it of bullying behaviour.**

### **REMEMBER**

St Joseph's College is committed to providing a safe and happy learning environment. Therefore, the College will be pleased to know if there are any bullying behaviours that are undermining this goal.