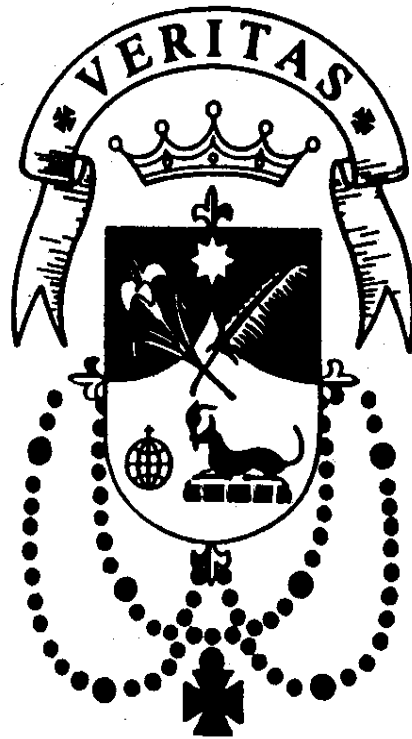


Prouille Catholic School Wahroonga



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Revised and Amended September 2008

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1. PURPOSE

At Prouille 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 create a culture of caring which will not tolerate bullying. This policy builds on the school's pastoral care policy to provide clear and agreed procedures and strategies for combating bullying in the school, responding to bullying behaviours and protecting and supporting all parties involved.

2. 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 has the following elements:

A desire to hurt; the perpetration of hurtful behaviour (physical, verbal or relational) in a situation in which there is an imbalance of power; the action being regarded as unjustified, typically repeated and experienced by the target of the aggression as oppressive, and by the perpetrator as enjoyable. (Ken Rigby, 2002)

3. POLICY CONTENT

Prouille provides a Christ –centred, catholic educational environment that nurtures, encourages and challenges all children to achieve their potential. At Prouille, we have developed and implemented pastoral care strategies to assist the school community to develop and maintain a culture of care in which bullying behaviour is not accepted.

At Prouille, we believe that bullying takes many forms, all of which will cause distress. Examples of bullying include:

<i>Physical:</i>	hitting, pushing, tripping, kicking, spitting on others.
<i>Verbal:</i>	teasing, using offensive names, ridiculing, spreading rumours
<i>Non-Verbal:</i>	writing offensive notes or graffiti about others, using e-mail or text messaging (cyberbullying) to hurt others, rude gestures
<i>Exclusion:</i>	deliberately excluding others from group, refusing to sit next to someone
<i>Extortion:</i>	threatening to take someone's possessions, food or money
<i>Property:</i>	stealing, hiding, damaging or destroying property

There is information about how bullying is different from simple social rejection, one of aggression/nastiness and mutual conflict. The indicators of each should be clearly stated.

Acceptable common terminology should be stated, eg:-

- avoid the term "victim" and use "recipient" or "target" instead
- avoid the term "the bully" and use "the student who bullied" instead
- avoid the term "weaker" and use "in less powerful position" instead

The Potential Impact of Bullying

Bullying has the potential to affect both the individual and the entire school community. Students who are bullied may:

- Develop feelings of negative self worth, possibly leading to feelings of isolation and abnormal absenteeism
- Develop feelings of helplessness, feeling they ought to be able to do something about it but lack the confidence to take any remedial action
- Feel frightened for their safety
- Feel embarrassed, angry or unfairly treated
- Disconnect socially from peers
- Project anger onto others
- Suffer problems in concentration or in sleep
- Develop health problems associated with the emotional/psychological distress created by bullying
- Exhibit "at-risk" behaviours, such as anxiety or depression
- Have long term problems in maintaining interpersonal relationships and in sustaining self esteem

The Possible Impact on the School Community

Although the effects of bullying may be most painful for the individual victim, bullying can create "shockwaves" across an entire school community. It may be responsible for some of the following:

- Feelings of anger, tension or disharmony amongst students or staff
- An atmosphere which seems unsafe or uncaring
- A perceived lack of trust and cohesion between members of the school community
- A lack of faith amongst the student body in the ability of staff to maintain a controlled, peaceful environment
- An abnormally high number of aggressive actions
- A perceived condoning of "preferencing" where older students exert power over students in younger year groups
- Tension and frustration within the parent body as a result of their fears for the safety, happiness and well-being of their children
- Feelings of guilt, shame or helplessness as the result of knowing about or witnessing bullying

- A reluctance by a section of the community to participate in activities, especially those which are non-compulsory
- Links between bullying behaviour and legal issues
- A reduction in community confidence in the school

How do we prevent bullying at Prouille ?

Ultimately, strategies to minimise and prevent bullying will only be effective when placed within the context of a culture in which respect for others is consistently taught and demonstrated across all facets of school life. The Christian values, which represent the antithesis of bullying, must be continually affirmed in words and actions.

