



## **DEALING WITH BULLYING AND HARASSMENT**

### **RATIONALE**

St Patrick's Primary School has a responsibility to provide an educational environment that promotes the dignity and respect of the person and, therefore, aims to eliminate bullying and harassment in all forms.

Learning outcomes, physical health, emotional, psychological and spiritual well-being can be adversely affected by bullying and harassment.

### **DEFINITIONS**

Bullying involves:

- a desire to hurt
- hurtful behaviour (physical, verbal or relational)
- an imbalance of power
- an unjust use of power
- typically repetition
- is experienced by the target of the aggression as oppressive, and by the perpetrator as enjoyable.  
(Adapted from Rigby 2001)

Harassment is any unwanted, unwelcome or uninvited behaviour which makes a person feel humiliated, intimidated or offended. (Adapted from CEO Policy, Harassment in School, 1998). Harassment can be seen as one form of bullying. The terms are often used interchangeably.

Bullying can be characterized as:

- Repetitive, causing distress, not only at the time of the attack but also by the threat of future attacks
- An imbalance of power (that is inappropriate and where there is an intention to hurt)

Its nature may be:

- Verbal—name-calling, put-downs, threats (spoken, written or electronic)
- Physical—hitting, tripping, punching, throwing objects, stealing
- Social—ignoring, hiding, ostracizing
- Psychological—stalking, threatening looks, spreading rumours, damaging possessions (MindMatters 2000).

### **PRINCIPLES**

1. St Patrick's Primary School owes a duty of care to its students.
2. St Patrick's Primary School provides a supportive environment, which promotes respect for self and others, physical/emotional well-being and positive mental health.
3. Dealing with bullying and harassment requires a whole school approach within the school's Pastoral Care Framework.
4. When bullying and harassment are ignored or overlooked, it serves to condone and reinforce the behaviour.

## PROCEDURES

- St Patrick's Primary school will continue to develop the Bullying and Harassment Policy with staff, students and parents all contributing to the Policy. Parent meetings will be a forum for comment and contribution to the ongoing formation of the Policy.
- St Patrick's Primary School does not tolerate bullying and harassment in any form. From our Values Policy each child is encouraged to ***"Show courtesy and concern towards all people, and develop possible alternatives for conflict resolution."***

St Patrick's Primary school ***"strives to develop a community whose aim is the transmission of values for living and whose work is seen as promoting a Faith-filled relationship with Christ in whom all Christian values have their inspiration"***. Values Policy. 1996

- The Principal will inform staff, students and parents and remind all each term about bullying and harassment rules of St Patrick's Primary School. This may take place at assemblies or parent meetings.
- At St Patrick's Primary School, all students have a responsibility to inform a staff member if they think a bullying or harassment situation has taken place, **immediately** or soon after the event. If the student remains silent and tells the parent, the parent is asked to remind the student that they need to address the problem when it happens. The parent can accompany the student to see the Principal or teacher; however, we ask that the student speaks about the incident.
- All teachers or adults within the school will address every bullying or harassment situation and discover exactly what happened. Minor problems will be dealt with at class level. If there is a need, the Principal and the parents will be informed.
- All reporting and recording of details will be kept in the confidential files.
- All incidents will be treated as learning experiences and strategies given to both students involved. The "Friendly Schools" document will be followed where appropriate.
- A supportive environment is established at St Patrick's where every child should feel safe and respected, and if an occasion of bullying or harassment occurs, every student should feel comfortable in approaching any staff member within the school.
- Professional Development will be offered to all staff to meet the needs in implementing the school policy
- The policy will be monitored and reviewed at regular intervals.

## References

- 1 Rigby, K. (2001). *Stop the Bullying. A Handbook for Schools*. ACER, Australia
- 2 Curriculum Corporation (2000), *Mind Matters*, Commonwealth of Australia