St Thomas’ Catholic Primary School
Anti-Bullying Policy

St THOMAS
Willoughby
Forward in Faith
ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

PURPOSE

At St Thomas School, we believe that all members of the community have the right to a learning and work environment free from intimidation, humiliation and hurt. We all share a responsibility to foster, promote and restore right relationships. We believe that bullying is unacceptable and we [students, staff and parents] all share a responsibility for preventing it.

This policy builds on the school's Pastoral Care and Behaviour Management Policies to provide clear procedures and strategies to prevent, reduce and respond to bullying.

POLICY FRAMEWORK

Flowing from the Christian vision expressed in the Diocesan Pastoral Care Policy, schools are called to establish relationships which are grounded in love, compassion, reconciliation and justice. In witnessing Christian values we reject ideas, beliefs and behaviours which marginalise or victimise people.

DEFINITION

Whilst there is no universally accepted definition of bullying, there is general consensus that bullying behaviour:

- is deliberate and often repeated
- intends to cause fear, distress, hurt or harm to another
- is action by a more powerful individual or group over a less powerful individual or group

Bullying takes many forms, all of which will cause distress. Examples of bullying include:

- **Physical** - hitting, pushing, tripping, kicking, spitting on others etc
- **Verbal** - teasing, using offensive names, ridiculing, spreading rumours etc
- **Non-Verbal** - writing offensive notes or graffiti about others, using e-mail or text messaging to hurt others, rude gestures etc
- **Exclusion** - deliberately excluding others from group, refusing to sit next to someone etc
- **Extortion** - threatening to take someone's possessions, food or money etc
- **Property** - stealing, hiding, damaging or destroying property etc
- **Cyber** - any form of bullying which is carried out through electronic means such as mobile phones, email, chat room, social networking, ‘sms’, web page etc
HOW DO WE PREVENT BULLYING AT ST THOMAS’ SCHOOL?

We believe based on research that prevention strategies through education that involve the whole school community [students, staff and parents] are more likely to reduce bullying. Therefore, at St Thomas’ School we recognise that we all share the responsibility to prevent bullying. The Catholic Worldview which represents the antithesis of bullying will be taught explicitly, continually modelled, clearly demonstrated and generously affirmed across all facets of school life.

AT ST THOMAS’ CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL WE ADOPT THE FOLLOWING STRATEGIES TO PREVENT BULLYING

- Explicit teaching of positive behaviours embedded within the curriculum addressing positive relationships, conflict resolution, resilience, bystander action etc
  - Positive Behaviour for Learning lesson sequence in (Behaviour Management Policy) and Personal development lessons across K – 6
  - Language Programme focus on pragmatic social skills
  - Rock & Water Programme
  - Children bring their concerns about the playground to the SRC meetings

- Regularly recognising and acknowledging students who demonstrate appropriate behaviours that promote and restore right relationships
  - PBL awards each week

- Vigilant classroom, playground and transition supervision
  - Teachers complete incident reports which are collated at discussed at regular PBL meetings.
  - Please ensure you are in the playground at the allotted time and inform the teacher on before you. **This is a legal requirement** and allows other staff to have their full break. Should a teacher not arrive to replace you please send a message alerting the office duty person (who can then follow this up for you). There should always be three teachers on duty with the only exception occurring in the morning when there are two, or if there is a significant reduction in the number of children
  - Supervision must be constant and consistent. Teachers need to talk to each other to ensure the same rules are being enforced. A forum for this is at the weekly briefing meeting to gain consensus and common understanding. Playground rules should be enforced and publicly proclaimed, dangerous behaviour stopped, dangerous objects confiscated.

- Provision of safe and structured playground spaces and activities at break times
  - Three days per week a sports lunch club is run for students at the Willoughby Legions Club
  - Additional activities such as chess and sketch club are also offered to students once a week at lunchtime.
  - Areas of the playground all designated as walking only and ‘out of bounds’ for safety reasons (Yellow diagonal lines in the under croft)
  - The school library is open for half of two lunch times per week.
At St Thomas School students are encouraged to:
- take some positive action to stop bullying if they observe an incident by seeking adult support
- report the bullying incident to a teacher as soon as possible
- make it clear to their peers that bullying is not accepted

At St Thomas School, staff are expected to:
- take some positive action to stop bullying when they observe an incident
- pass on information about any reported or observed bullying behaviours to the Principal or Assistant Principal for further action

At St Thomas School, parents are encouraged to:
- listen to their child and encourage their child to speak to their teacher at school
- contact the school if they have a concern: Class Teacher, Principal, Assistant Principal
- build their child’s resilience in partnership with the school, to give their child strategies when dealing with bullying behaviours or they see others being bullied.

