



# ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

## SCRIPTURAL CONTEXT

*“And now I give you a new commandment: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”*

*John 13:34*

## STATEMENT OF SCHOOL POLICY

At St Patrick’s School the dignity of the human person is the foundation of all Catholic social teaching and intrinsic to our education ministry. Consequently, the principle that the person is made in the image and likeness of God, is central to the mission of our parish school. This policy identifies the interconnectedness of the characteristics of quality Catholic learning and teaching and is intended to value, respect and promote the self-esteem and dignity of each student. The school will actively promote anti-bullying messages alerting students and staff of the need to be vigilant.

## SCOPE OF THE POLICY

It is essential that we create and maintain a respectful, safe and supportive learning environment that promotes student wellbeing and enables the school to engage a diverse range of learners including those with a disability.

This Anti-Bullying policy supports the school’s Mission and Vision Statements and Catholic Education in the Diocese of Lismore, The Mission of Jesus Christ Foundational Values.

The Diocesan approved poster resource is included in this policy, Nine Elements for a Parish School Approach to Wellbeing and is based on the National Safe Schools Framework. This poster helps to locate bullying issues within a wider pastoral care context.

This policy covers the bullying of students with disabilities. Disabled children and young people enrolled at St Patrick’s School need:

- To know they have the right to be safe from bullying. They need to know what bullying is, how to keep safe and what to do if adults do not do enough to stop the bullying
- To be involved in the development and review of school anti-bullying policies
- All children and young people need to know what to do to help stop a disabled child or disabled young person being bullied

At St Patrick’s School we expect that learning technologies are used ethically and responsibly in the school environment, so that communication is respectful and human dignity valued. The prevention of and responses to incidents of bullying, inappropriate use of technology and disrespectful behaviour is more readily achieved in a caring and supportive school culture that promotes positive relationships and reflects Gospel values. Bullying, cyber-bullying, harassment, aggression and violence disregard core values of our faith including dignity, respect, justice, equity, compassion, trust and courage. Importantly, such actions can adversely affect the wellbeing of our students and are therefore unacceptable.

All members of this school community are expected to prevent and challenge such actions in order to build respectful relationships that respond effectively and sensitively to the needs of each student.

## CONTEXT

At St Patrick's School we define bullying as:

A pattern of repeated physical, verbal, psychological or social aggression that is directed towards a specific student by someone with more power or perceived power and is intended to cause harm, distress and/or create fear. Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term physical and psychological effects on those involved, including bystanders.

Bullying may be carried out overtly (e.g. face – to – face) or covertly (e.g. through repeated social exclusion or via technology). It is a sub-category of aggression and is different to, but also related to, harassment and violence. It is not the same as conflict or social dislike even though, in some cases, the outcome of both can be bullying.

The different types of bullying identified by the National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF) include:

Face-to-face bullying (sometimes referred to as direct bullying) involves physical actions such as punching or kicking or overt verbal actions such as name-calling and insulting.

Covert bullying (sometimes referred to as indirect bullying) is a subtle type of non-physical bullying which isn't easily seen by others and is conducted out of sight, and often unacknowledged by adults.

Cyber-bullying occurs through the use of information or communication technologies such as Instant Messaging, text messages, email and social networking sites. Cyber-bullying involves the use of any information and communication technology involving deliberate, isolated or repeatedly hostile behaviour by an individual or group, that is intended to harm others or is undertaken recklessly, without concern for its impact on others. By virtue of its nature, technology facilitates repeated access to harmful content. It has many similarities with offline bullying but it differs in that the student(s) who is/are bullying can be anonymous, it can reach a wide audience and the sent or uploaded material can be difficult to remove.

Most students who cyber bully also bully off-line. It is now recognised that many forms of covert bullying appear to have significant potential for serious harm.

This definition refers to the use of digital technologies which are very much a part of life and learning, because they offer such a wide range of tools and platforms for social and educational engagement. However, the risks of the digital environment must be acknowledged and constantly addressed. Being cyber safe and acting ethically when using electronic communications is the responsibility of all members of this school community.

At St Patrick's School a conflict between equals and single incidents are not defined as bullying although, of course, such incidents will require intervention by the school and are treated as serious.

## DUTY OF CARE AT ST PATRICK'S SCHOOL

Staff at this school must be aware of the possibility of bullying and take action to prevent bullying if it is reasonably foreseeable.

The school will take reasonable actions to develop plans and implement programs aimed at deterring bullying activities. At St Patrick's School the following anti-bullying plans and programs are mandatory:

- 1 Cyber Bullying
- 2 Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL)
- 3 Mini Vinnies & Student Parliament

Our Duty of Care means this Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures is disseminated as appropriate to members of the school community in both digital form on our website and in hard copy school policy documents.

If a serious criminal offence has been identified we will report this to the police. This is the principal's responsibility. Teachers are to contact the principal immediately when conduct such as stalking, destruction of property, threats to inflict serious injury and/or kill, physical and sexual assault, offensive behaviour, discrimination, cyber stalking, defamation, breach of privacy, hacking, sexting and creating or possessing and/or disseminating child pornography are brought to their attention. .