Strategies to prevent bullying will fall within the following broad categories:

- 'moral education' in the context of religious education, liturgies and assemblies where the value of the individual is affirmed and the importance of qualities such as compassion, kindness, reconciliation, tolerance, respect and justice are encouraged
- 'across the curriculum' values teaching (eg looking at the problem of prejudice within the context of a novel or a history lesson)
- clear statements from staff about the nature and unacceptability of bullying
- teaching specifically related to bullying in the PDHPE curriculum
- teaching more positive ways of resolving conflict, such as working co-operatively within the classroom and playground
- staff and students as role models, particularly those in leadership roles such as peer support, school captains, house captains
- measures for vigilant classroom and playground supervision, especially of "high risk" areas
- provision of safe and structured playground spaces and structured activities at break times
- provision of activities which develop a culture of caring for one another and acknowledging the worth and contribution of others and which help to develop compassion
- appropriate provision of counselling or other support services
- provision of support for parents through information seminars, support networks

How do we respond to bullying at Prouille?

Bullying is viewed as a breach of the school's behaviour code. Any reports of bullying will be investigated and appropriate action will be taken. The response to bullying will provide:

- guidance and other support for the recipient
- appropriate and consistent sanctions and support for the student who bullied

Staff will be encouraged to report suspected incidents of bullying to the class teacher of both the recipient and the student who bullied. If they encounter an incident of bullying, they should first take steps to protect the recipient and witnesses. All staff are expected to pass on information about any bullying to the Principal/ Assistant Principal, for further action.

The School seeks to promote a culture in which students will be encouraged to:

- take some positive action to stop the bullying if they observe an incident
- report the bullying incident to a teacher as soon as possible
- make it clear to their peers that bullying is not accepted

Recipients of bullying will be encouraged to:

- initially ignore the bullying and not show that it is upsetting. Many bullies will stop if they do not elicit a response.
- confront the bully and let him/her know that his/her behaviour is unwanted and unjustified. This step should be taken if initial tactic is unsuccessful.
- discuss the problem with friends and parents, who may be able to assist with strategies to deal with the problem
- notify their class or teacher on duty

Witnesses of bullying will be encouraged to:

- assist students being bullied
- ask for teacher support
- discuss problem with friends and parents

What Parents can do

Parents play a key role in the support of both the recipients and the students who bully. The school must work in partnership with parents in the disciplinary process. Parents can assist in the following ways.

When your child has been the recipient of bullying:

- Let your child know that bullying in any form is never acceptable. Listen to your child and take their feelings and fears seriously.
- Make sure your child knows that being bullied is not their fault.
- Don't call your child names, like "weak, sook, wuss". Don't tell them "not to worry, to forget it, to toughen up."
- Avoid bullying tactics around your child, so they don't get mixed messages.
- If the bullying is verbal, help your child develop the skills to ignore it so that the student who bullies does not get the satisfaction of a reaction. Practice the way to walk past looking confident with head up. Practice a supply of quick (not insulting) responses -for example 'that's your opinion', 'talk to someone who cares'.
- Avoid the urge to take everything into your own hands unless absolutely necessary, as this will make your child feel less in control.
- Help your child feel good about the other things in his life. Enhance their self-esteem.
- The recipient and witness/es of the bullying may need further support to develop strategies to overcome the situation. The class teacher will seek to involve the parents in the formulation of the plan and its monitoring.

When it is clear that your child is the student who bullies:

- Recognise the seriousness of the issue and support the school in implementing this policy.
- Stay calm and avoid becoming angry and defensive.
- Reassure your child that you still love them – it's their behaviour you don't like but you will work with them to help change this.
- Co-operate with the school in implementing the appropriate procedures and graduated responses for dealing with bullying.

Procedures to deal with Bullying

All initial cases of bullying will be dealt with by the respective class teacher / specialist teacher or teacher on duty who will keep the Assistant Principal/ Principal informed. 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.

- An interview(s) will be conducted to ascertain the specific nature of the bullying and its effect on the recipient and witness/es, in an attempt to develop *mutual empathy*. Decisions will be made as to the level of severity of the incident and whether the parents (of those involved) need to be informed. The interview should also focus on appropriate strategies to assist all involved. Further support may be offered, if required.
- The initial interview should also 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.
- A record of the separate interviews must be placed in the Notes section of the student's record for this and any ensuing events.
- A less formal post-interview follow up of both parties should be conducted separately a week after the initial incident, to ensure that there have been no problems.
- If the student continues to engage in bullying behaviour, he/she will be interviewed in the presence of his/her parents by the Principal/ Assistant Principal and the Class teacher/ Specialist teacher. Direct consequences will include calling on internal and external assistance re development of a plan of action to manage student behaviour, conflict resolution, anger management.
- When action plan(s) have been implemented, all those engaged in their development will continue to monitor and formally follow up at regular intervals.
- 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

Prouille's graduated processes and consequences for dealing with breaches of the school's behaviour code

Consequences are what happen as a result of behaviour. Consequences can be positive or negative depending on the type of behaviour. Consequences should be fair, predictable and certain to happen. They should be related to the rule that has been broken.

