

# Student Anti-Bullying Guidelines & Procedures

*No Put Downs , Only Build-Ups!*



## Responding to Bullying

St Pius does not tolerate bullying. We believe in the worth of each child and strive for a school community where everybody feels safe, valued and is nurtured to reach their potential.

The Principal and class teachers clearly articulate the expectations and appropriate behaviours of all students.

Instances of bullying must be *reported*, usually to the class teacher. The relevant teacher will *investigate* the incident, using a 'no blame' approach, and may seek further information to clarify the situation. The teacher will complete an incident report and forward it to the Principal for *consultation* and to decide on the course of action to be taken. Parents/guardians of both the victim and the child exhibiting the bullying behaviour are notified and on-going communication commenced. The school will take *action* by implementing *goals*, consequences and measures appropriate to the circumstances of the incident. *Follow up* and monitoring of the students involved will occur. The Leadership Team will conduct an annual *review* of all instances of bullying.

## Rationale

At St Pius we have an expectation that everyone is treated with compassion, fairness and respect. We believe in the worth of each child and strive for a school community where everybody feels safe, valued and is nurtured to reach their potential. Bullying behaviours in all forms are wrong and will not be tolerated. It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that bullying behaviours are quickly eradicated and friendly behaviours and a safe and harmonious environment are promoted.

As a school that does not tolerate bullying, St Pius:

- Embraces and celebrates the diversity of the school community
- Accepts that everyone is an individual and understands differences
- Promotes respect of others and compassion
- Applauds the efforts and achievements of all individuals in the school community.

## What is Bullying?

A person is bullied when he or she is exposed repeatedly, over time, to negative action on the part of one or more other persons (Olweus, 1984). Bullying involves:

- a desire to hurt
- a hurtful action
- a power imbalance
- (typically) repetition
- an unjust use of power
- evident enjoyment by the aggressor
- a sense of oppression on the part of the victim

(Rigby, 1996).

According to the above definition, 'one-off' incidents involving social isolation, conflict, random acts of aggression/intimidation or meanness are not defined as bullying. Bullying can be physical, verbal, cyber, social and emotional.

## **Aims**

These procedures aim to provide guidelines to assist all members of the St Pius school community in responding to and dealing with incidents of bullying. Together, the school community will adopt a proactive rather than a reactive approach to bullying. We will aim to engender resilience in individuals, create a supportive school environment, maintain open and honest communication between all members of our community, and provide appropriate interventions for victims and children exhibiting bullying behaviour, with disciplinary procedures grounded in the principles of reconciliation and restorative justice. Natural justice and due process will be extended to all parties involved in an incident of bullying, and matters will be dealt with via an accountable and transparent process.

## **Responsibilities**

### **Responsibilities of the Principal**

- To ensure the expectations of staff, students and parents/guardians are clear.
- To monitor the implementation of school rules and values.
- To develop and maintain strong parent and community links.
- To effectively communicate and promote the school's behaviour management guidelines and procedures.
- To ensure that all members of the school community are aware of and have access to the anti-bullying school policy and procedures.
- To respond to each incident of bullying in accordance with the procedures detailed in this document.

### **Responsibilities of Staff**

- To model, educate and discuss appropriate behaviours.
- To watch for indicators of possible bullying.
- To ensure adequate supervision of children at all times.
- To respond to all reported and observed incidents of bullying, as detailed in this policy.
- To teach students the skills that will help build their self-esteem and empower them to feel confident to deal with bullying behaviours.

### **Responsibilities of Children**

- To have an understanding of bullying and bullying behaviours.
- To appropriately report incidents of bullying (occurring either to themselves or another child).
- To help someone who is being bullied.
- To not bully others.

### **Responsibilities of Parents/Guardians**

- To support the School's Student Anti-Bullying Guidelines and Procedures.
- To model, educate and discuss appropriate behaviours.
- To watch for indicators of possible bullying (including unwillingness to attend school or talk about school and activities, changes in personality, disturbed sleep, a pattern of headaches and stomach aches, loss of personal property).
- To encourage and support your child to inform you or a staff member if they are being bullied or witness bullying.
- To act appropriately if your child is found to be the bully.
- To speak to your child's teacher FIRST if you suspect or know that your child is experiencing bullying behaviour.

