



Policy:	Safe School's Policy Part 2 - Anti Bullying Policy
Released:	2000
Reviewed:	2016
Next Review:	End of 2018

St Jerome's strives to be a safe, supportive and respectful teaching and learning community, that promotes student well-being in a climate permeated by the Gospel spirit of love.

Overview

At St Jerome's school our Safe School policy supports the *National Safe Schools Framework* which is a collaborative effort by the Australian Government and State and Territory government and non-government school authorities and other key stakeholders. It presents a way of achieving a shared vision of student wellbeing for all students in all Australian schools.

Promoting and providing a supportive learning environment in which all students can expect to feel safe and be safe is an essential function of St Jerome's School. The Safe School policy includes strategies that enhance school safety and students' wellbeing while recognizing the individual needs of students. The *Framework* recognises the need for sustained positive approaches that include an appreciation of the ways in which social attitudes and values impact on the behaviour of students in our school community. Such approaches encourage all members of the school community to:

- value diversity
- contribute positively to the safety and wellbeing of themselves and others
- act independently, justly, cooperatively and responsibly in school, work, civic and family relationships
- contribute to the implementation of appropriate strategies that create and maintain a safe and supportive learning environment.

Student safety and wellbeing is enhanced when students feel connected to their school. Positive and respectful relationships with their peers and teachers are crucial so that students feel confident about their social and emotional skills and satisfied with their learning experiences at school.

The St Jerome's Safe School Policy includes the Nine Elements of the National Safe Schools' Framework.

Rules

The St Jerome's vision is underpinned by the following Rules that represent fundamental beliefs about a safe, supportive and respectful school community. These Rules emphasise the importance of student safety and wellbeing as a pre-requisite for effective learning at St Jerome's school.

St Jerome's:

- affirms the rights of all members of the school community to feel *safe* and *be safe* at school
- acknowledges that being safe and supported at school is essential for student wellbeing and effective learning
- accepts responsibility for developing and sustaining a safe and supportive learning and teaching community that also fulfils the school's child protection responsibilities
- encourages the active participation of all school community members in developing and maintaining a safe school community where diversity is valued
- actively supports young people to develop understanding and skills to keep themselves and others safe
- commits to developing a safe school community through a whole-school and evidence-based approach

The Nine Elements of the Safe Schools' Framework.

1. Leadership commitment to a safe school
2. A supportive and connected school culture
3. Policies and procedures
4. Professional learning
5. Positive behaviour management
6. Engagement, skill development and safe school curriculum
7. A focus on student wellbeing and student ownership
8. Early intervention and targeted support
9. Partnerships with families and community

Rationale

1. Bullying is a learned behaviour which is unacceptable and can be successfully changed.

At St Jerome's we believe that every member of the school community deserves respect. Our school's Bullying Policy is Christ centred and based on Making Jesus Real in our community. A safe school environment allows everyone to maximize learning and growth to enable them to become productive members of the school and wider community.

St Jerome's believes that every student and family member has the right to feel safe and be safe; therefore, bullying of any description will not be tolerated. This extends to parents approaching someone else's child to deal with incidents that have occurred between children.

At St Jerome's it is recognised that we have a responsibility to address issues related to both those who experience and are engaged in bullying behaviour. Short-term and long-term effects on mental health and well-being are significant. If unresolved, anti-social behaviour, both aggressive and submissive, can continue throughout a person's life, affecting future relationships and their ongoing contributions to society.

Young people involved in bullying are not always aware of the impact of their actions on others.

This Bullying Policy is designed to complement our School's Friendly Schools Plus Program while using the language of the MJR (Making Jesus Real) Program.

2. Definition of Bullying

Bullying occurs when somebody who is less powerful than another person or a group, is deliberately and (typically) repeatedly hurt, either physically or emotionally without in anyway deserving that treatment. These behaviours can be maintained by secrecy that can develop resulting from threats and fear.

According to Professor Ken Rigby (2003), bullying includes:

- i) A desire to hurt and this desire is acted on;
- ii) The action is hurtful;
- iii) There is an imbalance of power;
- iv) There is no justification for the action;
- v) It is (typically) repeated;
- vi) The person engaged in the bullying behaviour gains satisfaction from it.