Major Sanctions are last resort actions which only occur with due process in the event of serious breaches of the school's behaviour code. All major sanctions are options that can be undertaken after Step 6 in any order deemed appropriate for the situation.

Graduated Response Chart for Prouille

Action	Step 1 Alert student	Step 2 Caution the student	Step 3 Teacher/ student/ parents develop program	Step 4 Call on external assistance	Step 5 Follow-up to external assistance
Why	To refocus, to return to the appropriate activity, to make the student aware that the behaviour is inappropriate.	To stop the disruptive behaviour.	To assist student to modify unacceptable behaviour.	To set up a support group to manage concerns about student behaviour.	To monitor and follow up formal action plan.
When	When student's behaviour is disruptive, or school rules are being broken.	When inappropriate behaviour continues.	When student's behaviour continues to intrude upon teaching and learning time, or school rules continue to be broken.	When the student's behaviour intrudes upon teaching and learning time beyond manageable limits, school rules being broken which threaten the safety or dignity of others, harassment or bullying. This is a serious breach of the Behaviour Code.	At regular intervals after action plan has been implemented.
How	Ask student to return to what he/she is supposed to be doing, student makes restitution.	Relocate student within classroom, student makes restitution.	Restitution, by negotiating a rewards system, through use of a communications book with parents, by making a contract between teacher and student.	Parents, senior staff members and external support bodies assist the teacher and student to develop a plan of action to manage student behaviour.	Through a series of support group meetings involving all members in Step 4.
Who	Student Teacher	Student Teacher	Student Teacher Parents	Student Teacher Parents Principal External Consultant(s)	Student Teacher Parents Principal External Consultant(s)

Action	Step 6 Issue warning	Step 7 Suspension procedures	Step 8 Suspension pending negotiated transfer	Step 9 Negotiated Transfer	Step 10 Expulsion
Why	Action plan is deemed unsuccessful.	Action plan has failed to modify seriously disruptive student behaviour.	Suspension procedures have not modified student behaviour.	Negotiations are complete and suspension period is over.	Student's behaviour has not changed. Student is deemed to be a threat to the wellbeing or safety of others. Negotiated transfer has not occurred.
When	Prior to any action being taken towards putting major sanctions into play.	When all of the above steps have been unsuccessful. A serious breach has occurred.	When all internal and external resources available to the school have been unsuccessful in modifying student behaviour. A serious breach has occurred.	Negotiations with alternative location, parents and student are successful. A serious breach has occurred.	When previous major sanctions have been unsuccessful or deemed inappropriate. A serious breach has occurred.
How	A written warning, where appropriate, is issued outlining potential consequences for continued serious breaches and/or inappropriate behaviour.	The student's right to attend the school is withdrawn for a temporary time. Appropriate activities to be undertaken by the student to modify behaviour.	Through consultation with and research of alternative locations and environments. Consultation between staff and parents to determine optimal re-location.	Re-enrolment at new location. Where appropriate, offer assistance to student/ family to ensure positive re-location.	After consultation with Parish Priest & Schools Consultant, Principal makes recommendation to the Director of Schools. Recommendation is then reviewed by an Advisory Panel. Director shall make a determination based on report from the panel.
Who	Principal In the absence of the Principal Assistant Principal	Student Teacher Parents Schools Consultant Parish Priest Principal	Student Teacher Parents Schools Consultant, Parish Priest Principal	Student Teacher Parents Schools Consultant Parish Priest Principal	Student Teacher Parents Schools Consultant Parish Priest Advisory Panel Director of Schools Principal

4. POLICY RESPONSIBILITY

The Assistant Principal and Principal

5. RELATED POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

Broken Bay Diocesan Schools System Pastoral Care Policy
Broken Bay Diocesan Schools System Counter-Harassment Policy
Broken Bay Diocesan Schools System OH&S Policy
CCI Risk Management Bulletin No 1 Feb 2000 Bullying in Catholic Schools.

6. POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed within twelve months of its date of adoption and thereafter not less frequently than once every three years.

7. POLICY DATES

Date of completion of formulation and adoption	November 2002
Date of effective implementation	March 2003
Date of first review	September 2006