



Anti Bullying Policy

Ration *Forever Faithful*

At Our Lady of Mount Carmel we believe that children learn best in a warm, secure non threatening safe environment where self esteem is nurtured, differences respected and bullying behaviour not tolerated. Our approach to bullying is preventative. It involves a partnership between parents, teachers, students and relevant others to effectively address bullying, cyber bullying and harassment issues.

Definition

Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. Cyber bullying refers to bullying that is carried out through information and communication technologies.

Example:

- Physical violence such as hitting, pushing or spitting at another pupil.
- Interfering with another pupil's property, by stealing, hiding or damaging it.
- Using offensive names when addressing another pupil.
- Teasing or spreading rumours about another pupil or his/her family.
- Belittling another pupil's abilities and achievements.
- Writing offensive notes or graffiti about another pupil.
- Excluding another pupil from a group activity.
- Ridiculing another pupil's appearance, way of speaking or personal mannerisms.
- Misusing technology (internet or mobiles) to hurt or humiliate another person.

LINKS WITH OTHER SCHOOL POLICIES

- Wellbeing, Discipline Policy, Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy.

Signs of Bullying

Each individual student who has been bullied or is bullying others will respond and act differently. A student's behaviours and moods can also change for a variety of reasons. However, the following are some signs that may indicate a student is experiencing bullying:

Signs a teacher might notice:

becomes aggressive and unreasonable

starts getting into fights
refuses to talk about what is wrong
school grades begin to fall.

Sometimes bullying can be less obvious. Signs could include:

student is often alone or excluded from friendship groups at school
student is a frequent target for teasing, mimicking or ridicule at school
change in the student's ability or willingness to speak up in class and
appears insecure or frightened.

Signs a parent might report:

doesn't want to go to school
changes their method or route to school or are frightened of walking to school
changes in sleep patterns
changes in eating patterns
frequent tears, anger, mood swings
unexplained bruises, cuts, scratches
missing or damaged belongings or clothes
arriving home hungry.

Responsibilities

School staff

- To be role models in words and actions at all times
- To endeavour to provide a safe environment where children feel safe to report all forms of bullying
- To listen to and react promptly in an appropriate and supportive manner to a child's concerns
- To be observant of behaviour changes that may indicate bullying is occurring
- To ensure that children are given curriculum opportunities to develop the skills required to prevent or deal with bullying and cyber bullying
- To ensure that the all children are familiar with the schools policy for not tolerating bullying and the process that will occur should it happen
- To endeavour to provide a safe school environment for all members of the school community
- To seek co operation and involvement of parents/guardians of both victims and bully in resolving conflict situations
- To take a whole school approach focusing on safety and wellbeing of all staff and students when using modern technologies
- To follow the school's Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy and learn how to safely and responsibly use ICT
- To commit to the ongoing education of safety online with the support of relevant government programs

Students

- To know and understand their rights and responsibilities
- To ensure that there is respect for others physical, social and emotional wellbeing
- To understand that any form of bullying will not be tolerated and that both parents and teachers will be involved in resolving bullying behaviours with both bully and the victim
- To be familiar with the different forms of bullying behaviour and recognise these when they occur
- To continue to seek assistance when bullying persists
- To refuse to participate in bullying situations, e.g bystanders
- To be familiar with the school procedure in dealing with bullying and harassment
- To feel confident in their own ability to discourage bullying behaviour through the use of conflict resolution and negotiation skills
- To follow the school's Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy and learn how to safely and responsibly use ICT

Students will develop the skills required through participation at all grade levels in the following:

- Social and Emotional Learning Program
- Personal Safety Program
- Religious Education
- Wellbeing Inquiry units
- Class Rules
- Specific Anti Bullying Activities
- OLMC ICT Acceptable Use Policy

