Anti-Bullying Policy

At Sacred Heart Parish School, we are committed to providing a safe, inclusive and supportive environment which promotes open communication, respect, fairness and positive relationships. We believe that the partnership between home and school is a very important part of ensuring that children are happy, secure and open to learning. As a school community we are committed to working together to meet the various needs of our school community. Central to achieving this is trust and open, effective communication between all members of the school community. As a Catholic school the Gospel values form the basis for a proactive approach to communication and problem solving.

Rationale

Each Catholic community, organisation and individual collaboratively engaged in the educational ministry of the Church in the Archdiocese of Brisbane is called to:

Teach

We promote faith in Jesus Christ, teaching and learning about Jesus, the gospel and the faith of the Catholic Christian community. Learning is lifelong, life-giving and engages the whole person.

Challenge

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, we challenge those we educate to live in communion with God, others and the whole of creation in prayerful, sacramental, just, peaceful, inclusive and reconciling communities.

Transform

We educate for a transformed world in communion, by nurturing the gifts and potential of each person, enacting shared leadership, and exercising a preferential option for the poor and the marginalised.

Sacred Heart Vision/Mission

To develop Spirit, Mind and Body in Our Catholic Community. We will achieve this by:
- Living Catholic Faith, Values and traditions that acknowledge our heritage.
- Delivering a holistic education that supports the development of the life long learner.
- Developing positive and inclusive relationships based in Christian Values.

The Vision Statements for Catholic Education and Sacred Heart underpin and guide the development and implementation of this policy.

Policy Statement

Student wellbeing and behaviour management has to be based on clear rules, forgiveness, the need and opportunity to say sorry, the realisation that we make choices – good and bad and that there are consequences of, and for, those choices and that the student gets another chance.

Serious issues – physical behaviour against another, sexual harassment, bullying and racial slurs all require investigation and referral to Admin immediately.

Bullying - Our policy recognises the fact that bullying and harassment can undermine our school community and may have long term effects for individuals. We aim to provide a safe, inclusive, caring, supportive and ordered learning environment free from bullying, harassment and violence. Bullying, including cyber bullying, harassment and violence, is not acceptable in this school, and will be dealt with seriously and promptly.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:
- Create an environment in which:
  - teachers can exercise their right to teach
  - students can exercise their right to learn without interruption
  - where parents rights to expect a quality education for their children may be fulfilled;
- Assist students to make responsible choices about their behaviour and to accept the consequences of those choices
- Implement an approach to behavioural problems which:
  - is consistent throughout the school
  - understood by the total school community and is consistent with the school's Mission and Vision statements
- Create a positive, respectful climate where students, teachers and parents can work together to help students solve their problems in a manner which will enhance self-esteem and promote responsible behaviour choices
- Provide guidelines to ensure appropriate and equitable treatment of students.

Scope

The parents/carers, students and school staff each have specific responsibilities to ensure student welfare remains a priority.

Definitions

Duty of Care
- Schools have a legal responsibility to provide a safe environment and adequate supervision.

Bullying
- Bullying is defined as anything that a person does or says repeatedly and purposefully because he or she knows it will upset or hurt another person. This may be by gesture, verbal or physical harassment. The feelings of the victim are the key indicator of the existence of bullying or harassment. The intentions of the bully do not determine whether bullying exists. Bullying is repeated behaviour; it can involve a power imbalance and can take many forms.

Definition of Harassment
- Harassment is behaviour that targets an individual or group due to their identity, race, culture or ethnic origin, religion, physical characteristics gender, sexual orientation, parenting or economic status, age, ability or disability and that offends, humiliates, intimidates or creates a hostile environment. Harassment may be an ongoing pattern of behaviour, or it may be a single act.

Definition of Discrimination
- Discrimination occurs when people are treated less favourably than others because of their race, culture or ethnic origin, religion, physical characteristics, gender, sexual orientation, marital, parenting or economic status, age, ability or disability. Discrimination is often ongoing and commonly involves exclusion or rejection.

Definition of Violence
- Violence is the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against another person that results in psychological harm, injury or in some cases death. Violence may involve provoked or unprovoked acts and can be a single incident, a random act or can occur over time.

Definition of Sexual Harassment
- Sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual conduct which makes a person (male or female, of the same or opposite gender, same-sex attracted, bisexual or transgender) feel offended, humiliated and/or intimidated, where that reaction to the conduct is reasonable in the circumstances. Sexual harassment can be a single incident, repeated or continuous, direct or indirect, and take various forms.