**HOW DO WE RESPOND TO BULLYING AT ST THOMAS SCHOOL?**

Bullying is viewed as a major breach of the school rules and behavioural expectations and therefore follow up action will align with our School’s Behaviour Management and Student Discipline Policy.

Any reports of bullying will be investigated and appropriate action will be taken promptly. The response to bullying will include:

1. guidance and other support for the recipient of the bullying (eg re-skilling and re-teaching of strategies, resilience and social skills, counselling, conflict management skills, social networking etc)

2. guidance and support for ‘bystanders’, ‘supporters’ and witnesses of the bullying, including intervention strategies

3. age appropriate and consistent sanctions for the student who bullied, consistent with our School Behaviour Management Policy

4. interventions and support for the student who bullied included in a Behaviour Support Plan, including specific interventions developed to reduce the bullying behaviour, teaching of replacement behaviours, reinforcers

5. where appropriate informing parents as stated in the policy and involving them in any action and follow up

All responses and investigations are based on procedural fairness, addressing and investigating the issues in an impartial and unbiased way.
PROCEDURES FOR INVESTIGATING BULLYING AND FOLLOW UP

In discerning appropriate responses to bullying, school leaders need to balance the collective welfare of the school community with the individual needs of the student.

Recommended resource for interviewing and follow up of Bullying incidents - “The Method of Shared Concern” Dr Anatol Pikas, Sweden, Readymade Productions.

- Preliminary interview(s) will be conducted to ascertain the specific nature of the bullying. These interviews should be with individuals initially (ie student being bullied, students witnessing bullying, student engaging in bullying behaviour, staff etc).

- The initial interviews should focus on the safety of individuals. This should include:
  - a clear statement on the consequences if the bullying continues or if there are any reprisals as a result of the reporting of the incident
  - immediate preventative actions that will be implemented to avoid further incidents.

- Decisions will be made as to the level of severity of the incident and whether the parents of those involved need to be informed.

- Follow up interviews should focus on appropriate strategies to assist and support all involved within a Behaviour Support Plan. This Plan will specifically identify the inappropriate behaviours, name the replacement behaviours, outline strategies to support the replacement behaviours and reinforcers (both negative and positive) when behaviours occur.

- A record of the separate interviews should be kept.

- Regular monitoring and follow up with the students involved is necessary. (for example daily, prior to and after break times etc)

- Review of the Behaviour Support Plan will take place to modify strategies and supports.

- Any further recurrence of bullying may result in an issue of warning re suspension and could lead to the implementation of suspension procedures and, if necessary, removal of the student from the school through:
  - Suspension pending negotiated transfer,
  - Negotiated transfer or
  - Expulsion
COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Counselling is available through the Catholic Schools Office and can be accessed through the school. This is a confidential service.

For further community support the School Liaison Officer is Senior Constable Dennis Goodwin or the Youth Liaison Officer is Senior Constable Misty Ross at Chatswood Police Station. They can be contacted on (02) 9414 8499.

POLICY RESPONSIBILITY

The Principal:

- is responsible for the implementation of the school’s anti-bullying policy and procedures.
- is required to establish conclusive processes for staff, students and parents to gain understanding and ownership of the policy.
- will take appropriate steps to ensure that the school will regularly monitor and evaluate its anti-bullying policy.
- is responsible for the implementation of the school-wide education program focusing on positive behaviours

SUPPORT DOCUMENTS

The Catholic Schools Office will provide materials, professional development and support services to assist school communities with development and implementation of anti-bullying policies and procedures.

RELATED LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

*Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986* (Comm)

Telecommunications Act 1991 (Comm.)

Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)

Children (Criminal Proceedings) Act 1987 (NSW)

Young Offenders Act 1997 (NSW)

Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)

Pastoral Care Policy for Diocesan Systemic Schools

Anti-Harassment Policy for Diocesan Systemic Schools

Occupational Health and Safety Policy for Diocesan Systemic Schools

Acceptable Use Policy for Internet/Intranet and Network Services for Diocesan Systemic School
POLICY REVIEW

The Policy shall be reviewed every three years, or in the event of any information, that would warrant a review.

POLICY DATES

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POLICY AUTHORISATION

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<tr>
<th>Principal</th>
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authorised by
Bishop David L. Walker
Bishop of Broken Bay
March, 2008