Bullying can be:

Verbal Bullying: The repeated use of words to hurt or humiliate another individual or group. Verbal bullying includes using put-downs, insulting language, name-calling, swearing, nasty notes and homophobic, racist or sexist comments.

Emotional/Psychological Bullying: Includes repeated stalking, repeated use of negative body language, threats or implied threats, unwanted email or text messaging, abusive websites, threatening gestures, manipulation, emotional blackmail, and threats to an individual's reputation and sense of safety.

Relational Bullying: Usually involves repeatedly ostracising others by leaving them out or convincing others to exclude or reject another individual or group, making up or spreading rumours, and sharing or threatening to share another's personal information.

Physical Bullying: Includes repetitive low level hitting, kicking, pinching, pushing, tripping, 'ganging up', un-wanted physical or sexual touching and damage to personal property.

Cyber Bullying: Involves the use of information and communication technologies such as email, text messages, instant messaging and social media websites to engage in the bullying of other individuals or groups. This technology provides an alternative means for verbal, relational and psychological forms of bullying.

3. Bystanders

Bystanders are those who are aware of, or are witnesses to bullying, but are not directly involved in bullying or being bullied themselves. All members of a school community need to know how to support those who are being bullied and how to discourage bullying behaviours. Any member of the school community can be a bystander and can learn ways to act successfully in preventing or stopping bullying.

4. Terminology

The terms 'bullies' and 'victims' are not recommended as appropriate terminology to use when identifying, reporting, recording and responding to bullying incidents. More appropriate terms to use may include 'bullied students', 'students who are bullied', 'students who bully' and 'students who engage in bullying behaviour'. This will ensure that the unacceptable behaviours are addressed in a manner that supports the individuals involved to learn and demonstrate more acceptable social behaviours without the impact of enduring labels.

5. Bullying Vs Conflict

Bullying is different from other forms of aggression as it has the following unique characteristics:

- i) a power imbalance must be present;
- ii) the aggressive act is unprovoked by the victim or perceived as unjustified by others; and
- iii) the action is **repeated between the same individuals**.

Is Fighting Bullying?

While **fighting** between **two students of equal power** is of concern, it is **not bullying**. It is the presence of a power imbalance that distinguishes bullying from fighting, conflict, violence and disagreement. It is this imbalance that makes mistreatment of the bullied student possible.

6. Is Teasing Bullying?

Teasing, done in **mutual fun and jest**, where all individuals are involved and feel **capable of responding**, is **not bullying**.

Teasing done once is mean and unkind, but not bullying. However, **teasing that is done in a mean and hurtful way**, that involves a **power imbalance** whereby one individual feels **powerless to respond** or to stop what is happening **is bullying**.

7. Rights and Responsibilities of School Community Members

MEMBERS	RIGHTS	RESPONSIBILITIES
All students, teachers, parents, wider school community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are safe and supported in the school environment • are included • are treated with respect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participate and contribute to school positive behaviour programs • build positive relationships • demonstrate respect and tolerance towards others. • to be aware of the correct procedures that must be followed in relation to the School's Bullying policy • be observant to the signs of bullying and act accordingly.
School leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is supported in developing the school's plan to prevent and effectively manage bullying • is supported in implementing the strategies and programs under the school's plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provides leadership in resourcing the school's plan • ensures the school community is informed of the plan • implements the plan • supports staff to implement the strategies and programs under the plan
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • feel safe and supported in the workplace • are informed of the school's plan on bullying • have access to professional learning in preventing and effectively managing bullying • have access to curriculum resources suitable for supporting students in building positive relationships, resilience, safety and bullying prevention (including social/emotional learning) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote and model positive relationships • participate in developing the school plan • identify and respond to bullying incidents • deliver the strategies and programs to students in responding to bullying effectively • promote effective bystander behaviour • promote social problem-solving • use appropriate terminology when referring to bullying and the students involved
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to feel safe and be safe • to be treated fairly by all members of the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand and value the concepts of inclusion and tolerance

