



*Trinity*  
Catholic College  
Lismore

## **BULLYING – SAFE SCHOOL AND BULLYING POLICY**

### **Purpose:**

#### **To -**

- Strive to provide an environment where the dignity of all members of the Trinity Catholic College community is upheld and respected;
- discourage any behaviour which may attack a person's rights, dignity, morale or capacity for work and study;
- protect the following student rights:
  - the right to feel safe and comfortable and for property to be safe;
  - the right to travel to and from school feeling safe;
  - the right to be treated with courtesy and respect;
  - the right to learn.

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>Relevant to:</b>            | All Members of Staff<br>All Students   |
| <b>Responsible Officer(s):</b> | Assistant Principal – Head of Middle School<br>Assistant Principal – Head of Senior School |
| <b>Date of Introduction:</b>   | 2002   |
| <b>Date of Review:</b>         | 2009, 2012, 2014, 2015   |
| <b>Modification History:</b>   | Amended September, 2008<br>Amended May 2012<br><b>Amended October 2015</b>                 |
| <b>Related Documents:</b>      | Health Effects of School Bullying<br>(Available on Policy section of TrinityNet)           |
| <b>Related Forms:</b>          |  |

## POLICY

At Trinity Catholic College there is an expectation that the individuality and dignity of all its members will be respected.

Harassment of any kind is not acceptable. Bullying is similarly unacceptable.

Incidents of harassment and bullying will be dealt with quickly and firmly and according to established procedures.

### WHAT IS BULLYING

The National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF) defines Bullying:

*Bullying is a pattern of repeated physical, verbal, psychological or social aggression that is directed towards a specific student by someone with more power and is intended to cause harm, distress and/or create fear. Bullying may be carried out overtly (e.g. face-to-face) or covertly (e.g. through repeated social exclusion or via technology). It is a sub-category of aggression and is different to, but also related to, harassment and violence. It is not the same as conflict or social dislike even though, in some cases, the outcome of both can be bullying.*

#### **The different types of bullying identified include:**

*Face-to-face bullying (sometimes referred to as direct bullying) involves physical actions such as punching or kicking or overt verbal actions such as name-calling and insulting.*

*Covert bullying (sometimes referred to as indirect bullying) is a subtle type of non-physical bullying which isn't easily seen by others and is conducted out of sight and often unacknowledged by adults.*

*Cyberbullying occurs through the use of information or communication technologies such as Instant Messaging, text messages, email and social networking sites. It has many similarities with offline bullying but it differs in that the student(s) who is / are bullying can be anonymous; it can reach a wide audience and the sent or uploaded material can be difficult to remove.*

*Most students who cyberbully, also bully off-line. It is now recognised that many forms of covert bullying appear to have significant potential for serious harm.*

#### **Bullying takes many forms and can include:**

1. Verbal harassment: swearing, name calling, teasing, threatening spreading rumours
2. Physical harm: punching, spitting, kicking, pushing
3. Exclusion: deliberately leaving someone out of an activity or ignoring them
4. Extortion: demanding money, food, favours
5. Interference with or damage to personal belongings, stealing
6. Physical gestures: faces, obscene gestures
7. Written abuse
8. Electronic messages or social networking platforms via the internet / email and any other online device use

People can be involved in bullying behaviour either as individuals, ringleaders, members of a group or as a bystander.

## **SIGNS THAT A STUDENT IS BEING BULLIED**

These may include:

### ***Class/School Attendance***

- truancy
- refusal and reluctance to attend school
- refusal to attend school on particular days (e.g. swimming classes)
- lateness to school
- reluctance to leave school at the end of the day
- constant use of library/computers at recess/lunch times
- refusal to engage in learning

### ***Academic***

- significant decline in output and results
- lack of concentration in class
- problems with retention and short term memory

### ***Physical***

- tiredness
- loss of appetite
- unexplained bruises and injuries
- torn clothing
- psychosomatic complaints – frequent headaches, stomach aches
- emotional – anxiety / fear / depression

