

Catholic Ladies' College



Positive Relationships Policy: Bullying Prevention and Intervention

| Stage | Date | Ratified |
|-----------|------|----------|
| Initiated | 2009 | 2009 |
| Review 1 | 2013 | 2013 |
| Review 2 | 2016 | 2016 |
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| Review 4 | 2022 | 2022 |

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Under the Stewardship of
Mary Aikenhead Ministries



LOVE HOPE COMPASSION JUSTICE



Catholic Ladies' College Ltd

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Student Positive Relationships Policy: Bullying Prevention and Intervention

Catholic Ladies' College is a Mary Aikenhead Ministry in the tradition of the Sisters of Charity. We seek to develop in each member of our community a contemporary understanding and application of the charism of Mary Aikenhead, the spirituality of the Sisters of Charity, the mission and vision of Mary Aikenhead Ministries and their values of justice, love, compassion and hope.

In responding to this call Catholic Ladies' College is a Christ-centred community established to educate, in partnership with parents, women of faith, integrity, individuality and compassion, confident of their own worth as women and wholly involved in the transformation of society.

At Catholic Ladies' College the dignity of the human person is the foundation of all Catholic social teaching and is intrinsic to our education ministry. Consequently, the principle that the person is made in the image and likeness of God is central to the College mission.

The prevention of and responses to incidents of bullying and disrespectful behaviour are more readily achieved in a caring and supportive culture that promotes positive relationships and reflects Gospel values. Bullying, harassment, aggression and violence disregard core values of our faith, including dignity, respect, justice, equity, compassion, trust and courage. Importantly, such actions can adversely affect the wellbeing of our students and are therefore unacceptable.

Purpose

This policy:

- encourages a culture that is firm about unacceptable behaviour
- articulates how bullying is defined and addressed; including the means taken to prevent incidents and the response taken when an incident occurs
- supports the Mission and Vision Statement
- actively promotes anti-bullying messages, alerting students and staff of the need to be vigilant.

Principles

This policy is grounded in the beliefs that:

- every person has the right to be treated respectfully and feel safe from any form of verbal, physical and emotional abuse
- the College is committed to building and nurturing a community that values diversity
- parents are the prime educators of their children
- the College community is involved in the development of College policies
- reporting of unacceptable behaviour is essential to the effective implementation of this policy
- complainant(s) will be protected from victimisation
- learning technologies are used ethically and responsibly in the College environment
- communication is respectful and human dignity is valued
- regular monitoring of College policies is necessary.

Definitions

Bullying: is repeated unreasonable behaviour directed towards a person that creates a risk to health and safety. It occurs when an individual or a group deliberately upsets or hurts another person, their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion. Forms of bullying include:



Physical bullying: pushing, shoving, fighting, pinching and any other unwelcome physical contact used intentionally to intimidate or hurt someone.

Verbal bullying: put downs, particularly those referring to physical characteristics, can result in loss of self-esteem. Racial discrimination of any kind is a form of bullying.

Gesture bullying: non-verbal signals used to silence and intimidate a victim.

Extortion bullying: physically stronger and more powerful students may bully other students into giving up their possessions, buying food and drink, or taking part in rule breaking activities.

Exclusion bullying: deliberately being left out of activities is a most hurtful form of bullying.

Visual bullying: offensive notes or material, graffiti, or damaging other people's possessions.

Sexual bullying: touching, sexually orientated jokes, drawings of, or writing about someone's body, using rude names or commenting about someone's morals, unwanted invitations of a sexual nature, asking questions about someone's private life.

Cyber-bullying: the use of various forms of electronic media to spread text and visual messages to cause hurt, embarrassment, intimidation (see Cyber-bullying Policy)

Categories of Bullying: There are three broad categories of bullying:

1. **Direct physical bullying:** This form includes hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.
2. **Direct verbal bullying:** This form includes name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, or verbal abuse.
3. **Indirect bullying:** This form of bullying is harder to recognise and often carried out behind the bullied person's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Indirect bullying includes:
 - lying and spreading rumours
 - playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
 - mimicking
 - encouraging others to socially exclude someone
 - damaging someone's social reputation and social acceptance
 - cyber-bullying, which involves the use of email, text messages or chat rooms to humiliate and distress someone.

