



# MSCW Anti - bullying Policy

## Provisions

This Policy is endorsed by the College Executive

- is available on the school's website at: [www.mscw.nsw.edu.au](http://www.mscw.nsw.edu.au)
- has been distributed to staff on the staff intranet
- is referenced in the student diary (excerpts from)
- was created on August 2012
- was last reviewed June 2015

Key reference for this policy:

[CEO Anti-Bullying Policy](#)

[CEO Policy Re:Complaints](#)

## Policy rationale

As a Catholic school, all members of Marist Sisters' College community have the right to an environment free from intimidation, harassment, humiliation and hurt. In a Catholic community, there are also important expectations on each person to seek to maintain positive relationships with one another and to resolve conflict in a respectful and dignified manner. Students and staff alike are entitled to experience positive and respectful relationships. Bullying and harassment isolates and devalues people. It is the responsibility of the College community to create a school environment that actively endeavours to prevent bullying. Staff at all times are expected to be active role models in their dealings with others.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Each person is created in the image and likeness of God.
2. The dignity of every member of the school community is respected.
3. Bullying in any form is unacceptable behaviour.
4. All partners in a Catholic school share a joint responsibility to identify and address bullying behaviour.
5. Parents/caregivers have an integral role to play in the prevention and resolution of bullying.
6. Explicit instruction on the school's policy and procedures for dealing with incidents of bullying is part of our College processes..
7. Effective record-keeping is a crucial component of the College's response to the issue of bullying.
8. Where appropriate, the College will collaborate with outside agencies on matters concerning bullying, to the extent necessary and permitted by law to resolve the matter.

## **Definitions of Bullying**

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.

Bullying can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and all forms of harassment including that based on sex, race, disability, sexual orientation or practice of religion. Bullying of any form, or for any reason, can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Bullying can happen anywhere: at school, travelling to and from school, in sporting teams, between neighbours, or in the workplace.

Bullying behavior can be:

- verbal, eg name calling, teasing, abuse, putdowns, sarcasm, insults, threats
- physical, eg hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting
- social, eg ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating, making inappropriate gestures
- psychological, eg spreading rumours, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions, malicious SMS and email messages, inappropriate use of camera phones.

Conflict or fights between equals and single incidents are not defined as bullying.

Bullying behaviour is not:

- children not getting along well
- a situation of mutual conflict
- single episodes of nastiness or random acts of aggression or intimidation.

## **Signs a Child is Being Bullied**

There are many warning signs that may indicate that someone is affected by bullying—either being bullied or bullying others. Recognizing the warning signs is an important first step in taking action against bullying. Not all children who are bullied or are bullying others ask for help.

Look for changes in the child. However, be aware that not all children who are bullied exhibit warning signs.

Some signs that may point to a bullying problem are:

- Unexplainable injuries
- Lost or destroyed clothing, books, electronics, or jewellery
- Frequent headaches or stomach aches, feeling sick or faking illness
- Changes in eating habits, like suddenly skipping meals or binge eating. Kids may come home from school hungry because they did not eat lunch.
- Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares
- Declining grades, loss of interest in schoolwork, or not wanting to go to school
- Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations

- Feelings of helplessness or decreased self esteem
- Self-destructive behaviors such as running away from home, harming themselves, or talking about suicide
- If you know someone in serious distress or danger, don't ignore the problem.

### **Signs a Child is Bullying Others**

Young people may be bullying others if they:

- Get into physical or verbal fights
- Have friends who bully others
- Are increasingly aggressive
- Have unexplained extra money or new belongings
- Blame others for their problems
- Don't accept responsibility for their actions
- Are competitive and worry about their reputation or popularity

### **Procedures at Marist Sisters' College to deal with Bullying**

- 1.1 All members of the College Community play a part in dealing with and the prevention of bullying. The College's response to bullying- irrespective of what form it may take- is one of decisive action. Bullying behaviour is not tolerated under any circumstances and serious consequences apply. The "Managing students with challenging behaviours" document produced by the Catholic Education Office Sydney is a guiding document for student management at MSCW.
- 1.2 All students are encouraged to **immediately** tell a teacher, if they are being bullied or feel intimidated by another student or students. Typically the first point of contact would be the student's tutor. The teacher contacted would report this to the House Coordinator/s who will investigate the matter. In situations of ongoing bullying this would be reported to the Assistant Principal for investigation and follow up.
- 1.3 It is essential that each student takes responsibility for making MSCW a safe and secure environment and speaks up if another student is being bullied. Responding with violence – either physically or verbally – is not an acceptable response if bullying occurs.

### **Responses to Bullying at Marist Sisters' College**

All members of the College play a part in preventing bullying. We will endeavour to:

- Educate students regarding bullying, including cyber bullying - what it is, how can it be prevented, how it affects us and what we can do about it.
- Educate staff regarding bullying and in implementing the College's anti-bullying policy.
- Treat all instances of bullying seriously and be aware that victims may be hesitant or afraid to speak out.

## **Responsibilities of Students**

Every student is responsible for upholding the principles of Respect, Rights, Responsibility and Resilience which protect against bullying and isolation which results in unhappiness at school.

