St Monica’s School Oakey

Anti-bullying Policy

Rationale

Our belief is that every person is born in the image and likeness of God and is therefore inherently good. St Monica’s School is a community of faith and life in which the total development of the whole person is the focus. As a Catholic school, St. Monica’s works in partnership with parents, caregivers and parish in providing a safe, happy and caring environment for an education rich in Catholic identity and heritage, sound in academic learning, supportive of personal skills and maturity.

Values

The St. Monica’s “Anti Bullying” Policy gives expression to the values inherent in the creation of a school community of faith and life. It is characterised by a happy, safe and caring environment. The school values dignity, acceptance, inclusivity, compassion, care, respectful relationships and personal responsibility.

Policy Statement

Each person in the St Monica’s School Community has a right to enjoy a safe and supportive environment free from fear of bullying or harassment. All suspected or alleged bullying will be handled in ways that are based on mutual respect, dignity and in conjunction with the School’s Peace and Good Behaviour Policy.

Definition

Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. It can have long term effects on those involved.


Understandings

1. All members of the school community welcome, respect and appreciate one another.
2. All members of the school community feel safe, happy and free from fear of other persons.
3. The dignity of every school community member is upheld.
4. School community members recognise bullying behaviours and have strategies to lessen or stop its occurrence.
5. School community members recognise that bullying does occur and causes harm.
6. School community members develop networks and steps to have bullying addressed.
7. Persons bullied are supported within a community of care.
8. Bullies are identified, experience consequences and are supported in changing their behaviours.
9. School community members develop the capacity to say ‘no’ to bullying for themselves and others.

**Guidelines**

These guidelines are provided as a resource to the school community in order to work proactively to educate about bullying and its effects and to respond to situations where bullying has occurred. St Monica’s is a school where bullying is not tolerated and efforts to address it and eradicate it are taken. This requires the commitment and co-operation of all school community members; staff, parents and students.

The approaches listed to identify and address alleged bullying incidents are not a set of predetermined steps. They are a guide to be used in conjunction with the cooperation of the school community, particularly the staff who are in a position to use their skills, judgement and leadership to bring about positive outcomes.

**Proactive Strategies**

The school community will employ a range of proactive strategies to raise awareness of, and to minimise bullying issues. These include but are not limited to:

- Develop quality rapport between community members.
- Promote positive relationships that accept and value diversity e.g. promoting group situations and opportunities for community members to get to know one another and to resist the leaving out of individuals or small groups e.g. Team building activities.
- Teach explicitly about human interrelationships, including bullying issues and strategies to deal with situations.
- Use anti-bullying posters and audio-visual resources.
- Use commercially produced programs targeting emotional well-being.
- Arrange visits by community visitors — police, lawyers, school counsellors, health professionals and community identities in both student and adult forums.
- Encourage acceptance of difference and inclusion.
- Use School Counsellors — proactively.
- Publicise useful websites on bullying.
- Publicise useful information in the school newsletter.
- Provide opportunities for students to talk about the social climate of the school.
- Encourage staff to be actively aware of ‘what is going on’ around the school, particularly with regard to human interactions.
- Encourage parents to develop anti-bullying attitudes and practices in their children.
- Encourage parents to communicate with their children and to be aware of their children’s social-emotional competence and well-being.
Responsive Strategies

The school will employ a range of responsive approaches in order to identify and address bullying and its effects on individuals and the school community. These include but are not limited to:

- Respond quickly and investigate alleged incidents of bullying and treat the matter seriously.
- Offer persons who believe they have been bullied, the chance to record incident(s), date(s), perpetrators(s) and the actions they have taken personally to address the issue(s).
- Interview individuals or groups involved.
- Keep accurate records of alleged bullying incidents including dates, places, times, persons involved and witnesses.
- Talk to other staff members to ascertain if they have noticed or become aware of similar incidents.
- Notify the Principal or APRE of identified incidents; indicating what action has been taken.
- Provide support for the bullied person including strategies to develop confidence to deal with any future incidents.
- Notify parents/caregivers of the person bullied, the outcome of investigations and the steps to be taken in responding to the matter and any follow-up action required of them.
- Provide support for the perpetrator(s).
- Notify parents/caregivers of perpetrator(s), the outcome of investigations and the steps to be taken in responding to the matter and any follow-up action required of them.
- Monitor the bullying behaviour pattern of perpetrator(s). Refer to written records of previous incidents.
- Notify the victim of the action to be taken including the consequences to be applied.
- Where appropriate, endeavour to achieve reconciliation between both parties to the incident.
- Use counselling services for support of victim and perpetrator(s) where warranted or where repeat incidents are identified.
- Where significant repeat bullying behaviour patterns are identified, the Principal will contact the Catholic Education Office - Senior Education Officer for advice.
- Apply consequences to the perpetrator(s) commensurate to the severity and number of incidents. This may involve making apologies, losing privileges, isolation during playtime, internal or external suspensions or referral to The Director of Catholic Education Office for possible exclusion.

Roland Principal
Principal
September 2013

David Totenhofer
Board Chairperson
September 2013