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to learn without harassment • have access to curriculum that supports the building of resilience and social skills • to a system that deals effectively with harassment & bullying • are informed of the school's plan on bullying • are provided with support to stop bullying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify and respond effectively to bullying • are aware of themselves as bystanders • seek help for themselves and others as needed
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are treated with respect • are confident their children are provided with a safe and supportive school environment • are provided with access to information on the prevention and management of bullying • are informed of the school's plan and opportunities to participate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support and encourage children to treat others with respect and tolerance • act in accordance with the school plan if they observe/know about bullying • encourage children to report bullying incidents • work effectively with the school in responding to bullying
Wider community: including other professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are strategically included in prevention and bullying management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide support and input into the school's approach to preventing and managing bullying

8. School Response to Incidents of Bullying

Children are **not expected** to tolerate bullying or suffer in silence. They will be encouraged to disclose problems in an environment in which they feel safe and have the confidence to speak up. Early intervention is important if behaviour is to be changed.

The management of all incidents of bullying will use a team approach i.e. child, parent, teacher. The following **'Procedure for Intervention'** explains the actions the school will take in response to incidents of bullying. Support materials and detailed information about the interventions strategies are available to teachers on T:share in the 'Bullying Resources' file and in teachers' 'Anti-Bullying Support Materials'/CO-LATE model /No Blame model. **Parents are encouraged to speak to teachers and the leadership team for information on how to support their child.**

It is important to note that **parents are not permitted to approach a child** to discuss any alleged bullying or conflict between children, theirs, or anyone else's. Parents aware of this happening should report this to an Assistant Principal immediately and allow them to deal with the matter.

Although the following approach is not based on consequences or punishments, there are a range of measures available, up to and including suspension or exclusion that are in accord with the Behaviour Management Policy, and which may be used in response to on-going bullying.

Responding to a Bullying Incident

In accordance with the principle of treating others as Jesus would, our intervention strategies will follow the model of:

RESPECT, RESPOND and RECONCILE

FLOW CHART

RESPECT

A Possible bullying incident observed or reported by a child



B Remove child from harm and attend to needs

RESPOND



C Is this bullying? → **NO** → Assist with conflict resolution, friendship strategies
Or refer to Behaviour Management Policy.



Yes

D Staff member to Investigate incident. Engage a colleague to assist. Any EA involved to inform class teacher. All notes placed on SEQTA.

E Resolution - **Co-Late/ No Blame Approach** - obtain commitment for pro-social behaviour - encourage students to seek further help if required.

F Parents of all parties informed once the matter has been investigated. Meetings arranged if needed

G Consequences applied if appropriate. Principal informed -information on SEQTA.

H Counselling / support available from school Psych or Assistant Principal.

RECONCILE

I Teacher to monitor progress and review with **all parties involved within 7 days** and thereafter as necessary. All parents of students involved to be notified after each follow up and notes recorded on SEQTA to this effect.

Offer additional support to those students experiencing difficulties following the guidelines. Record details on SEQTA and inform parents.

FLOW CHART IN DETAIL

RESPECT

A Any staff member approached by a child to report a suspected bullying incident **must respond immediately**.

B Immediately **Remove** the child/ren from harm and attend to them as required.

RESPOND

C Is this Bullying?

A decision needs to be made about whether or not this is an incident of bullying by speaking to the student who appears or alleges to have been bullied. Any other children who witnessed the incident should also be interviewed on their own.

Definition: Bullying

For an incident to be bullying, it needs to meet the following definition:

- There is a desire to hurt and this desire is acted on;
- The action is hurtful;
- There is an imbalance of power;
- There is no justification for the action;
- It is (typically) repeated;
- The person engaged in the bullying behaviour gets satisfaction from it.

Not Bullying

If the incident is not bullying (eg. conflict) the teacher can assist with Conflict Resolution strategies, friendship strategies or refer to the *Behaviour Management Policy* for appropriate action.

D If Bullying, Investigate - If the incident is deemed to be bullying, the relevant classroom teacher needs to be informed about the incident and the matter investigated with the assistance of the staff member (teacher or EA) who witnessed or reported the incident and if considered to be of a serious nature an Assistant Principal needs to be informed.

