



## STUDENT ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

### RATIONALE

Our Catholic, and specifically Loreto, ethos requires that all students, their families, and employees within the Loreto Normanhurst community have the right to a learning and work environment free from intimidation, humiliation and hurt. It is the responsibility of the School community to create a culture of caring which endeavours to prevent bullying.

Flowing from the vision of Mary Ward and expressed in the School's Pastoral Care Guidelines, Loreto Normanhurst is 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.

### SCOPE

The Policy applies to students, staff members including permanent, temporary, and casual staff, contractors, volunteers, and parents in all School environments at all times.

### RELATED LEGISLATION

- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) Act 1986
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Racial Hatred Act 1995
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984.

### RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES & GUIDELINES

- Loreto Normanhurst Statement on Cyberbullying
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Student Code of Behaviour
- Behaviour Management in the Boarding School

### DEFINITIONS

Bullying – an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening. Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records). Bullying of any form or for any reason can have immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.

Bullying can take on many forms including:

**Physical bullying** – involves physical actions such as hitting, pushing, obstructing, or being used to hurt or intimidate someone. Damaging, stealing, or hiding personal belongings is also a form of physical bullying.

**Psychological bullying** – involves using words or actions to cause harm. This includes name calling, teasing, or making fun of someone.

**Indirect bullying** – is the deliberate acts of excluding or spreading untrue information to hurt or intimidate someone.

**Cyber bullying** – is the on-going abuse of power to threaten or harm someone using technology. Cyber bullying can occur in chat rooms, on social networking sites, through emails or mobile phones.

**Restorative practice** - Strategy used that seeks to repair relationships that have been damaged.

### PRINCIPLES

The School recognises the importance of providing a safe and positive learning environment for all



students. Bullying is not tolerated at Loreto Normanhurst.

It is acknowledged that conflict between children and young people are a normal part of growing up and are to be expected. These conflicts or fights between equals and single incidents are not considered bullying, even though they may be upsetting and need to be resolved.

Behaviours that do **not** constitute bullying include:

- Mutual arguments and disagreements (where there is no power imbalance).
- Not liking someone or a single act of social rejection.
- One-off acts of meanness or spite.
- Isolated incidents of aggression, intimidation, or violence.

## **PROACTIVE STRATEGIES AND EDUCATION**

Strategies to 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, protection, and justice are encouraged.
- 'Across the curriculum' values teaching (e.g. looking at the problem of prejudice within the context of a novel or a History lesson).
- Recognition that bullying is a concern for all sectors of the School community.
- Education of students, staff, and parents regarding all forms of bullying and in implementing the School's Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Monitoring student online activity through the School's network, on the external web, email, and School portal.
- Awareness-raising of the importance of punctuality to class, active supervision, and the need to challenge unacceptable behaviour.
- Clear statements from staff about the nature and unacceptability of bullying.
- Teaching that specifically relates to bullying in the PDHPE and Pastoral curriculum.
- Teaching positive ways of resolving conflict, such as working cooperatively within the classroom and playground.
- Staff and students as role models, particularly those in leadership roles such as School Captains, House Captains, Boarder Captains, Extra-curricular Captains, SRC Reps and Primary School leaders.
- Providing a student voice on raising awareness on bullying and how to manage this.
- Education of students on being an upstander not a bystander to report concerns.
- Explicit teaching of social and emotional skills through the Pastoral Curriculum
- Provision of activities which develop a culture of caring for one another and acknowledge the worth and contribution of others and which help to develop compassion and empathy.
- Appropriate provision of counselling or other support services.
- Provision of support for parents through the School's pastoral care structure, information seminars and support networks.

## **Signs of bullying**

Identifying bullying can sometimes be difficult. Bullying is often conducted out of sight of teachers and children may be reluctant to report bullying. Major behaviour changes in a student may be indicative of bullying.

The staff and community within the School are provided professional development training in recognising signs that students may be subject to or may be the instigator in bullying.