Teachers must be aware that in many instances, cyber-bullying can constitute criminal conduct, especially when the behaviour is seriously threatening, harassing or intimidating. Cyber bullying and highly inappropriate use of technology could include: child pornography, fraud, impersonation, or sending words or images that cause offence, distress, menace or threaten.

Our Duty of Care with bullying and related matters may in certain circumstances extend past the school hours of instruction. If unacceptable behaviour occurs that has a close nexus with the school or with the wellbeing of a child educated at the school but occurs outside school hours, off-site or through the use of a student's personal mobile devices and/or computer, we may still have an obligation to respond.

Therefore at St Patrick's School if staff become aware of such a circumstance they are obliged to bring the matter to the attention of the principal.

#### **AT ST PATRICK'S SCHOOL WE**

- Use an Anti-Bullying Response Pathway when we become aware of incidents. The Pathway assists with a regulated and thorough response. (Appendix A)
- Will keep a written record of any bullying investigation. (Appendix B)
- Want students, staff and parents/carers to report bullying and cyber-bullying to the homegroup teacher or directly to the principal.
- Will investigate complaints of bullying and cyber-bullying in a manner that respects the dignity and privacy of those involved.
- Will appoint a nominated person to coordinate strategies for the resolution of specific bullying incidents reported in this school.
- Will notify parents/carers of bullying incidents involving their children.
- Will notify the Police Youth Liaison Officer if the bullying situation has involved violence, threat of harm or alleged criminal conduct. Name of Police Youth Liaison Officer: Steve Jefferies. Macksville Police Station. 0265607799
- Will maintain records of bullying incidents and related interventions in accordance with the Catholic Schools Office Compliance manual. At our school the written record is kept in the Student Record Folder or Google Drive.
- Will survey students at least once a year on various matters and include questions about bullying, cyber bullying, safety and wellbeing.
- Will regularly review and evaluate this anti-bullying policy and the responsible use of technology procedures to ensure they are working effectively.
- Will involve parents in this review through communication at Parents and Friends Association meetings.
- Will purchase Anti-Bullying resources and support material for students, staff and parents and ensure easy access to this material for all staff, parents and students.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES: STAFF**

Staff at St Patrick's School aim to treat all members of the school community with dignity and respect and:

- Implement the student anti-bullying and Internet and Multimedia Devices Student Code of Practise by responding promptly and appropriately to reported incidents of bullying.
- Support the student anti-bullying and Internet and Multimedia Devices Student Code of Practise through positive modelling and the promotion of appropriate behaviour.
- Access professional learning to support appropriate anti-bullying responses which could include cyber safety, restorative justice practices, mediation and developing social skills in students. Such opportunities are made available to staff on the same basis as other professional learning.
- Support all aspects of related school policies.
- Remain vigilant in how students are using technology.
- Embed critical thinking, values clarification, respectful relationships and developing empathy into our teaching practice.
- Respond to bullying and cyber-bullying concerns by providing age appropriate guidance and boundaries so that students can learn to self-regulate.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES: STUDENTS**

Students have responsibilities as well. The staff at St Patrick's School will encourage and support students to:

- Follow the anti-bullying and Internet and Multimedia Devices Student Code of Practise Policies. Assist students from Kinder to Year 6 to understand what their signature means on use of technology documents.
- Immediately seek help from a trusted adult if they are aware of or involved in a bullying or cyberbullying incident.
- Seek support if bullied and refrain from retaliating in any bullying incident.
- Understand that any social networking site that identifies the school by name or image or implication is part of the school environment.
- In age appropriate circumstances the student should keep evidence of alleged bullying and produce it on request (for example phone text messages).

## **RESPONSIBILITIES: PARENT/CARERS**

Parents/carers have responsibilities as well. At St Patrick's School we will:

- Ensure that parents understand by completing the School Enrolment Application Form they are agreeing to the terms of responsible conduct.
- Request that parents notify the school promptly of all bullying situations involving their children.
- Remind parents about the need to reinforce the school messages in the proper use of technology to help children grow into ethical and responsible digital citizens.
- Encourage parents to report serious matters of out-of-school hours bullying and cyber-bullying to the Police or other appropriate authority (such as the Internet Service Provider) and, as relevant, to the school.

**REFLECTIVE MATERIALS:**

CSO Student Anti –Bullying Policy and Standard Operating Procedures (2015)

St Patricks Internet and Multimedia Devices Policy 2019

St Patrick’s Behaviour Management Policy

**LIST OF APPENDICES**

Appendix A: Anti-Bullying Response Pathway

Appendix B: Bullying Record Keeping and Investigation (electronic copy found in templates folder)

This policy was last ratified by St. Patrick’s School Board in... reviewed in...	December, 2006 May 2011, September 2012 September 2013, December 2015 October 2021
---	--

**1. Policy Access and awareness**

Policy on the schools website; articles and resources on bullying made available through newsletter and other means.

**2. Initial disclosure made, first response**

School becomes aware of an incident involving possible bullying. Physical contact stopped (if this involves physical action). Safe environment established for the victim.