Example of Bullying and Harassment include (but are not limited to);
- Physical: hitting, pushing, touching, grabbing, looks, stares, facial expressions, gestures, spitting, taking or damaging property
- Verbal or written: spoken or written insults, threats, suggestive comments, name-calling, unfair criticism, spreading rumours
- Indirect: excluding others from the game or group, spreading stories about others, spreading untrue stories about others
- Cyber: using e-mail, voice and text messaging, social networking sites, photographic and video images
- Graffiti: using pictures, tags or words
- Social: forming groups to leave out, ignore and disrespect; influencing, encouraging or organising someone else to be involved in any type of bullying or harassment.
- Sexual: unwanted sexual advances, other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature; types of bullying and harassment such as that described above that is based on a person's sexuality or sexual orientation; abuse, comments, including name calling that suggests something about a person's sexuality or sexual orientation.

Suspension
- Withdrawal from classroom or playground and normally used, in extreme cases, as a precursor to expulsion.

Expulsion
- Withdrawal from the school.

Anti-Bullying Procedures

At the beginning of the year and regularly throughout the year, rules, routines, rights and responsibilities are taught within each class. These are published in each classroom and cover all aspects of life within the school and are referred to in 'class meetings' when necessary to assist staff and students in responding to inappropriate behaviour by students.

Each week the whole school briefing introduces the Pastoral Care topic and teachers and students:

- explore what the *topic* means
- consider what it looks like when people do it
- set goals for achieving the *'Key to Success'* within the school
- evaluate their achievement and
- receive awards to encourage desired behaviour each week.

Parents are encouraged to discuss the topics being taught through the publication in the school newsletter.

As a school staff we shall attempt to prevent bullying at Sacred Heart by:
- Being a role model in word and action at all times
- Being on the lookout for signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying
- Making efforts to remove occasions for bullying by actively patrolling areas during playground duty
- Arriving at class lines on time
- Reporting bullying to the Principal or Admin team member
- Taking steps to empower victims before bullying begins
- Discussing with classes the question of bullying and discuss ways to prevent it
- Skilling the students in the class through conflict resolution exercises and assertive behaviour
- Following the Sacred Heart expectations and consequences consistently for all students.

Steps to counter bullying:
- All reports of bullying will be taken seriously and will be reported to the Principal or Assistant Principal
- Teachers who learn of bullying actions will respond and report the actions to the Principal or Assistant Principal
- In the school curriculum, the topic of bullying will be discussed with the students and dealt with at the appropriate level. This will be done at the beginning of each school year in every class
- Anyone present when bullying occurs has an obligation to try to prevent it.
- Parents who have concerns of possible bullying are strongly advised to contact the school.

Responsibilities of students:
- To 'talk to an adult' (eg. a parent, teacher, staff member) if they are being bullied or if they see someone else being bullied – both at school and on the way to or from school
- To help someone who is being bullied
- To not bully others

Responsibilities of parents
- To watch for signs that their child may be being bullied eg. unwillingness to attend school, a pattern of headaches, missing equipment, requests for extra money, damaged clothes or bruising
- To speak to someone on staff (classroom teacher first) if their child is being bullied, or they suspect that this is happening
- To encourage their child to seek support if they are bullied

Reporting Bullying

Incidences of bullying can be reported to any teacher, teacher aide, or school leadership team by students and their parents. Any bullying incidences that are dealt with will be recorded.

Procedures for reported incidence of bullying:

Steps to be followed upon report of bullying:
- Incidents of bullying reported
- Incidents relayed to appropriate person if necessary
- Appropriate person interviews alleged perpetrator, victim and any bystanders to establish facts

Act of bullying verified:
- Appropriate person counsels so that person who bullied is aware of the effect on victim
- Appropriate person ensures the perpetrator acts in a responsible and constructive way to remedy the situation (written or verbal apology also needs to be given)
- Teacher puts appropriate steps from Behaviour Management Policy in place (withdrawal, detention, relevant intervention etc)

If further incidence of the bullying cycle occurs:
- Teacher, in collaboration with Principal, to interview student and their parents
- Principal to make clear consequences of repeat occurrence
- Counselling (on a private basis) is recommended for student who bullied
- Further action (internal/external suspension) is at the discretion of the Principal.

Suspension & Expulsion

Internal Suspension (if deemed appropriate for the behaviours exhibited, i.e. bringing the name of the school into disrepute, extreme violence or disruption (Child withdrawn for safety reasons while appropriate care/support is arranged and parents contacted). Class teacher will be informed of action taken.

The Suspension and Expulsion Process to be followed by Leadership Team is clearly detailed in the BCE Administration Handbook:

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