



## **SAFE SCHOOL/ANTI-BULLYING POLICY:**

### **Mission and Values**

We believe that **ALL** children in our school should be given the opportunity to succeed and reach their full potential. In an atmosphere of love and concern, the whole person will be developed SPIRITUALLY, MORALLY, SOCIALLY, ACADEMICALLY, PHYSICALLY and EMOTIONALLY.

We believe that each child that is immersed in a faith filled Christian community will develop as an integrated person, striving for excellence, growing in relationship with God and having respect for self and others.

Our Vision for Learning:

St Patrick's School collaboratively facilitates *meaningful learning opportunities* that develop creative, confident and independent lifelong learners. Our students will have the skills to contribute to an ever changing world, while demonstrating a strong sense of empathy, social justice, compassion and connection to the Catholic faith.

### **Rationale**

At St Patrick's School we believe that when students are nurtured in a safe, friendly and supportive environment they are able to develop as a whole person and, in turn, learn to the best of their ability. The school will create and nurture a positive culture where bullying is not accepted and where all members of the school community will have the right to be respected by others, the right to learn, and the right to feel safe and secure in their school environment.

### **DEFINITION OF BULLYING:**

The definition of Bullying adopted by the Commission and recommended to Diocesan offices is that of the National Safe Schools Framework:

Bullying is a pattern of repeated physical, verbal, psychological or social aggression that is directed towards a specific student by someone with more power and is intended to cause harm, distress and/or create fear.

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 subcategory 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 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 or 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.
- Cyberbullying occurs through the use of information or communication technologies such as Instant Messaging, text messages, email and social networking sites. 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 cyberbully also bully off-line. It is now recognised that many forms of covert bullying appear to have significant potential for serious harm.

### **AT ST PATRICK'S SCHOOL WE AIM TO:**

1. Create a school ethos where bullying and violence, including cyber bullying are not tolerated.
2. Raise awareness that bullying is unacceptable behaviour in all areas of school and community life.
3. Create an ethos which encourages students and staff to disclose, discuss and deal with incidents of bullying behaviour.
4. Support those affected by bullying and those involved in bullying behaviour.

At St Patrick's School:

- we have appropriate and effective prevention strategies across the school in partnership with all those it affects – students, teachers, parents and school staff
- we have a whole school response to reduce bullying and aggressive behaviour and to further promote a secure and supportive learning and teaching environment for all
- staff support the school's non-tolerance of bullying in accordance with the Discipline and Pastoral Care policies
- we will provide all students and parents/carers with the information necessary to assist them in reporting alleged incidents of bullying within the school community including cyber bullying within and outside the school.

### **THE ROLE OF THE STUDENT:**

We encourage and explicitly teach students skills that enable them to:

- report incidents of bullying against them or another student
- support victims of bullying
- build resilience
- deal with issues of anger and conflict in a calm and appropriate manner
- adhere to the expectations and procedures as outlined in the school Code of Conduct for Student Use of Internet and Student Agreement for Use of the Internet and Network Services.

Bullying will not go away by ignoring it. No one person or group can counter bullying alone. It must be a collaborative effort between members of the school community and parents in order to have a lasting effect and to make the school a safe, happy and positive learning environment for all.

### **THE ROLE OF THE PARENTS:**

When parents and the school work in partnership to address the issues of bullying, there is more likely to be positive outcomes for everyone.

If it is a serious or repeated incident then parents **MUST** report it to the school - only then can the matter be given due consideration. Parents are asked to consult with their classroom teacher/s in the first instance. More serious incidents may require referral to the school Executive by the classroom teacher/s.

It is **never** acceptable for parents to approach other children, either within the school grounds or out of school, to discuss a bullying issue. All school issues are to be dealt with in consultation with teachers and/or the Executive.

### **SUPPORT STRUCTURES FOR STUDENTS WHO BULLY OTHERS:**

A student who bullies will be encouraged and supported in developing positive and appropriate behaviour.

## **ANTI-BULLYING IMPLEMENTATION STRUCTURE:**

### **OVERVIEW:**

St Patrick's School's Anti-Bullying Policy will be implemented in conjunction with other relevant policies, including the Pastoral Care Policy, Discipline Policy and Work Health and Safety Guidelines and with due regard to mandatory legal obligations.

### **PROCEDURES FOR INVESTIGATING AND DEALING WITH BULLYING:**

#### **The Role of the Teacher:**

Teachers will take a calm, unemotional, non-judgemental approach in dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour, whether reported by students, staff or parents.

In any incidents of bullying the teacher will speak to all students concerned, including any witnesses, to make sure that all sides of the story are heard. Every person has the right to be heard.

All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the privacy and rights of all concerned.

### **Phase 1:**

1. Incident reported.
2. When analysing incidents of reported bullying behaviour, teachers should ask questions of what, where, when, who and why to determine what occurred in a calm manner.
3. Incidents of 'one-off' aggression will be dealt with according to the school's Discipline Policy. Document reported incident and consequences in blue playground book.

### **Phase 2:**

1. Repeated incidents.
2. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, teachers should ask questions of what, where, when, who and why to determine what occurred in a calm manner.
3. If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually and then as a group, where appropriate. Witnesses may also be interviewed to get a clear and accurate account of events. Every person has the right to be heard.
4. Have students write their own account of the incident using the 'Bullying Student Report Form' (App A).
5. If it is determined that a student has been involved in bullying behaviour, they must be encouraged to see the situation from the victim's point of view.
6. Reassurance is given to the victim that the matter has been addressed and a commitment given by the bully not to repeat the behaviour.
7. Teachers who are investigating an incident of bullying behaviour must keep a written record of any discussion with those involved using the Incident Report (Appendix B). A copy of the incident report is to be returned to the Assistant Principal who will file reports in the Behaviour Folder. At the discretion of the staff, parents/carers of the student/s involved are to be informed.

### **Phase 3:**

1. Serious incidents to be reported to the Assistant Principal and/or Principal.
2. Parents/carers will be contacted and a formal interview arranged. The situation will be explained and consequences outlined, in accordance with the school's Discipline Policy.
3. In consultation with parents and the student's classroom teacher, a Behaviour Contract will be prepared and implemented.
4. Failure to comply with the terms of the Behaviour Contract may result in a review of the child's enrolment.

### **The Restorative Justice Approach or "Method of Shared Concern"**

- Interview the victim and the offender
- Interview others involved
- Explain the problem
- Share the responsibility
- Encourage students to identify solutions
- Have a follow up meeting

Date of Implementation	December 2013
Date of Last Review	September 2023
Date for Next Review	February 2025