



# Safe Schools Policy

## Anti-Bullying & Harassment

### Rationale

At Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School, Merbein (OLSH), the community is committed to ensuring a caring environment which promotes personal growth and positive self-worth for all. It will not condone any form of bullying or harassing behaviour. The *Safe Schools Policy* is in place to ensure the safety of all members of the school community.

### Definition & Categories of Bullying and Harassment

**Bullying, harassment and violence** is when someone, or a group of people, deliberately upset or hurt another person or damage their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion. There is an imbalance of power in incidents of bullying with the bully or bullies having more power at the time due to age, size, status or other reasons.

This table below describes the categories of bullying.

<b>Direct physical bullying</b>	Hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching and pushing or damaging property
<b>Direct verbal bullying</b>	Name calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, homophobic or racist remarks, or verbal abuse.
<b>Indirect bullying</b>	Action designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Indirect bullying includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o lying and spreading rumours</li> <li>o playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate</li> <li>o mimicking</li> <li>o encouraging others to socially exclude someone</li> <li>o damaging someone's social reputation or social acceptance</li> </ul>
<b>Cyberbullying</b>	Direct verbal or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technologies. This includes harassment via a mobile phone, setting up a defamatory personal website or deliberately excluding someone from social networking spaces.
<b>Harassment</b>	is any type of deliberate, uninvited behaviour that is considered unacceptable to the community. It may offend, embarrass and/or scare. It could be sexual or target people because of their race, religion, gender, disability, culture. Such behaviour could be verbal, non-verbal, or physical and may include physical aggression, offensive jokes, comments or notes, or unwanted touching.

### Policy Statement

OLSH will not tolerate any action that undermines a person's right to feel safe.

At the school every person has this right and any person who bullies or harasses another is denying them the right to feel safe. The staff and school community will implement appropriate strategies and processes to build and maintain a safe school environment.

### Implementation

At OLSH we are committed to the provision of a safe environment for all who participate in any school activity. Bullying in any form, will not be tolerated. The school has implemented strategies that are highlighted in 'Behaviour Support Guidelines' to eliminate or reduce the risk to health and safety from bullying. Where it is not possible to eliminate the risk, the school will reduce the risk so far as is reasonably practicable.

Where bullying behaviour is identified, staff work with students and sometimes other members of the school community including external agencies, to repair harm caused and prevent further harm in a restorative manner. Restorative Practices are inspired by a philosophy which aims at repairing harm done to relationships and people, over and above the need for assigning blame and dispensing punishment. It is a learning centered approach. Key values create an ethos of respect, inclusion, accountability and taking responsibility, commitment to relationships, impartiality, being non-judgmental, collaboration, empowerment and emotional

articulacy. Key skills include active listening, facilitating dialogue and problem-solving, listening to and expressing emotion and empowering others to take ownership of problems.

## **Responsibilities and Accountabilities**

Managing bullying and harassment is not just the responsibility of the school. It requires a commitment from all members of the school community. The responsibility and accountability to address incidences of bullying lies with the school, children and parents.

At OLSH this means:

The Principal creates the best circumstances for a safe environment by:

- Ensuring the expectations of children and teachers are clear
- Monitoring the implementation of rules
- Encouraging rewards through acknowledgement of effort or actions
- Developing strong parent and community links
- Effectively communicating and promoting the school's behaviour management policies
- Ensuring all members of the school community are aware of the school policy and procedures
- Responding to each incidence of bullying in accordance with the procedures set out in association with this policy

Teaching and non-teaching staff actively create a safe environment by:

- Being role models in words and actions at all times
- Treating every complaint of bullying seriously no matter the perceived level
- Discouraging any signs of bullying or anti-social behaviour
- Being vigilant and observant for signs of bullying in the playground and classroom
- Managing bullying issues in accordance with the anti-bullying policy
- Where applicable ensure that incidents are reported to the principal
- Providing children with skills and strategies to recognise and manage stress which may arise through relationships, individual differences and communication
- Developing within the children non-violent alternatives to resolve conflict
- Developing a sense of 'fair play' in children

Children actively create a safe environment by:

- Not bullying other children
- Not standing by while another child or children are being bullied, but actively seek the help of a teacher or staff member of the school to intervene
- Reporting to a teacher or the principal if they feel they are being bullied or if they witness any incidence of bullying either at school or on the way to and from school
- Obeying rules
- Developing self-discipline and helping others
- Being good role models for other children by displaying strong values as taught and expected of all children at OLSH
- Taking a level of responsibility for their behaviour appropriate to their stage of development

Parents create a safe environment by:

- Being role models in words and actions at all times
- Familiarising themselves with the school anti-bullying and harassment policy
- Discouraging any sign of bullying behaviour which may become apparent in their child/children
- Cooperating in full with the school if it is found that their child has been directly or indirectly involved in bullying behaviour and supporting any activity designed to change the child's behaviour
- Encouraging their child/children to tell them and the teacher, if they feel they are being bullied
- Watching for any indication of bullying and notifying the child's class teacher immediately if they suspect their child may be the victim of bullying
- Seeking understanding of all the facts of a bullying instance before reacting
- Working in partnership with the school to assist the child to overcome the impact of identified bullying, including implementation of appropriate support and coping strategies which will empower the child to respond to emerging situations with confidence

- Working in partnership with the school to assist the child to take responsibility for bullying behaviour and its impact on others and developing appropriate behavioural strategies to strengthen and improve their social interactions

## Procedures

Dealing with bullying is difficult in that many of the behaviours are not readily observed and can be hotly debated, with much taking place 'out of sight' away from the attention of teachers or adults. One critical factor in the treatment of bullying is the disclosure of such treatment to an appropriate person. Without knowledge of these matters the school is unable to address them.

Staff shall:

- Make efforts to remove opportunities for bullying through active supervision at all times
- Provide children with clear procedures in the event of bullying
- Take appropriate action by reporting suspected incidents to the appropriate staff member [Class Teacher, Assistant Principal, Religious Education coordinator or Principal]

The school expects parents to:

- Take an active interest in their child's whereabouts after school and their child's friends and acquaintances
- Inform their child's class teacher if bullying is suspected, if the child is reluctant to do so
- Discourage the child from retaliating
- Not approach the child or the parents of the child who has allegedly bullied their child or involve an older child to deal with the bully. They should inform the school immediately
- Be willing to attend meetings with staff at the school if their child is involved in bullying incidents
- Reassure their child that steps are being taken
- Keep listening to their child as 'the story unfolds'

This requires children to:

- Refuse to be involved in any bullying situation
- Put in place strategies from 'Say No to Bullying' or from the 'Bully Stoppers campaign'
- Immediately, if present when bullying occurs:
  - if appropriate, take some form of preventative action
  - refuse to condone or encourage or be a spectator to bullying

**Consequences** of bullying or harassment at may involve:

- exclusion from class or specific activity/event for a set period
- exclusion from the yard for a set period
- having privileges withdrawn for a set period
- development of an individual positive behaviour management plan for a set period of time, which provides immediate consequences for any breaches and is reviewed regularly. The Plan will be communicated and discussed with student's parents who will be expected to support the implementation.
- referral to the school Behaviour Management Policy and Positive Behaviour Support Guidelines for dealing with serious offences if a student continue to re-offend. This could involve a student being suspended, or in extreme cases, implementing an assisted-transfer to another school or expelled. It is important that the procedures are appropriately followed for serious offences, report the incident or suspected incident to a teacher

## Communication

The Behaviour Management Policy in conjunction with this policy is discussed with staff, students and at parents meetings at the beginning of the school year. It is reviewed on a regular basis throughout the year to ensure consistency in its application. Incident data also will be analysed regularly. This policy is on the school's website and is communicated to parents through the school newsletter and parent handbook.

## **Risk Management**

The school develops strategies for risk management through identifying and mitigating areas of risk for maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment. This is recorded on the school risk management register. Incident data and student surveys will assist in identifying risks and will be reviewed regularly by THE school's leadership team.

## **References**

DOBCEL Student Anti-Bullying & Harassment Policy  
National Safe Schools Framework Resource Manual March 2011  
BDSAC Behaviour Guidelines for Behaviour Support 2016  
BDSAC Complaints and Grievance Policy 2016  
OLSH Duty of Care Policy  
OLSH Complaints and Grievance Policy  
OLSH Behaviour Management Policy  
OLSH Home School Partnership Agreement  
CECV Child Safety Commitment Statement