St Columba's
Catholic Primary School

God's Glory Always

Anti-Bullying Policy

Revised May 2019

This document builds on the work of behaviour support practices developed at St Columba's School over a number of years. In 2010, the school community committed to formally reviewing the school's behaviour support practices, resulting in extensive professional development, focused discussion and consultation. This was led by the Behaviour Support Committee, whose members included:

Rachael Nucifora (Chair)
Martin Wilkie (Principal)
Margo Carwardine (Assistant Principal)
Melissa Graham (Teacher)
Meg Grouhel (Support Teacher, Inclusive Education)
Lauren Schultz (Teacher)
Toni Godfry (Teacher)

The Committee was thankful for the technical support it received at the time from:
Tamara O'Brien (Teacher)
Nicole La Rosa (Teacher)
Ricardo Bonasia (Teacher)

The school community was further thankful for the guidance and support received from Linda Llewellyn and Brooke Daniels, Brisbane Catholic Education, Education Officers – Student Behaviour

In 2013 this document was revised, to be reflective of the then newly published Brisbane Catholic Education *Student Behaviour Support: Guidelines, Regulations and Procedures.*

Between 2014 and 2018, changes to the system wide Student Behaviour Guidelines required modifications to the school plan. The adoption of the Student Behaviour Support System (SBSS), now known as ENGAGE, initiated a review of the plan in operation and then commenced at the beginning of 2017.

It was decided to make the Anti Bullying Policy a separate document and take it out of the **St Columba's Behaviour Support Plan.**

As with any good policy, it is a "working document" in that it will continue to be monitored and revised as necessary.

Contents -

St Columba's School Bullying Policy

In the spirit of our school Mission Statement and our beliefs about behaviour and learning, at St Columba's, in partnership with parents, staff and students, will strive to be a community who create a safe environment by:

- *Treating each other with dignity and respect*
- *Adopting a proactive rather than a reactive approach to bullying*
- *Working together to create a shared understanding of processes and procedures contained in this policy*

Anti-Bullying Motto

Bullying at St Columba's is unacceptable and it is everyone's concern-
No one ever deserves to be bullied and everyone has the right to feel safe!
All members of the community, students, staff, parents and carers, also have the responsibility not to bully others and to help each other make positive behaviour choices; in the classroom, out in the playground and when using technology.

Definition of Bullying and Cyberbullying

Bullying is the "repeated oppression, psychological or physical of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group of persons" (Rigby, 1996)

Bullying is when someone gains power over another person by hurting or harming that person, more than just once. Bullying is intentional and there is an imbalance of power. Bullying is continuing to 'pick on' someone, torment them or exclude them, so that the person feels helpless. Cyberbullying is another form of bullying using technology, such as a computer or mobile phone via text messaging, MSM, social networking, photographs and web pages.

A Bystander is a person who witnesses a bullying incident as an onlooker. At St Columba's, we agree that if you are a bystander who encourages bullying behaviours or you witness bullying and do not report the incident, your behaviour is considered to be bullying.

Forms of bullying:

- Physical: hitting, kicking, any form of violence, threat or intimidation that could cause physical harm
- Verbal: name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing, intimidation, lying about someone
- Emotional: excluding, tormenting, ridicule, humiliation, intimidation
- Racist: taunts, graffiti, gestures, intimidation
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact, abusive comments, intimidation
- Cyber: unwanted text messages, emails, information technology, intimidation

What is NOT Bullying at St Columba's School

In keeping with the above definition, "one off" incidents involving social isolation, conflict, random acts of aggression/intimidation or meanness are not defined as bullying.

Some examples of situations that are not bullying are:

- If there is a conflict between two students where there is an equal balance of power between students and both students want to find a solution to the conflict.
- Talking to a teacher or parents about something that someone has done.
- A random act of hurt or harm against another without that student provoking the other.
- A random act of destroying property.
- Leaving someone out of an activity once because of different interests or skills.
- Standing up for others and reporting bullying behaviours.
- Accidents are not bullying as there is no intention to hurt or harm.

Responsibilities of Children

- To have knowledge about and an understanding of bullying, bullying behaviours, bystanders
- To appropriately report incidents of bullying – if you believe you are being bullied or you have witnessed bullying as a bystander
- To avoid bullying others
- To choose and use an appropriate strategy to stand up for yourself first and then report to an adult
- As a bystander, choose and use an appropriate strategy to help the students involved and report to an adult

Responsibilities of Staff

- To have a well developed understanding of bullying, bullying behaviours, bystanders
- To model, educate and suggest appropriate, positive anti-bullying behaviours and supportive bystander behaviours
- To listen to all student reports and watch for signs of possible bullying
- To ensure that children are supervised adequately at all times
- To respond to all reported and observed incidents of bullying as set out in this plan under *Responding to Bullying.* This includes identification of potential bullying by reporting through *Playground Incident Reports* (refer to Appendix 5).