### ***Social***

- withdrawal from social activities with peers
- withdrawal from extracurricular activities

### ***On the Home Front***

- requests for extra money
- requests to change transport arrangements to/from school
- taking and losing valuables from home
- reluctance to do things in the community
- withdrawal
- aggressive and/or atypical behaviour

## **PREVENTION STRATEGIES**

### ***At the College Level***

A public commitment to respect for self and others

- explicit in College documentation and ethos
- emphasize respect at College and House Assemblies
- appropriate behaviour modelled by staff and student leaders
- information readily available to parents through established means (e.g. College newsletter)
- ParentNet Forums

Increase awareness of the College's Policy on Bullying

- Clear statement in Student Planner and the [ICT User Agreement Policy](#) with a link to this Policy for E-Planners
- Reference to the Policy at House Meetings and in Tutor Groups
- Articulation of the Policy on Orientation Day and at other times throughout the year

Creating a positive and supportive climate

- Promote the acceptance of "individual differences"
- Promote the concept of unity within the College
- Promote the idea that while bullies need to be stopped, they also need to be helped

Welfare practices based upon:

- Acknowledgement of Civil Laws relating to bullying behaviour under Child Protection and Social Media legislation in accordance with E-Safety Guidelines
- Respect for others and self
- Forgiveness
- Acknowledging positive behaviours
- Non-violent sanctions
- Parents and the College working together
- Clear articulation of expectations

Supervision practices

- Conducting and monitoring a proactive supervision roster before school, during recess and lunch breaks and at afternoon bus times.
- Modelling appropriate behaviour

Maintaining records and review

- Counsellors; Heads of House and Year 7 Transition Coordinator should ensure records of incidents are maintained
- Heads of House to review the policy on an annual basis

### ***At the Classroom Level***

#### Creating Awareness

- Define what is acceptable in the classroom
- Discussion of bullying in Tutor Groups
- Display anti-bullying posters
- Inform students that there is always someone to turn to for help
- Online awareness programmes and Digital Literacy initiatives for the College

#### Creating a proactive classroom:

- Model acceptable behaviour
- Be assertive not aggressive
- Utilise differentiated curriculum and co-operative learning techniques
- Be positive and praising
- Assist students who need to change – work with Learning Enrichment Plans aimed at addressing bullying in particular students
- Encourage resilience in one's attempts to reach their goals
- Conduct role plays that allow students to gain insight into bullying behaviour and acceptable behaviour
- Be prepared to refer bullying students on to Counsellors / Heads of House to gain assistance to change behaviour

### ***At the staff level***

#### Know the Bullying Policy:

- Policy to be available on College Intranet
- Policy to be published via staff newsletters
- Encourage staff in-service regularly

#### Model Behaviour:

- Assertive rather than aggressive conduct.
- Remaining positive and open in communication.
- Listening for signs of distress in students.
- Being punctual to classes and supervisory duties.
- Intervening to stop behaviour that might lead to bullying - put downs; name calling; exclusion

### ***At the Student Level***

All students are made aware of the College's Safe School and Bullying Policy by the Head of House at commencement of enrolment, particularly those students who commence during the year.

## **For the Student Leaders**

Awareness of the College's Policy on Bullying:

- Discussion and being proactive at the Leadership Camp; SRC and Captains Council
- Modelling appropriate behaviour
- Talking to students in their House and listening for signs of distress in students
- Intervening to stop interactions between students that may lead to bullying

## **For the Individual Students**

Early intervention with students who show bullying tendencies

- Outline their responsibility regarding their behaviour
- Counselling.
- Contact with parents.
- Recognising any positive interactions with other students.

Early intervention with students who are vulnerable to bullying

- Explain their rights.
- Teach them how to be assertive and resilient.
- Affirm their worth by treating them with dignity and respect.

Class Placement

- Where required, place students in classes that lessen the opportunities for bullying to occur.