**3. Life threatening incident or Risk of Significant Harm involved?**

Principal to complete the MRG - Mandatory Reporting Guide. If yes, Principal to inform relevant personnel (CSO, FACS). If no, move to 4.

**4. Information gathered on Bullying Record Keeping and Investigation form**

Completed by a staff member - copy to principal. Pay attention to repeated offences, intent to harm, imbalance of power. Once completed refer to the Behaviour Management Policy.

Appendix B

**Bullying Record Keeping and Investigation Tool**

---

Bullying is a serious offence and is not acceptable in our school. All school employees are required to report alleged violations and every act of bullying will be duly investigated, and parents/carers informed.

**Directions:**

The Bullying Record Keeping and Investigation Tool is to be used when an alleged bullying incident is reported. This document is to be confidentially maintained in accordance with the National Catholic Education Commission and National Council of Independent Schools' Associations Privacy Compliance Manual, December 2011. Upon completion, the Bullying Record Keeping and Investigation Tool is to be filed in the appropriate student records and the incident entered into the *electronic database*.

School: St Patrick's School, Macksville

Investigating Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Name / Homeroom of Students Involved: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Date/Time of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

**Was the incident life threatening or was the target a high-risk concern?**

**If Yes, immediately inform the principal, and as appropriate:**

Seek medical assistance	Inform parent/carers	Contact the police and/or school liaison police	Inform the Child Protection Helpline	Inform the Assistant Director, School Resources Services, CSO
-------------------------	----------------------	---	--------------------------------------	---

If the incident is not life threatening or the child is not a high-risk concern, continue completing this document.

If additional sheets are necessary, print the appropriate sections and attach to this form.

**1. Where did the incident occur? Please Tick:** ✓

On bus/transport		In playground		In classroom		Outside school		Other	
------------------	--	---------------	--	--------------	--	----------------	--	-------	--

**2. Who reported the alleged incident? Please Tick:**

The alleged victim(s)		Other student(s)		Parent/carer		Member of staff		Member of wider school community		Other	
-----------------------	--	------------------	--	--------------	--	-----------------	--	----------------------------------	--	-------	--

Describe the incident:

**3. Identify the nature of the alleged bullying incident: Please Tick:**

<b>Written</b> eg graffiti, notes, letters, writing on books, written threats, ridicule through drawings etc
<b>Social</b> eg lying, spreading rumours, playing a nasty joke, mimicking and deliberate exclusion etc
<b>Verbal</b> eg name calling, insults, threats, severe sarcasm, abusive comments, racist remarks etc
<b>Physical</b> eg pushing, shoving, fighting, tripping, hitting, poking, spitting etc
<b>Cyber</b> eg using technology such as email, mobile phones, chat rooms, social networking sites etc to verbally, socially or psychologically bully
<b>Psychological bullying</b> eg intimidation, manipulation and stalking
<b>Damage to property</b> eg theft of bags, clothes, money, property, tearing clothes, ripping books etc
<b>Accessory</b> A person who is able to help the target, who joins the bullying either willingly or inadvertently
<b>Bystander</b> Encouraging others to bully or deliberately witnessing bullying without taking affirmative action

**4. Is there evidence of an imbalance of power in this incident through either? Please Tick:**

Academic ability		Age		Social status		Strength		Size		Other	
------------------	--	-----	--	---------------	--	----------	--	------	--	-------	--

**5. Is there evidence that this behaviour was deliberate or planned? Please Tick**

Yes

No

If yes, what is the evidence?

**6. According to the alleged target has he/she experienced other or repeated incidences of bullying from the alleged perpetrator? (If yes, please give dates, who was involved, outcomes). Please Tick**

Yes

Date/s:

No

**7. Does the alleged target fear for their safety or for their property?**

*Please Tick*

Yes

No



<b>8. What evidence supports the allegation?</b> <i>Please Tick</i>	Physical		Material		Digital	
---	----------	--	----------	--	---------	--

**9. Is there concern the alleged incident may have been influenced by any of the following?**

*Please Tick:*

Race/ culture		Disability		Gender		Socio- economic status		Other:	
------------------	--	------------	--	--------	--	------------------------------	--	--------	--

<b>10. What effect is the situation having on the alleged target's wellbeing?</b> <i>Please Tick</i>									
Self-esteem		Physical Health		Peer Relationships		Ability to learn		Absenteeism	

<b>11. Were there any witnesses to this incident?</b> (Identify student names and class names)			
Name	Class	Name	Class

\*Include witness statements on separate report if applicable

**12. Indicate other investigative procedures carried out.** *Please Tick:*

Interviewed parents of alleged target(s)		Interviewed parents of alleged perpetrators(s)		Interviewed parents of witnesses/bystanders/ accessories	
Date/Time:		Date/time:		Date/time:	

Interview with parents:
-------------------------

**13. After investigation, was the allegation of bullying confirmed?**

Yes / No

If 'No', please sign below and place a copy of this document into the student(s) file and refer to schools' Behaviour Management Policy as required.

If 'Yes', please sign below, place a copy of this document into the student(s) file and refer the incident to the Year Coordinator, Principal or Principal's delegate.

Digitally Signed: ..... Date: .....