What Bullying is Not

Many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying, even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management. There are three socially unpleasant situations that are often confused with bullying including:

- **Mutual conflict:** In mutual conflict situations, there is an argument or disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the problem. However, unresolved mutual conflict sometimes develops into a bullying situation, with one person becoming targeted repeatedly for 'retaliation' in a one-sided way.
- **Social rejection or dislike:** Unless the social rejection is directed towards someone specifically and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others, it is not bullying.
- **Single-episode acts:** Single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If a student is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied. Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different students is not the same as bullying.

Person experiencing bullying:

- Discuss the situation with someone they trust e.g. parent/guardian, friend, relation, Homeroom Teacher, Counsellor, Year Level Team Leader, SLT Representative. This is not "dobbing". Everyone has the right to feel safe.
- If they feel confident enough to do so, they should tell the person who is bullying or harassing them to stop.
- Walk away from the situation to an area where they feel safe.



Bystanders/Observers of bullying behavior

- If possible, help and support the person who is being bullied.
- Refuse to join in.
- Talk to someone they trust who can help. This is not “dobbing”.
- Report the bullying.
- If they feel confident enough to do so, tell the person responsible for bullying to stop.

Procedures

All members of our College community must be aware of the possibility of bullying and take action to prevent bullying if it is reasonably foreseeable.

Responsibilities: The College

Catholic Ladies' College will respond to all reported incidents of bullying, perceived or actual, sensitively, fairly and promptly by:

- using an Anti-Bullying Response Pathway when we become aware of incidents. The Pathway assists with a regulated and thorough response.
- implementing an Anti-Bullying Action Plan as part of the Response Pathway.
- keeping a written record of any bullying investigation.
- encouraging students, staff and parent and carers to report bullying and cyber-bullying to the class teacher or directly to the Principal
- investigating complaints of bullying and cyber-bullying in a manner that respects the dignity and privacy of those involved.
- nominating a person or staff to co-ordinate strategies for the resolution of specific bullying incidents reported in this school
- notifying parents/guardians/carers of bullying incidents involving their children
- notifying the relevant Regional Learning Consultant of any serious incident
- contacting the Police/Police Youth Liaison Officer if the bullying situation has involved violence, threat of harm or alleged criminal conduct
- maintaining records of bullying incidents and related interventions
- conducting Student Safety Audits at least once a year to promote safe, inclusive and respectful learning environments
- promoting student voice and empowerment in classrooms and through the use of Student Representative Council to discuss matters associated with bullying, cyber bullying, safety and wellbeing
- reviewing and evaluating the College's anti-bullying policy and the responsible use of technology procedures to ensure they are working effectively.
- engaging with parents/guardians/carers to review and evaluate the College's anti-bullying policy and the responsible use of technology procedures to ensure they are working effectively.

Responsibilities: Staff

Staff at Catholic Ladies' College aim to treat all members of the College community with dignity and respect and build respectful relationships that respond effectively and sensitively to the needs of each student by:

- implementing the student anti-bullying and responsible use of technology procedures by responding promptly and appropriately to reported incidents of bullying
- supporting the student anti-bullying and responsible use of technology procedures through positive modelling and the promotion of appropriate behaviour
- engaging in professional learning to support appropriate anti-bullying responses which could include cyber safety, restorative justice practices, mediation and developing social skills in students. Such opportunities are made available to staff on the same basis as other professional learning.
- supporting all aspects of related school policies
- remaining vigilant in how students are using technology through positive modelling and the promotion of appropriate behaviour
- embedding critical thinking, values clarification, respectful relationships and developing empathy into our teaching practice
- responding to bullying and cyber-bullying concerns by providing age appropriate guidance and boundaries so that students can learn to self-regulate.