- Immediately after the event, where possible, gather individual reports from all parties using the Report form in Appendix C. Interviews carried out using the Shared Concern method also known as the 'No Blame' approach.cf: 'Bullying Policy Support materials'.
- Check SEQTA for any history
- Carry out enquiries **discretely**.
- If necessary, asking for assistance from the relevant AP.
- If an EA is assisting with the investigation the results should be handed to the class teacher for recording on SEQTA and follow up.

During the interview:

- listen to the child/children
- Acknowledge their concerns
- Talk about any options- What would Jesus have done or do now?
- End with encouragement
- Tell the children you will get back to them by a certain time **and then do so**.

Formalised Reporting is critical when addressing bullying incidents. Collect and record all information and place on SEQTA.

RECONCILE

E Reconciliation and Resolution

This may include the following:

- Using the 'No Blame'/Co-Late approach with all parties to develop strategies to prevent the incident occurring again.
- A clear statement reinforcing that bullying is unacceptable at St Jerome's School.
- Obtaining a commitment for pro-social behaviour from all children involved. Use of FSP, MJR & GirlPower strategies as appropriate, including a plan for reconciliation.
- Encouraging children to ask for help if further issues occur.
- Check in with all parties involved at regular predetermined intervals.
- Offer additional support to those students who are experiencing difficulties adhering to the bounds.
- Monitor the effectiveness of the response technique after each incident.
- Ensure all monitoring is recorded and tracked on SEQTA for all students involved.

F Parents of all children involved, to be notified of the incident by the end of the day. Preferably in person or by phone or email. Any meetings deemed necessary should be organised as soon as possible. All notes from meetings are to be recorded on SEQTA.

G Consequences – In some cases when a serious bullying incident occurs, where a school rule has been broken or previous resolutions have been unsuccessful, consequences will need to be applied. A decision to apply consequences, and the nature of that consequence will be at the discretion of the teacher **and** AP involved and when necessary the Principal. Consequences will be applied in accordance with the school's *Behaviour Management Policy* and will increase in severity in cases of repeated occurrences.

H Counselling and consultation may be available from the Assistant Principals and/or School Psychologist (with parental consent) in cases where bullying is not resolved.

I Follow-up - The class teacher involved must undertake the following:

- Intervention will be reviewed within **7 days and again thereafter as necessary and recorded on SEQTA.**
- All parents of students involved to be notified after each follow-up and notes recorded on SEQTA to this effect.
- Offer additional support to those students experiencing difficulties following the guidelines. Record details on SEQTA and inform parents.

9. Harassment

It is completely unacceptable for anyone, a parent, family member, staff member or any other person within the community, to communicate via phone, email, different forms of social media OR to approach a staff member or any other individual personally, and speak rudely or inappropriately to them. If someone has a grievance concerning any other individual, they need to make an appointment with the person involved to discuss the matter in a civil and responsible way. A third party, an Assistant Principal/Principal should be present at this meeting. It should be remembered that **at all times we are expected to model Christ Like**, respectful and considerate behaviour towards others, because it acknowledges the dignity of all involved. The Principal reserves the right to deny any parent/adult who cannot comply with these conditions, access to the school grounds.

10. Parental Concerns about Bullying

Parents are encouraged at all times to communicate to the school any incidents of bullying, whether their child is a victim or has observed bullying occurring. After this report has been assessed by the school, parents will be made aware as to whether this incident is deemed as bullying or a behavioural issue.

Parents may report incidents of bullying to the class teacher, Assistant Principal or directly to the Principal. Where possible, the first person to be informed of any bullying incident by a parent **should always be the class teacher**.