## **REPORTING BULLYING CONCERNS**

Students are advised that they should report Bullying when they have concerns. This can occur by speaking to a classroom teacher, Tutor, Advisor, Head of House, or Head of Students.



Students who witness the bullying of another student are also advised to report their concerns using the process outlined above.

All parents are encouraged to recognise the signs of bullying and notify the School if they suspect that their child is a victim of bullying. Parents should report this concern through a trusted staff member such as the classroom teacher, Tutor, Advisor, Head of House, or Head of Students.

## **RESPONDING TO CONCERNS**

The School will investigate any reports of bullying that are made. The principles of Procedural Fairness will apply to any investigation into the alleged bullying of another student. A restorative practice approach will underpin the response which requires the student to reflect on her actions in order to own the behaviour and seek to repair the impact. The process is not without consequences.

### Notification and information gathering

- The School is notified by a student, parent, teacher, friends.
- The alleged victim meets with an appropriate staff member who could be any of the following: Classroom Teacher (Primary School) or Head of House/Tutor/School Counsellor/Head of Students/Deans of Boarding/Heads of House Boarding
- The Student Anti-Bullying Policy is discussed with the student and reassurance given that the matter will be investigated.
- Strategies are put in place to ease the situation for the alleged victim and an appointment is made to meet again in a few days.
- Background information is collected from various sources and documented.
- It is made clear that any suggestion of retaliation by any party will be treated as harassment.
- Parent contact at this stage is discretionary.

### Consultation and investigation

- The alleged victim meets with the Classroom Teacher (Primary School); Head of House / School Counsellor/ Tutor /School Counsellor/Head of Students/Deans of Boarding/Heads of House Boarding as planned in above.
- Parents are informed and made aware of the allegation.
- If the situation has improved further meetings are planned for ongoing monitoring of the situation.
- If the situation has not improved, then the alleged bully/bullies are interviewed by the Classroom Teacher (Primary School); Head of House/Boarding Heads of House and parents of both students are contacted. If the incident occurred in the Day School but involves a boarder, the Director of Boarding is also notified.
- When boarders and day girls are involved with each other in an incident or allegation of bullying, the staff of both the Day and Boarding Schools will take joint responsibility and work closely together to resolve the situation.
- The allegation and the School's Anti-Bullying policy are discussed. Student/s are given the chance to respond to the allegation. Possible suggestions to deal with the situation are generated. Follow up appointments are made to see all parties involved and it is made clear that any suggestion of retaliation by any parties will be treated as harassment.
- Interviews are completed individually however, collective interviews may be conducted at the discretion of staff.
- Records of the meetings are documented and kept with the Director of Pastoral Care.

### Final resolution

- The Director of Pastoral Care informs the Deputy Principal where the balance of evidence suggest that the allegation of bullying is confirmed.
- The Deputy Principal requests a meeting with the student and her parents to review and discuss the allegation, including any consequences.
- Consequences may be implemented depending on the severity of each situation.
- Strategies to be put in place to ease the situation for the alleged victim and an agreement reached about how the parties will interact with each other.

### Review

- Within a reasonable timeframe, the situation is re-assessed.



- If the situation has not settled or has worsened, the matter is referred to the Head of Primary School, Director of Pastoral Care or Director of Boarding, and the School Counsellor is made aware of the situation. Students are required to meet with the Director of Pastoral Care or Director of Boarding.
- Parents are kept informed and may be asked to attend an interview with the Head of Primary School, Director of Pastoral Care and the School Counsellor or the Director of Boarding and the School Counsellor.
- If the situation has settled or been resolved, then appointments are made for follow up meetings if necessary.
- Within a reasonable timeframe, if there were concerns with the first re-assessment, the situation is reviewed again.
- If the situation has not settled or has worsened, the Principal is informed, and appropriate action is then discussed with the parents.
- Parents have the right to contact their local Police Station and speak with the Youth Liaison Officer or the School Liaison Officer.

