SATTLER CHRISTIAN COLLEGE
BULLYING & HARASSMENT POLICY

(NB: This policy is a subsection of the Sattler Student Wellbeing and Discipline Policy)

PREAMBLE

Concern and responsibility for the safety and well-being of all students is of prime importance at Sattler Christian College (SCC). The example of God as a father, nurturing his children throughout their life journey through his provision of love and guidance is a picture of God as the supreme 'care giver'. This establishes the foundation for SCC to function as a community where teachers and parents work together in partnership to establish a safe and supportive environment for all students, enhancing their learning opportunities and fostering their spiritual, emotional, social and academic development. Because a Christian school is called to be faithful and just, school leadership has the authority and obligation to ensure that the school environment is a safe place, free of bullying, harassment, unhealthy discrimination and the isolation of individuals. Therefore the school should take steps to prevent bullying type behaviour and take a strong stand that ensures all students and teachers are aware that the school does not tolerate bullying.

When bullying occurs it must be addressed in ways that:

- Comfort and empower the victim(s) of bullying
- Hold accountable those perpetrating bullying
- Minimise the continuation of bullying
- Seek restorative outcomes

POLICY SUMMARY

This policy outlines the basis on which the SCC school community seeks to care for all those within its community. The policy defines bullying; outlines the school's commitment to minimising bullying and how the school will respond when it occurs.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying is the persistent use of greater strength, influence or numbers to hurt or intimidate another person. It generally involves repeated negative behaviours that cause distress, hurt and or undue pressure to others including: exclusion, enticing others to exclude, ganging up, teasing, harassment (sexual, physical), discrimination (appearance, ability, race, faith), and intimidation.

The national definition of bullying for Australian schools:

Bullying is an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more persons. Bullying can happen in person or online, it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert).
Single incidents and conflict between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying. [However, these conflicts still need to be resolved.]

Forms of bullying can include:

Harassment is any unwanted, unsolicited and unreciprocated behaviour or statement that offends someone or humiliates them.

Victimisation is the specific targeting of a person by another person or a group of persons for repeated actions or comments of an unwelcome and unwanted nature. It is often inflicted on the subject in retaliation for a stand that has taken against a wrong action or lodged a complaint against harassment or bullying.

Sexual harassment occurs if a person makes an unwelcome sexual advance or an unwelcome request for sexual favours or engages in other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature and a reasonable person in the circumstances would have anticipated that the person harassed would be offended, humiliated or intimidated.

Physical abuse is any action of an unwanted nature inflicted upon a person which incurs hurt or harm to their bodies.

Psychological abuse is any action or comment of an unwanted nature directed towards a person which has the effect of creating fear, isolation, distress, humiliation or affront in the victim.

Cyber bullying eg inappropriate use of social networks to harm another person.

IMPLEMENTATION

Duty of Care

Duty of Care is a legal term describing the responsibility of executive and teaching staff to be aware of and protective of the students' well-being while under their supervision. If an outcome is foreseeable, the staff members most closely involved with the student concerned have a 'duty of care' to take action to protect their well-being. The executive also have a duty of care to ensure that there is an appropriate duty of care policy and that policy is being monitored and enforced.
(See also the Sattler Christian College Duty of Care Policy for more details.)

Prevention

SCC is committed to:

- Providing an environment where students are free from any form of harassment, bullying and exposure to any other harmful elements.

- Providing educational programmes promoting mutual respect and care, and which proactively address the topic of bullying. (eg. National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence)

- Allowing students to develop a sense of belonging and connectedness to the school community at large.

- Identifying students at risk and ensuring appropriate measures are made available to address their needs.

- Ensuring that appreciation of who each person is rather than what they can do.

- Encouraging an attitude of positive self-esteem and self-worth through the knowledge that God has created each student with unique contributions and gifts, able to make valuable contributions to the community.

- Encouraging the development of self-disciplined young people.

Awareness

- School leaders and teachers should be knowledgeable about bullying behaviours and aware of the mechanisms for dealing with and resolving such behaviour.

- School leaders and teachers should participate in taking steps to prevent it.

- School leaders and teachers will develop a plan to address bullying where there is an emphasis on awareness and prevention, but also include strategies of response.

Zero Tolerance

SCC takes a 'zero tolerance' approach to bullying, meaning that all bullying should be responded to in a manner that results in a cessation of the bullying. All reports of bullying should be investigated, responded to and the relevant staff member(s) should oversee the situation to ensure that the bullying behaviour does not continue. Responding to bullying is typically not an easy, quick fix response because bullying usually involves subtle practice, on-going relationships and the use of power in a wide range of forms. Therefore working through effective 'bullying response strategies' takes endurance and commitment from the staff member(s) leading the process.