Parents are asked to provide the following information where possible:

- who is involved in the bullying
- how frequently the bullying is occurring
- where the bullying is taking place
- nature of the incident– kicking, name calling etc
- effects on the child bullied
- what they, the parents, and their child have already done

11. Proactive Strategies to Minimise Bullying

- The Anti-Bullying Policy will be discussed with students at the commencement of each school year and throughout the year.
- Appropriate standards of behaviour and school rules will be explained with all students in class and at assemblies.
- Students will be taught about the importance of ‘bystanders’ in bullying incidents and encouraged to “ask for help” when they need to.
- Information on bullying will be made available on request to parents, teaching and non-teaching staff in the form of literature, staff and parent newsletter articles, through discussion or by educational sessions as required.
- Students at risk will be identified and a high level of communication will be maintained. Management strategies will be explained to those staff involved.
- Students experiencing ongoing difficulties will be referred, where appropriate, to the School Psychologist.
- The school curriculum will provide opportunities for teaching students about bullying. This will be done through the Friendly Schools’ Plus Program, Making Jesus Real Program resource, support materials provided to teachers and Girl Power strategies, which will be used from Pre-Kindy to Yr 6 and Cyberbullying will be addressed in classes and Health lessons across all year levels.
- The school curriculum will provide additional opportunities for teaching social skills, anger management, resilience, assertiveness, conflict resolution and protective

behaviours. Programs including PAThS, 'Friendly Kids Friendly Classrooms', 'Stop Think Do', 'Forging Friendships', 'Circle of Friends' & 'Protective Behaviours' are available for individual teachers to use in their classrooms if required and the resources are available through the library and the school Psychologist.

- The Class Buddy program will continue and involves pairing classes in the lower school with the upper classes for a variety of activities both with an academic and social value.
- Cooperative learning will continue to be encouraged throughout the school.
- The Rock & Water Program will be taught to students in Year 5 by the school Psychologist.

Appendix A

NOTIFICATION OF BULLYING INCIDENT

**Proforma email/example of conversation to parents.
(to be made available on SEQTA)**

For a child Engaged in a Bullying Incident or a Bystander to bullying

Date: _____

Dear Mr and Mrs.....

The purpose of this **email** is to inform you that your child _____ has been involved in a bullying incident on _____(date).

Your child was engaged in bullying behaviour OR a bystander to bullying behaviour.
(include which is appropriate)

The school's philosophy in regard to any bullying incident is that of consultation with all parties involved. We believe that all parties, with the support of parents and the school, should be responsible for improving their peer relationships, involved in finding solutions and making a commitment to resolve this situation.

The matter has been acted upon and all children involved will be monitored over the coming week. The class teacher **or an Assistant Principal (name the person)** will speak with all of the children involved as to how they feel the situation has progressed.

On this occasion, behavioural consequences **have/have** not been applied to your child. **This email/discussion** is not intended to result in consequences at home either. It is for your information and may be useful in discussing choices that your child may make in a similar situation in future. We would appreciate your support and consultation with the school. I would be grateful if you could email me after you have had a discussion with your child about this matter and let me know of any feedback you may have. If you wish to discuss this matter in person or by phone, please contact me via the school office or by email, to set up an appointment.

Yours sincerely,

.....

Teacher monitoring the situation

Appendix B

FOR A CHILD WHO HAS BEEN THE TARGET OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

**Proforma email/example conversation to parents
(to be made available on SEQTA)**

Date: _____

Dear Mr and Mrs.....

The purpose of this email is to inform you that your child _____ has been involved in a bullying incident on _____ (date). Your child was the target of bullying behaviour.

The school takes all matters of bullying very seriously. The school's philosophy in regard to any bullying incident is that of consultation with all parties involved, that all parties are responsible for improving their peer relationships, and solutions and commitments are made to resolve this situation. Our staff are here to support all the students involved but particularly those who have been the target of bullying behaviour, which in this case is your child

The matter has been acted upon and all children involved will be monitored over the coming week. My Assistant Principalwill speak with your child..... and all of the children involved as to how they feel the situation has progressed.

Please discuss with (your child)what has happened and encourage them to continue to speak to their teacher or the person responsible for following up on this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact the school should you wish to discuss this further or require any assistance with supporting your child at this time. Please keep the school informed of any developments that may arise from this incident.

Yours sincerely

.....

Helen O'Toole
Principal

Appendix C

Individual Bullying Incident Report Form

To be placed on SEQTA

Date:

Reported by:

Reported to:

Students involved:

Class/Year Level:

Details of incident:

Other relevant information:

Follow up Date/s.

Teacher's signature:

Review History

- Year 2014
- Year 2016

Next Review

Year	Person/Group Responsible
2018	Assistant Principal/Review team