Responsibilities: Students

Students at Catholic Ladies' College have responsibilities to use technology appropriately and respectfully. The staff at Catholic Ladies' College will encourage and support students to:

- follow the anti-bullying and responsible use of technology procedures
- immediately seek help from a trusted adult if they are aware of or involved in a bullying or cyber-bullying incident
- seek support if bullied and refrain from retaliating in any bullying incident
- understand that any social networking site that identifies the school by name or image or implication is part of the school environment
- in age-appropriate circumstances the student should keep evidence of alleged bullying and produce it on request (for example phone text messages).

Bullying incidents can be advised to the College verbally (or in writing) through any of the following avenues:

- informing a trusted teacher
- informing the College Counsellor
- informing a student's year level team leader
- informing the Deputy Principal or the Principal.

Responsibilities: Parents/Guardians/Carers

Parents/guardians/carers at Catholic Ladies' College have responsibilities to use technology appropriately and respectfully. Catholic Ladies' College will work in partnership with parents/guardians/carers in responding to incidents of bullying. Staff at Catholic Ladies' College will:

- remind parents/guardians/carers about the need to reinforce the College messages in the proper use of technology to help children grow into ethical and responsible digital citizens
- encourage parents/guardians/carers to report serious matters of out-of-school hours bullying and cyber-bullying to the Police or other appropriate authority (such as the Internet Service Provider) and, as relevant, to the College
- ask parents/guardians/carers to contact the College immediately through the class teacher or directly through the Principal if they know of any bullying incident
- expect that parents/guardians/carers will model behaviour that is indicative of Gospel values and that reflect the College's Vision and Mission statement. Thus parents/guardians/carers are required to act respectfully to all members of the College community at all times.

Signage

Anti-bullying posters may be posted in strategic locations in the College to promote appropriate behavior and encourage students to respect individual differences and diversity.

Implementation

This policy is implemented through a combination of:

- staff training
- student and parent/guardian education and information
- effective incident reporting procedures
- effective management of bullying incidents when reported
- the creation of a 'no-bullying' culture within the College community
- effective record keeping procedures
- initiation of corrective actions where necessary.

References

- [Privacy Compliance Manual](#) (2020). Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) (CEVN website)
- Department of Education and Training (Vic). 2021. [Bullying Prevention and Response Policy](#)
- Department of Education and Training (Vic). 2021. [Cybersafety and Responsible Use of Digital Technologies](#)



Resources

[Bully Stoppers](#) – a resource containing information and advice for the school community, including students, parents and school staff.

[Bullying. No Way!](#) – a website for Australian schools, managed by the Safe and Supportive School Communities Working Group (SSSC) which has representatives from all states and territories, including the Catholic and independent schooling sectors.

[eSmart](#) – assists schools to develop a culture that promotes the safe, smart and responsible use of technology.

[eSafety Commissioner](#) – provides a range of up-to-date information and resources, coupled with a complaints system to assist children who experience serious cyberbullying and image-based abuse.

[Australian Student Wellbeing Framework \(2018\)](#)

[Student Wellbeing Hub](#)

Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV). (2018). [Introduction to the Principle of Inclusion: Child Safety in Catholic Schools in Victoria](#)

Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV). (2018). [Positive Behaviour Guidelines](#)

Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV). (2014). [Whole School Approaches to Supporting Positive Behaviour](#)

Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV). (2016). [Child Safety Commitment Statement](#)

Catholic Education Melbourne. (2018). [eXcel: Wellbeing for learning in Catholic school communities](#)

Catholic Education Melbourne. (2017). [Horizons of Hope: Vision and Context](#)

Catholic Education Melbourne. (2017). [Horizons of Hope: Wellbeing](#)

Catholic Education Melbourne. (2017). [Horizons of Hope: Learning Diversity](#)

Catholic Education Melbourne. (2018). [Identity and growth: A perspective for Catholic schools](#)

Intended Audience Students, Staff, Parents/Carers

Developed by Student Wellbeing Team