



Topic:	Behaviour Management Policy
Policy No reference (CECWA):	Dealing with Bullying Harrsment Aggression and Violence
Policy Area:	2-D6 Community
Drafted	2008, 2014
Reviewed:	2020
Date of Review:	2022

## Rationale

Catholic schools have a responsibility to provide an educational environment that promotes the dignity and respect of the person and, therefore, aims to encourage the development of positive relationships between students to reduce all forms of bullying, harassment, aggression and violence. The policies and practices that a school employs should enhance the dignity of the human person and reflect the Principles of Pastoral Care as espoused in the Pastoral Care Framework (2007).

Learning outcomes, physical health, emotional, psychological and spiritual wellbeing can be adversely affected by bullying, harassment, aggression and violence. Students who are bullied, subject to aggression or harassed tend to have poorer health, lower self-esteem, more interpersonal difficulties, higher levels of loneliness, depression, suicidal ideation and increased anxiety. They are also more likely to have a dislike of and want to avoid school, higher absenteeism and lower academic competence. The effects of bullying can begin early in life and, for some, last a lifetime.

The Australian Government's National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF) adopts a whole school approach to safety and wellbeing. It provides a comprehensive range of evidence-informed practices to guide schools in preventing and responding to incidents of harassment, aggression, violence and bullying and to implement their responsibilities in relation to child protection issues.

The National Safe Schools Framework is based on the following overarching vision:  
All Australian schools are safe, supportive and respectful teaching and learning communities that promote student wellbeing.

In the NSSF, a safe and supportive school is described in the following way:

In a safe and supportive school, the risk from all types of harm is minimised, diversity is valued and all members of the school community feel respected and included and can be confident that they will receive support in the face of any threats to their safety or wellbeing.

The Guiding Principles of the National Safe Schools framework

This Framework is underpinned by the following guiding principles that represent fundamental beliefs about safe, supportive and respectful school communities. These guiding principles emphasise the importance of student safety and wellbeing as a pre-requisite for effective learning in all school settings.

**Mel Maria Catholic School:**

- affirm the rights of all members of the school community to feel safe and be safe at school
- acknowledge that being safe and supported at school is essential for student wellbeing and effective learning
- accept responsibility for developing and sustaining safe and supportive learning and teaching communities that also fulfill the school's child protection responsibilities
- encourage the active participation of all school community members in developing and maintaining a safe school community where diversity is valued actively support young people to develop understanding and skills to keep themselves and others safe commit to developing a safe school community through a whole-school and evidence-base

**The nine key elements that schools need to have in place to implement the NSSF are described in the Framework as:**

1. Leadership commitment to a safe school
2. A supportive and connected school culture
3. Policies and procedures
4. Professional learning
5. Positive behavior 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

## Definitions

Bullying is when, over a period of time, an individual or a group intentionally harm a person, who finds it hard to stop this behaviour from continuing.

Additionally, bullying can be characterised as: causing distress, not only at the time of the attack but also by the threat of future attacks; and, 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, electronic or cyber which may also apply to the following points)
- physical - hitting, tripping, punching, throwing objects, stealing
- social – ignoring, hiding, ostracizing
- psychological – stalking, threatening looks, spreading rumours, damaging possessions

Harassment is any unwanted, unwelcome or uninvited behaviour which makes a person feel humiliated, intimidated or offended. (Adapted from Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia Policy, Harassment in School, 1998). Harassment can be seen as one form of bullying.

Bullying and harassment are often thought of separately, however, both involve a more powerful person or group oppressing a less powerful person or group, often on the grounds of 'difference'. These differences can be related to culture, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, sexual orientation, ability or disability, religion, body size and physical appearance, personality, age, marital status, parenting status or economic status. (Bullying. No Way! website cited in the National Safe Schools Framework, 2003).

Unlike bullying and harassment, violence is not necessarily associated with an imbalance of power. It can occur between people of equal power. It implies extreme forcefulness, usually (but not always) of a physical kind. (Rigby, cited in the NSSF, 2003).

## Principles

1. Mel Maria Catholic School is a safe and supportive environments where the 6 guiding principles and 9 key elements of the National Safe Schools Framework are practiced.
2. Mel Maria Catholic School provides a supportive environment which:
  - acts to prevent instances of bullying, harassment, aggression and violence
  - encourage socially appropriate behavior using positive behavior management and direct teaching of curriculum in areas such as interpersonal and self-management skills
  - promote respect for self and other
  - develop physical/emotional well-being and resiliency
  - develop interpersonal skills and positive mental health
3. Responding to bullying, harassment, aggression and violence requires quality leadership and role modelling to facilitate strategy implementation and sustained change, together with a whole- school community approach that is consistent with the Catholic Education Office of Western Australia's Pastoral Care Framework, the school's Pastoral Care practices and the school's Evangelisation Plan and which partners with parents and other agencies
4. Bullying, harassment, aggression and violence may occur outside of the school. When these behaviours impact on a student's learning and behaviour in school, Catholic schools take action to support the continued wellbeing of those involved.
5. All bullying, harassment, aggression and violence shall be responded to. When bullying, harassment, aggression and violence are ignored or overlooked, it serves to condone or reinforce the behaviour. Bystanders, (those who observe bullying) can encourage or assist those who bully simply by doing nothing.
6. While the aim is to promote and encourage positive behaviour, school policy and procedures shall contain clear statements regarding the range of appropriate consequences that may be applicable for unacceptable behaviour. In looking at consequences relating to specific issues, consideration should be given to other circumstances which may have bearing such as family or mental health matters.
7. All parties to incidents of bullying, harassment, aggression and violence are entitled to appropriate support.