## **CONSEQUENCES**

Where the balance of evidence suggests that an incident of bullying has occurred any of the following consequences may apply, depending upon the circumstances. If an incident is witnessed by a member of boarding or day staff, and there is no issue of doubt, the relevant staff member may, in consultation with a Head of House or Boarding Coordinator, apply sanctions immediately. All consequences may vary depending upon the severity of each individual incident.

### Day school consequences

Any student found to have engaged in bullying behaviour is expected to take action to make reparation and an apology. Parents are expected to co-operate fully and support the School's efforts to achieve a just outcome.

The following consequences may be applied at the discretion of classroom teachers (Primary School), Heads of House, Director of Pastoral Care, Director of Boarding or Deputy Principal.

- Playground duty
- Access restriction to digital technology
- Behaviour Support Plan
- Reflective task based on decision making model
- Detention
- Non-term time detention
- Suspension
- Referral to counselling

### Boarding school consequences

It is an expectation that a boarder involved in an incident of bullying would, in the first place, apologise for the behaviour and make every effort to repair the relationship.

At the discretion of the Director of Boarding any or all the following may apply:

- Parents may be contacted.
- Detention or Community Service within the Boarding School.
- Behaviour Improvement Program.
- Loss of privileges.
- Referral for counselling or other form of support.
- Confiscation of mobile phone.
- Access to computers may be suspended or limited. Alternatively, access may be allowed under supervision.

If bullying behaviours persist, or recur, an interview with the Principal, Director of Boarding and parents will be held.

Depending upon the circumstances, and at the discretion of the Principal, a student might be suspended or asked to leave this School. This action would be in accordance with the principles of Procedural Fairness.



## Reporting to authorities

The Loreto Normanhurst community needs to be aware that, when necessary, the police may be involved in any case of severe bullying.

## Corporal punishment

The School prohibits the use of corporal punishment in disciplining students attending the School. The School does not explicitly or implicitly sanction the administering of corporal punishment by non-school persons, including parents, to enforce discipline at the School.

## RECORDS

Records of all meetings and evidence gathered during investigations are held securely by the Director of Pastoral Care. All substantiated allegations of bullying are documented in the Bullying Register.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

### Staff

- Complying with this Policy

### Teachers and Head of House

- Observe, document, and actively respond to concerns that may indicate bullying is occurring
- Listen to student concerns that are raised
- Report concerns

### Head of Students and/or Dean of Boarding

- Conduct investigation into the alleged bullying
- Inform Director of Pastoral Care and Director of Boarding of outcome of investigation
- Implement actions to be taken i.e., reflective practice, consequence, or detention.

### Risk and Compliance Manager

- Maintain the Bullying register
- Track and report on trends or patterns as required

### Director of Pastoral Care, Director of Boarding and Head of Teresa Ball Primary

- Conduct meetings with parents to discuss their daughter's behaviour.
- In conjunction with the Deputy Principal as appropriate, conducting an interview with the student and their parents
- Determine the action to be taken
- Document incident in Bullying register

### Deputy Principal

- Conduct an interview with the student and their parents.
- Document incident in Bullying register

### Principal

- Suspending or cancelling a student's enrolment.

*This Policy appears on the School's website, FACEOnline and Staff Intranet.*

Version	Approved By	Version Date	Comment	Policy Owner	Next Review
1	Leadership Team	February 2014	Original	Director of Pastoral Care	2015
2	Leadership Team	2015,2016,2017,2018	Revised	Director of Pastoral Care	2019
3	Leadership Team	February 2019	Revised	Director of Pastoral Care	2020
4	Leadership Team	2020	Revised	Director of Pastoral Care	2021
5	Leadership Team	Aug 2022	Reviewed and change of template	Director of Pastoral Care	2023
6	School Board	May 2023	Revised	Director of Pastoral Care	2024
7	Leadership Team	Mar 2024	Reviewed and updated	Director of Pastoral Care	Mar 2027