## ***At the Parent(s) / Carer(s) Level***

As primary care-givers, parents and carers are most influential in a child's life. They need to:

- Encourage responsible digital citizenship and model appropriate behaviours at all times
- Build a welcoming and inclusive home environment
  - Know your child's friends and their families
- Encourage self-esteem
  - Be positive in word and deed to help build your child's self-esteem
- Discuss issues
  - Create an environment where issues (school, news, community etc) are discussed in the home. Discuss ways in which your child could respond to bullying
- Be observant
  - Be aware of your online social media tools and activity by your child

Respond to:

- Unwillingness to attend school
- Unwillingness to catch the bus
- Declining academic performance and social interaction
- Frequency in loss of money or valuables
- Unexplained bruises / scratches / torn clothing
- Inappropriate online behaviour
- Unwillingness to discuss issues with you

## **RESPONDING TO BULLYING**

### ***Students***

What can a student do if they witness Bullying?

- Support the victim – tell the bully to “leave them alone”
- Report the incident to a member of staff via email, in person or via parent / carer
- Encourage the victim to seek support from an adult, House Captain, Head of House or family member via email, in person or via parent / carer

What can a student do if they are bullied?

- Seek assistance from someone who can help – Counsellors, Tutors, House Captains.
- Try not to retaliate because that is what a bully wants.
- Ignore it.
- Be assertive
  - “I told you I don’t like that”
  - “If you keep it up I’m going to see my Head of House”
  - “I told you I would go and see someone so I am going”
- Lean on the support of your friendship group
- Avoid places where the bullying occurs

The following flowchart outlines a process that may be followed by a student who is being bullied.

**FOR STUDENTS**  
**HOW TO RESPOND TO BULLYING**

**Step 1**

Try to show it doesn't upset you. Don't react. Tell the person you don't like it. Walk away.  
**Harassment stops.**  
**No more action is needed.**

**Harassment Continues.**

**Go to Step 2, 3 or 4**



**Step 2**

Tell the person harassing you to STOP. Tell them the behaviour is unwanted and illegal and if they continue you will report it.  
**Harassment stops.**  
**No more action is needed.**

**Harassment Continues.**

**Go to Step 3 or 4**



**Step 3**

Telling someone is reporting abuse – not “dobbing”  
Talk it over with:

- Your parents;
- Your Tutor;
- Year 7 Transition Coordinator
- Counsellor
- Designated Senior student;
- Head of House;
- Assistant Principal;
- Any member of staff with whom you feel comfortable

Make a plan with this person to deal with the problem and follow it through.  
**Harassment stops.**  
**No more action is needed.**

**Harassment Continues.**

**Go to Step 4**



**Step 4**

Go to the Head of House or Year 7 Transition Coordinator (if Year appropriate) with the person from **Step 3**.  
Head of House collects from all involved written statements (signed and dated) and/or interviews separately those involved.

**Harassment Continues.**

**Go to Step 5**



**Step 5**

Report the incident to the relevant Assistant Principal who will take appropriate action to address the matter, and, if necessary, will refer the matter to the Principal or to outside Authorities

## **THE USE OF SANCTIONS**

- a) Despite counselling and efforts to encourage the bully to feel concern for the victim and undertake responsible action to improve relationships, the problem may still remain unsolved - and the victim needs protection.
- b) Serious discussion with the bully and their parents / carers is then deemed necessary. Non-physical sanctions may be imposed, and in the most serious cases, suspension, exclusion or expulsion may be justified.

## **CONCLUSION**

Bullying is presently seen as a serious problem for all schools. We must think not simply and only of directly suppressing bullying but more positively of promoting among students co-operative and pro-social ways of thinking and behaving.

The gains are most notable for the well-being of students who are particularly vulnerable to bullying. But all students benefit in the process of bringing about a happier and more constructive school climate in which every student has the opportunity to achieve success, socially as well as academically.

The changes that are needed are not beyond the resources of schools. They do, however, require concerted attention from members of the school community, both teachers and students.

**COLLEGE RESPONSE TO BULLYING is ZERO TOLERANCE**