## Procedures

Mel Maria Catholic Primary School respects the rights of all those in the school community to:

- Feel safe
- Be treated with respect
- Be free from all forms of bullying.

Below outlines Mel Maria's Bullying Response Plan and is used in conjunction with our Behaviour Management Policy

## Definition

### *What is bullying?*

Bullying is when, over a period of time, an individual or group intentionally harms a person who find it hard to stop this behavior from continuing. Bullying can be characterized as:

Causing distress, not only at the time of the attack but also by the threat of future attacks, and an imbalance of power that is inappropriate and with the intention to hurt.

Its nature may be:

Verbal: name-calling, put downs, threats, (spoken, written, electronic or cyber).

Physical: hitting, tripping, punching, throwing objects, stealing.

Social: ignoring, hiding, ostracising,

Psychological: stalking, threatening looks or gestures, spreading rumours, damaging possessions.

Bullying is totally unacceptable in our school community and Mel Maria Catholic Primary School will do all it can to counter this behavior.

Standing by and watching or encouraging bullying by others is also unacceptable. Such action indicates you condone bullying.

Bullying is different from children simply acting impulsively, having a disagreement or difference of opinion or playing boisterously without thought for the opinions of others.

### *Parents/caregivers can:*

- Encourage your child to talk with you
- Listen to your child sympathetically and take the situation seriously
- Try not to overreact; remember that the other children involved will have their own views of what happened
- Assure your child that it happens to most people at some time. We learn to avoid it, cope with it or confront it
- Reassure your child that it is not happening because there is something wrong with him or her
- Assist your child to discuss any incidence of bullying with a teacher
- Be willing to inform the school of any cases of suspected bullying
- Tell your child that physical or verbal retaliation on their part is not the answer
- Be aware of the signs of distress in your child (e.g. unexplained bruises/scratches, unwillingness to attend school, a pattern of illness, missing/damaged equipment or clothing, loss of confidence, declining academic performance)
- Refrain from talking directly to other children who may have been involved
- Set a good example when resolving your own conflicts
- Be positive about your child's qualities and teach them to respect differences
- Take an active interest in your child's social life and friends.

*'Always try to work through the school, but talk with your child about what you are doing and why.'*

### *Students who are bullied can:*

- Tell the student who is bullying to stop. State quite clearly that the behavior is unwelcome and offensive
- Ignore them and walk away
- Seek help. Talk about it to someone you trust
- Report it to a member of staff, a trustworthy friend or buddy. Feel confident that an incident can be solved
- Talk it over openly with your parents – they can help you make a decision
- Do NOT retaliate with physical or verbal abuse
- If you are experiencing bullying on the way to or from school, tell your parents and walk home with a friend
- Write a description of the event and place it in the class meeting box or give it to a teacher and/or
- Find someone else to play with.

### *'Students who see someone being bullied can:*

- Tell the person to stop
- Be a friend to the person being bullied
- Encourage the person being bullied to inform someone
- Seek help. You can decide to do something about it and help to protect others
- Write a description of the event and place it in the class meeting box or give it to a teacher
- Talk it over with a teacher.

*'We can always talk with someone we trust about anything, no matter what.'*

*Strategies used by staff at Mel Maria Catholic Primary School to help manage bullying.*

- Respond pastorally to any reported incidents of bullying
- Involve other staff as appropriate e.g. Principal, Assistant Principal
- Provide appropriate playground supervision
- Wear yellow vests while on duty so the students can locate a teacher easily
- Provide opportunities in the curriculum to address bullying (including cyberbullying)
- Adopt positive classroom management strategies
- Provide positive role models for students
- Provide other professional support as appropriate e.g. School Social Worker
- Include relevant information and articles in the school newsletter, at assemblies
- Encourage parents to contact a teacher about concerns related to their child or other students as appropriate.

*Strategies used by the school community to help manage bullying.*

- Use every opportunity to encourage positive social interactions between all members of the school community
- Provide positive role models
- Promote students' sense of concern and responsibility
- Build resilience and self-confidence
- Keep the lines of communication open.

*Our Purpose*

*To be part of an accepting community;  
an authentic Catholic school  
where Catherine McAuley's ideals of justice,  
respect, compassion and  
service to others prevail  
and where all learning  
is a joy to be experienced  
in an educational community  
questing for excellence.*

*Our Values Include:*

*Service*

*Respect*

*Compassion*

*Justice*

The Bullying Response Plan is to be read in conjunction with the school's Pastoral Care and Behavioral Management Policies.



**MEL MARIA CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

*SCHOOL VISION*

*'Excellence in Catholic Primary Education'*

## **Bullying Response Plan**

Mel Maria Catholic Primary School respects the rights of all those in the school community to:

- Feel safe
- Be treated with respect
- Be free from all forms of bullying.
- Learn within a caring environment that lives the Gospel values.

<b>Year of Review History</b>	
<b>2011</b>	<b><i>Originally Released</i></b>
<b>2014</b>	<b><i>Reviewed</i></b>
<b>2018</b>	<b><i>Updated</i></b>