Anti-Bullying Policy

Introduction

Southern Cross Catholic College recognises that bullying can be a serious problem in society today. Bullying is very harmful and should not be part of anyone's on-going experiences. This policy is designed to provide guidance to determine what is considered bullying, how to develop positive outcomes and to resolve issues for all parties.

Rationale

Southern Cross Catholic College has implemented a policy against bullying, to minimize the effect of bullying on the physical and mental health of the students of the College.

Definition of Bullying
(Including Cyber-Bullying)

When someone (or a group of students) with more power repeatedly and intentionally use negative words and/or actions, which causes someone distress and risks to their wellbeing.
(Reference: National Centre against Bullying)

Bullying Is Not:

- **Mutual agreement and disagreement**
- **Single episodes of social rejection or dislike**
- **Single episode acts of nastiness or spite**
- **Random acts of aggression or intimidation.**

Principles, Values, Understanding

'For God gave us a spirit not of fear, but of power and love and self-control'
(2 Timothy 1:7)

This Gospel teaching of Timothy enlightens us to the fact that with God at our side we have the will to prevent and deal with acts of bullying.

At Southern Cross Catholic College everyone has the right to feel safe, valued and respected and it is everyone's responsibility to ensure this occurs. Bullying does not only involve participants but also bystanders. All members of our College community have the right to be treated with dignity and have their concerns handled with sensitivity and fairness.

Policy Statement

At Southern Cross Catholic College, keeping students safe from bullying is one of the most important responsibilities that we can undertake. As students are the future, the importance of providing them with the right to a safe and happy childhood cannot be underestimated. The initiatives that this policy provides reduce students' exposure to the risks of bullying, as well as educates and equips them with the skills to prevent the risk of bullying others. This policy extends to students attending College excursions, camps and other activities organised by the College, as well as the use of Information Technology and Social Media outside of the College, which impacts the good functioning of the College. (Refer to Cyber Bullying flow chart)

Implementation Issues

The policy aims to assist members of the Southern Cross Catholic College community to be able to identify and respond appropriately to instances of bullying behavior. Preventative and educative strategies undertaken by the College include, but are not limited to: Code of Behaviour, Safe Person, Circle Time, Health and Physical Education, Religious Education, Social/Emotional programs.

Social and emotional development helps students develop the skills, attitudes and behaviours needed to foster healthy relationships with peers, manage conflict with others, express care and concern, and work effectively with peers and teachers. Common examples include empathy, respect, cooperation, managing emotions, critical thinking, self-control, goal setting and problem solving.

In keeping with the Education Act (2006) and 'Working Together' (Townsville Catholic Education Code of Conduct for Parents and Volunteers), parents/guardians are not permitted to approach a child, other than their own, in relation to a perceived problem between students. College staff are well-skilled in the mediation process and in dealing with perceived problems.

Instances of bullying will be followed up and discussed where appropriate with the parents/guardians of students. This will be done with respect to maintaining the privacy and rights of the students involved and should not be addressed between parents.

All concerns about bullying should be reported to a member of staff and will be responded to by using any of the following processes:

- Refer to Code of Behaviour and/or Cyber Bullying Flowchart for clear guidelines on expectations and consequences.
- Interview undertaken with involved parties separately to determine if the incident is isolated or ongoing.
- Action plan is formulated to support all parties involved. This may involve a Guidance Counsellor.

Support Resources

- **Michael Grose**
  https://www.parentingideas.com.au/blog/

- **Bullying No Way**
  https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/

- **Centacare North Queensland**
  http://www.centacarenq.org.au

- **Circle Time**
  http://antibullying.net/circletime.htm

- **TCEO Social Media Policy**
  http://tsvceo-web.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/TCEO_DECPolicy_SocialMedia_FINAL.pdf

- **TCEO Addressing Bullying Policy**
  https://tsvceo-web.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/CathEd_DEC_BullyingPolicy_FINAL[NOBLEED].pdf

- **e-Safety Commissioner**
  https://www.esafety.gov.au/

Does the online behaviour/incident negatively impact student wellbeing and/or the good order and management of the school?

Yes   **No**

1. Initiate an incident response as soon as possible
- Start an incident management log (running sheet) which records times and dates of events, observations, tasks completed, persons involved and written conversation notes.
- On the same day, inform the student's parents/guardians (and student if appropriate) of the alleged incident, that it is being investigated and what you intend to do and CSA contact details. It is important that families work together with the school to respond.
- Assess potential risk and provide the students/parents with details of appropriate support services.

Inform the student's parent/s (and student if appropriate) of their options:
1. Report the incident to an external agency such as Police, Office of the e-Safety Commissioner or the Australian Cybercrime Online Reporting Network.
2. Report the online content/behaviour using the online tools provided by the website or app.
Principals may start contact with a law enforcement agency to report potential crimes that do not negatively impact the good order of the school.

2. Collect evidence
- Gather and preserve any evidence of the online content or potential unlawful behaviour, where legally permissible. Confiscation of digital devices can only be done under certain circumstances – refer to Student Usage Agreement – Information Communication Technology.

3. Is there a potential crime?
The Queensland Criminal Code contains several applicable sections for cyberbullying. A list of potential relevant criminal offences can include:
- Unlawful stalking;
- Computer hacking and misuse;
- Possession, distribution and making child exploitation material;
- Fraud – obtaining or dealing with identification information;
- Criminal defamation.

Potential crime

Yes   **No**

Principals may start contact with law enforcement agency and share information when reasonably satisfied the disclosure is necessary for the prevention, detection, investigation, prosecution or punishment of a criminal offence or to assist in averting a serious risk to the life, health or safety of a person or where the disclosure is in the public interest. Principals may continue to investigate the matter for disciplinary purposes, subject to all laws and Catholic Authority procedures.

Content may not constitute a criminal offence requiring police involvement, but it may negatively impact the good order and management/student wellbeing of the school. Principals can take action for the online behaviour outlined below.

4. Take steps to remove the upsetting or inappropriate content
- Where appropriate, request poster to remove inappropriate content. For assistance with this see the resources at the Social media safety centre and/or involve your Catholic School Authority or QCEC;
- Use the online Australian Cybercrime reporting network's (ACORN) reporting tool.

5. Managing student behaviour
Where the online behaviours of students do negatively impact the good order and management of the school and the wellbeing of students, the principal must, where appropriate, take:
- statutory disciplinary action to address cyberbullying:
  - that occurs outside of school hours or school grounds that also negatively affects the good order and management of the school (e.g. where the conduct, threats, intimidation or abuse have created, or would likely create a risk of, substantial disruption within the school environment, or where the conduct, threats, intimidation or abuse has or might reach school premises);
  - that is undertaken on or originating from school premises during school hours, or by means of use of the school ICT, concerning other students, staff or members of the school community;
  - OR
- use non-statutory options to respond to incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent manner, for example: discussion with student's parent/guardian informing them of the incident and your course of action; student mediation; apology; ICT/mobile technology ban; guidance referral.

6. Student welfare
Regardless of whether or not the cyberbullying is a matter that must be dealt with by the school Principal as a disciplinary matter or by alternative means (see 5 above), Principals must consider and support the wellbeing of any student who is displaying apparent negative effects from cyberbullying, by means of offering the student guidance officer support. Regularly (weekly at first, then monthly) follow up with students and parents to confirm there is no ongoing negative behaviour/bullying.

7. Recording the incident
If the incident was resolved at school level, record details of the incident, as reported to the school and investigated through the incident management process, in the student's behaviour record system. Track and analyse the grouped collective behaviour incident data to detect patterns that focus school prevention strategies.