*Under no circumstance should parents/guardians contact other parents/guardians or children regarding an issue of bullying! All matters should be referred to your child's teacher who will then respond according to this document.*

## **How Will the School Respond to Bullying?**

When a bullying incident is reported or observed, the following steps will be taken. The process may be accelerated according to the severity of the incident and the age of the student involved.

When a bullying incident is reported, the class teacher will use a 'no blame' and shared concern approach and process in the first instance. The teacher will meet separately with the children involved to gain an understanding of what has occurred. This information will be recorded on an incident report and forwarded to the Principal/APRE to be noted and discussed. At this stage there may not be any consequences and parents/guardians may not be notified. If the incident is deemed not to be bullying, the classroom teacher will monitor the relevant students according to the Relationships Policy. Where appropriate, the class teacher may utilise an existing anonymous bullying survey tool.

If bullying is identified, the parents/guardians of both the child exhibiting the bullying behaviour, and the victim, will be requested to meet with the Principal/APRE and class teacher. They will be notified of the level and severity of the incident, and its consequences. Discussion of disciplinary procedures and expectations will also occur. The matter may be further addressed via mediation, individual counselling or the development of a behaviour management plan. Support through the Guidance Counsellor will be offered to both children and their families. A record of the incident and its management will be kept on file.

Continued bullying would result in an additional action plan being developed, often in conjunction with the Guidance Counsellor/Learning Support staff. Appropriate consequences would be delivered to the child exhibiting the bullying behaviour, and further dialogue with relevant parents/guardians would occur. Additional incident reports would be kept on file as necessary.

If bullying behaviour continues to occur, it will be decided if a new behaviour management plan will be implemented or if the child should be suspended in line with Brisbane Catholic Education policy.

## **Whole School Strategies**

At St Pius we implement the following programs to improve the children's self-esteem and resiliency, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving, and to nurture and grow genuine and supportive relationships amongst the student body.

**Buddy Program** – a program involving the grade six and seven students being assigned prep buddies, which helps foster relationships, builds social skills, and assists in the transition into primary school.

**Program Achieve** – a program delivered to all students via their class teachers with an emphasis on making the right choices and being a kind, friendly and cooperative member of the school community. Emphasis is placed on developing the skills of resilience, confidence, getting-along, persistence and organisation.

**Social Interaction** – throughout each school year numerous activities are held in mixed class groups. These fun activities assist in developing positive relationships throughout the school community.

**Religious Education Curriculum** – as a Catholic school, St Pius delivers a learning environment based on the ideals of respect for every person, justice for all, and trust in God. This ethos underpins all areas of learning.

**Chaplaincy Program and Structured Play Sessions** – where students are offered alternative recreational activities at lunch times in small groups, such as gardening and chess.

The **School Guidance Counsellor** is on hand to support students, parents/guardians and staff in maintaining or establishing appropriate relationships, and can lend their expertise to assist in the development of behaviour management plans, as required.

We also openly talk about bullying, what it is, how it affects people, and what to do about it. Students are encouraged to 'tell' of incidents of bullying. 'Telling' is established as an acceptable and responsible behaviour that is valued in the school community. Staff are provided with professional development in strategies relating to the counteraction of bullying and harassment.

## **Support for the Victim and the Child Exhibiting the Bullying Behaviour**

### **We support the victim in the following ways:**

By offering them an immediate opportunity to talk about their experience with their class teacher, another teacher or a membership of the Leadership Team if they wish

Informing the victim's parents

By offering continuing support when they feel they need it

By checking regularly to see how they are feeling

By taking necessary actions to prevent more bullying

### **We support the child exhibiting the bullying behaviour in the following ways:**

By talking about what happened to understand why they became involved

By involving the child's parents

By explaining to the child the procedures at school, the consequences of their behaviour and the expectations for the future

By enforcing appropriate consequences that are directly linked to the child's bullying behaviour and grounded in the principles of reconciliation, restitution and restorative justice

By implementing a behaviour monitoring program and continuing to monitor the child

## **References**

Rigby, K. (1996). *Bullying in Schools and What to Do About It*. London: Jessica Kingsley

Olweus, D. (1984). *Aggressors and their victims: Bullying at school*, in N. Freude and H. Gault (Eds.), *Disruptive behaviour in schools*. Chichester: John Wiley.