Parents

- To provide an appropriate role model for their child at all times
- To listen to and observe their child for changes in behaviour that may indicate that bullying is occurring e.g. school refusal, loss of interest or reduced performance at school, unexplained crying, anger toward siblings, withdrawal, mood swings, damaged clothing.
- To help their child to develop appropriate strategies to prevent and/or deal with bullying
- To acknowledge that bullying occurs and that their child may be involved in bullying behaviour either as a bully, a victim or an onlooker.
- To inform the school if they suspect that bullying is occurring and to communicate to their child the importance of doing so
- To be prepared to work with the school to resolve a bullying situation
- To familiarise themselves with the school's anti-bullying policy and the approach used in dealing with bullying situations

- To encourage their child/ren to follow the school's Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy and learn how to safely and responsibly use ICT

Implementation

Parents, teachers, students and the community will be aware of the school's position on bullying.

The school will adopt a three phase approach to bullying.

Phase One:

- Professional development for staff relating to bullying, harassment and the strategies that counter-act them.
- School community awareness and input relating to bullying, its characteristics and the school's programs and response through communication channels.
- To provide programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution, cyber safety and problem solving.
- A bullying survey and yard survey will be administered and acted upon at least once annually.
- Each classroom teacher to clarify at the start of each term the school policy on anti-bullying.
- Student Representative Council, House Captains, staff and students to promote a "Bully Free Zone".
- Structured activities available to students at recess and lunch breaks.

Phase Two:

The Immediate Response

- **STOP the bullying – ensure that the children are safe.**
- **Be vigilant in setting up tight supervision and communication systems so that all incidents can be dealt with immediately.**
- **To ignore is to condone.**
- **Make it clear that the behaviour is unacceptable to staff and students.**
- **Disapproval should be unambiguous.**
- **Stress that it is the behaviour and not the student that is unacceptable.**
- Promote the reporting of bullying incidents involving themselves or others.
- Classroom teachers on a regular basis reminding students to report incidents, and that reporting is not dobbing.
- Encourage parents to contact school, through The Communication Process, if they become aware of a problem.
- To remind children that our designated quiet place for children to access at recess and lunch times is The Quiet Area.
- The Leadership Team will monitor all reported bullying incidents.
- Issues identified through the Bullying Survey will be addressed.

Phase Three:

The Restorative Approach

At OLMC we promote the use of restorative practices. This approach has proven effective in many schools. The aim of this approach is to work with students rather than doing things to them or for them. Restorative Practices are underpinned by the principle of restorative justice whereby the student causing harm is held to account for his/her behaviour. This means:

- accepting responsibility for the harm caused to the individual being bullied
- accepting responsibility for the harm caused to others (e.g. staff, friends or family)
- recognising the need to take action to begin to repair the harm caused
- all those involved agreeing to a range of actions, which will be monitored over an agreed period of time.
- There is a range of restorative approaches, from informal meetings with students where they can talk through their issues in a structured way, to, at the most formal end, a restorative conference with an independent facilitator.

Restorative approaches can be effective when the requisite time and resources are invested, but it is important they are used in conjunction with, not in place of, disciplinary measures (Rigby, 2010a).

If the bullying continues unremittingly or is deemed a serious incident (see definition below) then the following process will occur

- The child is sent to the Principal.
- The Principal initiates meeting with all involved, child, parent, and teacher of both the victim and aggressor.
- A Behaviour Modification Plan will be implemented for the Aggressor/s and may include reparation and/or community service. Reconciliation will need to be sought between victim and aggressor.
- Consequences may involve any or all of the following:-
 - exclusion from class.
 - exclusion from yard.
 - withdrawal of privileges.
 - school suspension.
 - ongoing counselling from appropriate agency for both victim and bully.
- Ongoing monitoring of identified bullies / victims.
- Referral to outside Counselling Agencies if deemed necessary.
- Continued feedback to parents.

What constitutes a serious incident?

A serious incident may result in one, or a combination of the following:

- The degree of distress of the victim(s).
- The concern of the parents, which will normally be a reflection of their child's distress and inability to cope.
- The duration over which the bullying has occurred.
- The amenability of the bully when confronted to recognise the hurt that has been caused.
- The readiness of bullies to work towards a reconciliation.

