



## **ANTI-BULLYING & HARRASSMENT POLICY**

### **Rationale**

St Patrick's College, as a Catholic school in the Edmund Rice tradition, contributes to the development of young people through education and their formation in Christian virtue and conscience. The school aims to demonstrate the Church's commitment to the dignity of the individual, particularly by being called to relationship in the community. We believe in the inestimable worth of every human individual, for each is made in the image of God and is a reflection of God's goodness. Motivated by the love of Christ and with Him as our guide and model, we strive to live out His call to love one another as He loves us (John 15:12). Each person therefore has a right to feel safe and comfortable, and each person has the responsibility to show respect for themselves and for others.

### **Scripture**

So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all and especially for those of the family of faith (Galatians 6:10).

### **Principles**

- Bullying and harassment do not accord each individual the dignity inherent in their humanity as being made in the image of God;
- Bullying and harassment is unacceptable and can be illegal;
- Each person at the College has a right to feel safe and be free from bullying and harassment;
- Each person at the College has the responsibility to show respect for themselves and others;
- The College aims to contribute to the development of young people through education and their formation in Christian values;
- The College does not accept bullying and harassment and its response to those involved will be informed by the principles of justice, reconciliation and subsidiarity.

## **Guidelines**

Bullying and harassment are unacceptable and St Patrick's College is committed to creating an environment and community wherein bullying and harassment are not tolerated, and where students are taught the values and practice of respecting the dignity and well-being of all other individuals.

## **Definition**

Bullying and harassment occurs when a person or group is intimidated, frightened, excluded, humiliated, hurt, or discomforted by an instance or pattern of behaviours directed at them by others. Bullying and harassment may be physical, verbal or emotional and can result in a loss of self-esteem and decreased social effectiveness for the victim. It can be direct or indirect, including via the use of technology, for example by mobile phone or internet.

## **Harassment is a Community Issue**

It is the responsibility of every member of the St Patrick's College community to create a safe environment free from bullying and harassment. Bullying and harassment can be actively or passively condoned by the presence of bystanders and silent witnesses, who will therefore be subject to the same processes of mediation, counselling or disciplinary consequences, as the perpetrator/s.

## **Examples of Bullying/Harassment, not excluding other forms**

- Pushing, hitting, physical assault, spitting, damaging the property of someone else;
- Using 'Put-downs', sarcasm, name calling, ridiculing, threatening;
- Making rude or threatening signs;
- Demanding money, food or other belongings;
- Hurting friends by ignoring or isolating them, or by spreading rumours about them;
- Unwanted touching;
- Persistent movement of another person's property;
- Deliberately excluding someone due to achievements, personal appearance and abilities;
- Making derogatory, insulting, demeaning or mocking comments about a persons' sexuality, race, culture, religious beliefs, ability, background, social or family status;
- Whistling, gesturing or making comments about an individual's body or physical appearance (sexual harassment);
- Nuisance calls / emails / text messages / chat lines;

## **Some Signs which may indicate Student is being Bullied**

- Change in attendance at school;
- Change in achievement levels;
- Unexplained injuries;
- Change in sleep patterns;
- Change in eating patterns;
- Withdrawal from activities or groups;
- Neglect of physical appearance;
- Long lasting mood changes.

## **Reporting**

If a student is bullied or harassed, they should:

- Tell the person responsible to stop;
- Report the incident to a friend, a teacher or parent / caregiver;

If a student, parent or other person witnesses or becomes aware that a student is being harassed or bullied they should:

- Tell the person responsible to stop;
- Report the incident to a teacher, Year Level Coordinator or Deputy Headmaster – Wellbeing.

Any such report is to be referred to a Bullying report

### Complaints procedures for staff in the case of harassment by a student or a parent:

- Tell the alleged offender that you object to the behaviour and want it to stop.
- Report the incident to the Deputy Headmaster – Wellbeing who will then decide if the matter will be dealt with as a First Response or a Serious breach in accordance with this policy

## **First Response**

- Upon a bullying report being made to any member of the College community the following steps will be taken
  - The incident is to be documented by the Year Level Coordinator on behaviour tracking on the College intranet cross referencing the names of all involved on each student's file;
  - The Year Level Coordinator shall take appropriate steps to investigate the incident;
  - Once the incident has been properly investigated the Year Level Coordinator shall notify the parents of all students involved ;

- The Year Level Coordinator shall decide whether the matter is to be dealt with as a serious breach or a minor breach;
- The Year Level Coordinator shall treat minor breaches by getting the parties together and if appropriate the parents and any other party as decided appropriate to try and resolve the issue and may require the student or students to enter into an agreement, attend counselling or take other action to resolve the issues;
- If in the opinion of the Year Level Coordinator the matter is a serious breach or cannot be resolved between the parties then the Year Level Coordinator shall report the matter to the Deputy Headmaster- Wellbeing who may elect to treat the matter as a minor breach and deal with the matter in accordance with this provision otherwise may decide to treat the matter as a serious breach as set out in this policy.
- Any repeat bullying report involving the same student shall also be treated as a serious breach

### **Serious Breach**

- A serious breach is to be dealt with as follows:
  - The incident is to be documented by the Year Level Coordinator on behaviour tracking on the College intranet cross referencing the names of all involved on each student's file;
  - The Deputy Headmaster - Wellbeing will be notified
  - The Year Level Coordinator shall take appropriate steps to investigate the incident;
  - Once the incident has been properly investigated the Year Level Coordinator in consultation with the Deputy Headmaster – Wellbeing shall notify the parents of all student involved;
  - The Year Level Coordinator in consultation with the Deputy Headmaster - Wellbeing will call all students involved and their parents to a meeting to try to resolve the issue;
  - After such meeting the Deputy Headmaster – Wellbeing after reviewing all matters and in consultation with the Year Level Coordinator has the right to decide appropriate action against any student which may include;
    - Suspension
    - Counselling of any of the parties involved
    - Expulsion from the school
    - To report the matter to the police or
    - Any other action as deemed appropriate

## **Beyond School**

Where bullying/harassment occurs in circumstances in which the school is not directly responsible for the care of the student/s involved, the College reserves the right to respond in terms of the above procedures if it judges this appropriate in the interests and well-being of the student/s and of the College environment.

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**Status of Policy:** Ratified by the College Board October, 2014

**Sources:**

**Review:** 2019