Responsibilities of Parents

- To support the information outlined in the *St Columba's School Bullying Policy*
- To have knowledge about and an understanding of bullying, bullying behaviours, bystanders
- To model, educate and discuss appropriate, positive anti-bullying behaviours
- To watch for signs of possible bullying
- To encourage and support one's child to inform a teacher if they are being bullied or have witnessed bullying as a bystander.
- Parents may need to speak on their child's behalf about bullying to the class teacher. Under no circumstances should parents contact other parents or children regarding the issue.
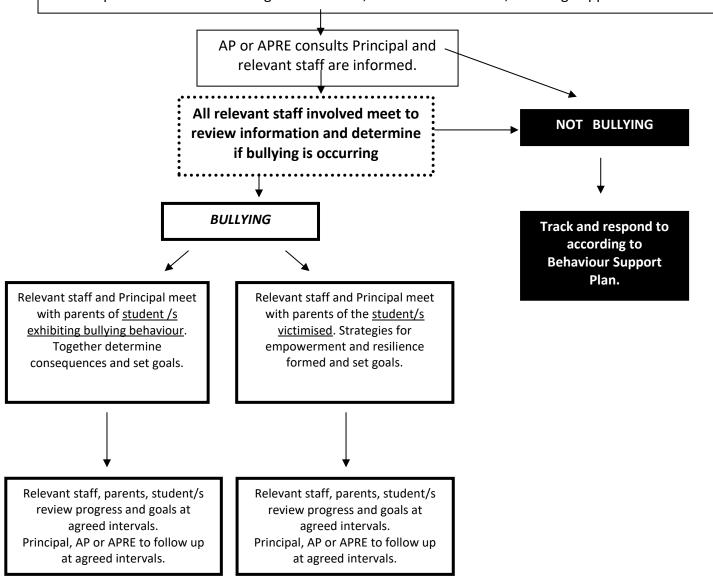
Responding to Bullying

When a bullying incident is reported or observed the following steps will be taken. This process may be accelerated according to student age and the seriousness of the incident. (Refer to Appendices 5, 14, 15.)

POTENTIAL BULLYING REPORTED

In the first instance, all reports are to be directed to the class teacher/s who determines if the report initially meets the guidelines, and records details of the potential bullying behaviours on the *Record of Reported Potential Bullying Behaviours* sheet. A report could have been passed on to the teacher by a student/s or recorded by a teacher on duty via a *Playground Incident Report* form. The class teacher

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Principal, AP, APRE records necessary additional details of incident to begin an investigation (see *Investigating Potential Bullying* below), then:

- Interviews students involved and check student files for information
- Speaks to relevant staff e.g. class teacher, Guidance Counsellor, Learning Support teacher

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AP or APRE consults Principal and relevant staff are informed.

All relevant staff involved meet to review information and determine if bullying is occurring

NOT BULLYING

Track and respond to according to Behaviour Support Plan.

BULLYING

Relevant staff and Principal meet with parents of student /s exhibiting bullying behaviour. Together determine consequences and set goals.

Relevant staff and Principal meet with parents of the student/s victimised. Strategies for empowerment and resilience formed and set goals.

Relevant staff, parents, student/s review progress and goals at agreed intervals.
Principal, AP or APRE to follow up at agreed intervals.

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Investigating Potential Bullying

When an investigation about bullying is required, the following procedures will be followed:

1. St Columba's will use a 'no blame' approach and process in the first instance. Those involved will be interviewed and made aware of the suspected bullying and the school's anti-bullying position. At this stage, there may not be any consequences and parents may not be notified. The incident, if deemed not to be bullying, will be referred back to the classroom teacher so the incident can be tracked according to the behaviour support plan.

2. If bullying is identified, leadership team members may choose to use the following methods with the children involved:
   - Method of shared concern
   - Mediation
   - Individual counselling

   Parents of both the child exhibiting the bullying behaviour, and the victim, will be notified of the level and severity of the incident and its consequences. A record of the incident is kept on file.

3. Continued bullying would result in a further action plan being devised, appropriate consequences for the child, and further dialogue with the parents. The Guidance Counsellor and /or Learning Support may be involved in formulating this action plan.

All reports of bullying will be dealt with and recorded using the *Record of Reported Potential Bullying Behaviours* form. These forms and records of all interviews will be kept on file.

Support for the Victim and the Child Exhibiting the Bullying Behaviours

We support the victim in the following ways:
- Offering them an immediate opportunity to talk about the experience with their class teacher, or another teacher or member of administration.
- Informing the child's parents.
- Suggesting and role playing appropriate, positive anti-bullying behaviours with the child
- Offering continuing support when they feel they need it and encouraging immediate reporting of incidents.
- Taking necessary actions to prevent more bullying.

We support the child doing the bullying in the following ways:
- Talking immediately with their class teacher, another teacher or member of administration about what has happened and the behaviours the child has been displaying.
- Informing the child's parents.
- Continuing to monitor the child's behaviour and offering appropriate support.
- Enforcing appropriate consequences that are directly linked to the child's bullying behaviour.

Positive, Proactive Anti-bullying Approaches at St Columba's School

At St Columba's we take a positive, proactive approach to bullying by teaching the five anti-bullying strategies displayed on the *Break Through Bullying* "*be AWARE*" to all students in Prep to Year 2. The strategies are as follows and are displayed on a poster in all Prep – Year 2 classrooms:

- **A is for Ask them to stop**
- **W is for Walk away**
- **A is for Ask a teacher to help**
- **R is for Remember to ignore**
- **E is for Even try to make friends**

The *"Safe Start"* Queensland Primary Schools Children's Safety Kit is used in Prep – Year 2 to teach Protective Behaviours. The *Bounce Back!* Program, teaching resilience, values and positive behaviours starts in Prep and continues to Year 7. From Year 3 to Year 7, the *Bounce Back!* Program is used to continue to teach positive, proactive approaches to bullying. All children at St Columba's are encouraged to talk about bullying and to let someone know if they feel unsafe. If it continues, REPORT IT. Students can report to: parents, class teacher, another teacher that the child is comfortable talking to, an older student or buddy, Principal, APA, APRE or Guidance Counsellor. This information is displayed on Brisbane Catholic Education *Feeling Unsafe?* posters in all classrooms. Also in Years 3 - 6, supportive bystander behaviours are also taught, with a focus on safety and responsibility when reporting incidents of bullying.

The St Columba's Behaviour Support Plan has been developed in accordance with Brisbane Catholic Education 'Student Behaviour Support Policy' and 'Student Behaviour Support Regulations and Guidelines'. For issues relating to suspension and exclusion please refer to these documents.