- Every student is expected to build positive relationships with others so that bullying does not occur.
- All students must refuse to be involved in any bullying.

## **Responsibilities of Staff**

- Be positive role models in relationships with others.
- Treat all instances of bullying seriously and report it to the House Co-ordinator, Assistant Principal or Principal.
- Educate students in ways to prevent bullying.
- Understand that through punctuality to class, active supervision and challenging unacceptable behaviour, staff can play an active role in preventing bullying in class and on the playground.

## **Suggestions for Parents/Guardians**

- Take an active interest in your daughter's social life and acquaintances.
- Advise your daughter to speak to a trusted member of staff. If possible allow your daughter to report and deal with the problem herself as this often leads to the development of necessary social and communication skills in such situations.
- If necessary, inform your daughter's Tutor or House Co-ordinator.
- It can be counter-productive for parents/guardians to contact parents/guardians of the student/s involved. Under no circumstance should parents/guardians contact the student/s involved.
- Understand that the resolution of the situation may take time.
- Encourage your daughter to speak openly with you and to look to positive strategies to deal with her feelings.
- Monitor your daughter's progress and if you are still concerned contact the College. For further information refer to the [Report Process for Parents](#)

## **Process for Dealing with Bullying at Marist Sisters' College**

Suspected bullying can be reported by any parent, student(s) or any member of staff. Depending on the nature of the incident, the following steps may be involved in dealing with an allegation of bullying:

1. House Coordinators of both the student who is reporting being bullied and the student accused of bullying are informed.

2. The student making the report is interviewed by her House Coordinator and given reassurance that the matter will be investigated. This student may ask another teacher or student to be present to support her.

3. Background information is collected from various sources and documented.

4. It is made clear that any suggestion of retaliation by any party will be treated as harassment.

5. Students involved may be referred to the College' Counsellor.

6. If the incident is found to warrant action then the student accused of bullying is advised of the following:

- her actions must stop and the student should reflect on what she can do to make the situation better
- those who have been bullied do not want similar incidents to continue
- the person accused of bullying is to attend a follow-up meeting with the House Coordinator for ongoing monitoring of the situation
- parents/guardians may be informed by phone and in writing, by the House Coordinator or Assistant Principal, of the nature of the incident and the actions taken. Serious incidences may be reported to the police.

7. If the bullying continues or is repeated then one or more of these more formal actions may take place:

- the House Coordinator will convene a Restorative Justice meeting of students affected and a support person (if requested). Parents/guardians may be contacted to inform them of the process
- a formal meeting may be held where those involved are represented to discuss the allegations and the College's anti-bullying policy
- an action plan may be formulated
- in an agreed period of time the group may be brought together to review the

incident

- both the alleged victim and the alleged bully may be referred to counselling or a conflict resolution process.
- act of revenge or retaliation may result in suspension from the College.
- serious incidents of bullying, including student bullying of staff, will be escalated to the College leadership team and may be reported to the police.

### **Cyberbullying**

Cyberbullying is the use of information and communication technology to deliberately hurt, harass, threaten, or intimidate someone. Just like other forms of bullying, it is about human relationships, power and control. Those who bully others are trying to establish power and control over those they perceive as weaker than them. Cyberbullying can occur in different forms, such as text, video or image, and can be conveyed using a range of modes, such as e-mail, instant messaging (IM), chat rooms, mobile phones, social websites, weblogs (blogs) and on-line personal polling sites.

[CEO Student Acceptable Use Form](#)

[MSCW Student Acceptable Use Form](#)

### **Suggestions on handling Cyberbullying for Students**

- do not respond to the abuse
- do not engage with the abuse, rather leave the area, stop the activity or block the sender
- talk to someone about it, ignoring bullying may lead to it becoming worse. Tell an adult you trust - your parents, a teacher, Tutor, House Coordinator, Assistant Principal or Principal
- keep records or print outs of messages or a screenshot to help identify the bully and show these to whomever you have reported the incident
- get a new member or account if necessary and only give it to one person at a time
- never give anyone access to your accounts or give your usernames and passwords

### **Suggestions on handling Cyberbullying for Parents**

- place and keep home computers in an open, common area
- inform Internet Service Provider (ISP) or mobile phone service provider of any abuse
- keep records for evidence by saving or printing out messages or keeping a screenshot and note the time and date

- install parental control programs on home computers that provide filters for both instant messaging and chat rooms
- report serious incidences to the police.
- Finally, make a note of the date, time, location, e-mail address and name (nickname or real) and any other information that you think might be useful and then Save the file.

#### Contact Information:

- NSW Youth Liaison Officers. Phone Number: 0437883329
- School counsellor, Phone Number: 98162041
- Community services Helpline: Phone number 133627
- NSW Health Phone Number: 02 9391 9000
- Note: Phone number for school Liaison Police and/or Youth Liaison Officers is available at: <http://www.police.nsw.gov.au/>
- Contact Us >Gladesville Police Station  
<https://www.police.nsw.gov.au/about-us/structure/operations-command/local-area-commands>
- [Australian Federal Police](#)
- [Reach Out](#)
- [Beyondblue](#)
- [Bullying - No Way!](#)
- [CyberSmart](#)