It should be noted that the term 'bully' is at times too widely used for any unpleasant behaviour between students. The definition of 'bullying' involves the abuse of power in persistent or repeated ways that causes on-going intimidation. Children may at times incorrectly label certain behaviour as bullying.

Strategies

The 'why' issue - Digging in under the issue

Because bullying is basically about power and how people view themselves, the school needs to dig in under the issue to see why it's occurring. This takes time and effort by staff. There are no simple solutions and multiple strategies are needed. Some of the main responses will be:

- Encourage students to appropriately stand up for themselves and/or to talk to a teacher when they feel bullied.

- Teachers respond by taking the student seriously and carefully seek to find the best way to respond.

- The teacher facilitating reflection for both the perpetrator and victim on why the behaviour is happening, and seeking appropriate changes in the behaviour.

- Working through the causal issues is where the solutions to bullying is found.

- Teacher training (PD) may be conducted to assist teachers in dealing with bullying.

- Some classes or groups of students may be targeted for a special workshop session regarding anti-bullying behaviour.

- Information about the school's approach to bullying and other on-going information regarding bullying is communicated to the school community.

Student involvement

- Students should, where appropriate, be encouraged to 'work out' lighter level behavior or relationship issues among themselves. If this is unsuccessful the possibility of seeking the assistance of peers might be sought. Peer conflict resolution processes should be developed wherever possible.

Parent Involvement

- Parents should be familiar with the partnership ethos of the school and the way in which that would impact their involvement in handling bullying issues; eg keeping the school informed; allowing teachers to follow through; not getting directly and personally involved; discussing strategies for dealing with victimization or perpetration.
- The school should keep parents abreast of bullying matters that involves their child.

Intake Strategies

- Mechanisms for receiving and handling bullying complaints should be understood by students, parents and teachers.
- Reporting of bullying should be handled carefully and often times with the protection of confidentiality.

Bullying Survey

A specific strategy is the use of a Bullying Survey where students can express their concerns about bullying. A Bullying Survey occurs when the Section Coordinator deems it would be helpful in addressing bullying concerns.

The survey is confidential, unless the student ticks the option of desiring to talk to someone about the issue. Students are asked to respond to a range of questions about bullying including matters like: the name of the alleged bully; what occurred; the frequency and timing of when they have been bullied.

Follow-up to the survey occurs:

- Through the Section teachers analysing the information and determining the best course of 'follow up' action:
- Collating the results and discussion at a Section Meeting. Concerns are identified at this meeting and if required, procedures established for ongoing support and counselling with student(s) and Section Coordinator.
- Students who have been mentioned several times for distinct bullying behaviours are followed up by the assigned teacher/ Coordinator.
- Parents may be notified if it is thought the matter is serious enough. A meeting with parents may be requested.
- The Section Coordinator is responsible for following up issues for students and teachers that have arisen from the bullying survey. Very serious concerns may be passed on to the principal to address.

<u>Investigation & Response Strategies</u>

The following steps can be taken by the individual teacher/ staff member following up on a complaint about bullying.

1. Investigation: Investigate the complaint primarily through interviewing the 'key players'. Review the evidence.

2. Assessment: If the form of bullying involves any form of child abuse or sexual harassment refer to the section on Mandatory Reporting in Part A of the Student Wellbeing and Discipline Policy. Assuming the matter is one of bullying, the staff member should assess the level of response, ie whether the matter needs adult involvement; whether they deal with it; whether it should be referred onto a higher level of authority (depending on the severity).

3. Parent Involvement: If the matter requires more than immediate follow up, parents should be informed and involved in discussions about handling the difficulty.

4. Student Reconciliation: This will include describing the bullying behaviour such that the perpetrator understands the impact on the victim; outlying the school's 'zero tolerance' policy; discussion on the behavioural consequences including: suggested remedies from students; accountability strategies; appropriate punishment; apologies and to the extent possible reconciliation.

5. Follow Up: Indicate mechanisms for ensuring the bullying has been resolved.

6. Documentation: Staff involved in following up bullying that requires more than immediate follow up, should retain notes that summarise the situation and actions taken.

7. Continuance: Should the bullying behaviour continue, the matter should be referred to a Coordinator and/or Principal for more significant follow- up.

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