

Introduction

At Emmanuel College the dignity of the human person is the foundation of all Catholic social teaching and is intrinsic to our education ministry. Consequently, the principle that the person is made in the image and likeness of God is central to the mission of our parish school.

This policy identifies the interconnectedness of the characteristics of quality Catholic learning and teaching. It is intended to value, respect and promote the self-esteem and dignity of each student, regardless of their cultural or linguistic background. The school will actively promote anti-bullying messages, alerting students and staff of the need to be vigilant.

It is essential that we create and maintain a respectful, safe and supportive learning environment that promotes student wellbeing, personal growth and positive self-esteem amongst our diverse range of learners. ([eXcel: Wellbeing for learning in Catholic school communities](#)).

The prevention of and responses to incidents of bullying, inappropriate use of technology and disrespectful behaviour are more readily achieved in a caring and supportive school culture that promotes positive relationships and reflects Gospel values. Bullying, cyber-bullying, harassment, aggression and violence disregard core values of our faith, including dignity, respect, justice, equity, compassion, trust and courage. Importantly, such actions can adversely affect the wellbeing of our students and are therefore unacceptable.

Purpose

This policy:

- encourages a culture that is firm about unacceptable behaviour
- articulates how bullying is defined and addressed; including the means taken to prevent incidents and the response taken when an incident occurs
- supports the school's Mission and Vision Statement and guidelines of Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS)
- actively promotes anti-bullying messages, alerting students and staff of the need to be vigilant.

Principles

This policy is grounded in the beliefs that:

- every person has the right to be treated respectfully and feel safe from any form of verbal, physical and emotional abuse, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures (such as Aboriginal culture)
- the school is committed to building and nurturing a community that values diversity
- parents are the prime educators of their children
- the school community is involved in the development of school policies
- identification and reporting of unacceptable behaviour is essential to the effective implementation of this policy
- complainant(s) will be protected from victimisation

- learning technologies are used ethically and responsibly in the school environment, and in a way that minimises the opportunity for children, young people and students to be harmed
- communication is respectful and human dignity is valued
- regular monitoring of school policies is necessary, and improvements are made where appropriate.

Definitions

Bullying: is repeated unreasonable behaviour directed towards a person that creates a risk to health and safety. It occurs when an individual or a group deliberately upsets or hurts another person, their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion. Forms of bullying include:

Physical bullying: pushing, shoving, fighting, pinching and any other unwelcome physical contact used intentionally to intimidate or hurt someone.

Verbal bullying: put downs, particularly those referring to physical characteristics, can result in loss of self-esteem. Racial discrimination of any kind is a form of bullying.

Gesture bullying: non-verbal signals used to silence and intimidate a victim.

Extortion bullying: physically stronger and more powerful students may bully other students into giving up their possessions, buying food and drink, or taking part in rule breaking activities.

Exclusion bullying: deliberately being left out of activities is a most hurtful form of bullying.

Visual bullying: offensive notes or material, graffiti, or damaging other people's possessions.

Sexual bullying: touching, sexually orientated jokes, drawings of, or writing about someone's body, using rude names or commenting about someone's morals, unwanted invitations of a sexual nature, asking questions about someone's private life.

Cyber-bullying: the use of various forms of electronic media to spread text and visual messages to cause hurt, embarrassment, intimidation.

Categories of Bullying: There are three broad categories of bullying:

1. **Direct physical bullying:** This form includes hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.
2. **Direct verbal bullying:** This form includes name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, or verbal abuse.
3. **Indirect bullying:** This form of bullying is harder to recognise and often carried out behind the bullied person's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Indirect bullying includes:
 - lying and spreading rumours
 - playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
 - mimicking
 - encouraging others to socially exclude someone
 - damaging someone's social reputation and social acceptance
 - cyber-bullying, which involves the use of email, text messages or chat rooms to humiliate and distress someone.

What Bullying is Not

Many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying, even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management. There are three socially unpleasant situations that are often confused with bullying including:

- **Mutual conflict:** In mutual conflict situations, there is an argument or disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the problem. However, unresolved mutual conflict sometimes develops into a bullying situation, with one person becoming targeted repeatedly for 'retaliation' in a one-sided way.
- **Social rejection or dislike:** Unless the social rejection is directed towards someone specifically and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others, it is not bullying.
- **Single-episode acts:** Single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If a student is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied. Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different students is not the same as bullying.

Procedures

All members of our school community must be aware of the possibility of bullying and take action to prevent bullying if it is reasonably foreseeable.

Responsibilities: The school

Emmanuel College will respond to all reported incidents of bullying, perceived or actual, sensitively, fairly and promptly by:

- using an Anti-Bullying Response Pathway when we become aware of incidents. The Pathway assists with a regulated and thorough response – refer to Appendices
- implementing an Anti-Bullying Action Plan as part of the Response Pathway – refer to Appendices
- keeping a written record of any bullying investigation.
- encouraging students, staff and parent and carers to report bullying and cyber-bullying to the class teacher or directly to the principal
- investigating complaints of bullying and cyber-bullying in a manner that respects the dignity and privacy of those involved.
- ensuring that complaints of bullying and cyber-bullying are handled in a way that is sensitive to students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and that recognises the diverse circumstances of students
- nominating a person or staff to co-ordinate strategies for the resolution of specific bullying incidents reported in this school
- notifying parents/guardians/carers of bullying incidents involving their children and allowing them to have input into decisions that affect their children, where this is appropriate
- notifying the relevant Regional Leadership Consultant of any serious incident
- contacting the Police/Police Youth Liaison Officer if the bullying situation has involved violence, threat of harm or alleged criminal conduct
- maintaining records of bullying incidents and related interventions in accordance with relevant recordkeeping requirements (such as the Public Record Office Victoria Recordkeeping Standards)
- conducting Student Safety Audits at least once a year to promote safe, inclusive and respectful learning environments.
- promoting student voice and empowerment in classrooms and through the use of Student Representative Council to discuss matters associated with bullying, cyber bullying, safety and wellbeing

- reviewing and evaluating the school’s anti-bullying policy and the responsible use of technology procedures to ensure they are working effectively.
- engaging with parents/guardians/carers to review and evaluate the school’s anti-bullying policy and the responsible use of technology procedures to ensure they are working effectively.

Responsibilities: Staff

Staff at Emmanuel College aim to treat all members of the school community with dignity and respect and build respectful relationships that respond effectively and sensitively to the needs of each student by:

- implementing the student anti-bullying and responsible use of technology procedures by responding promptly and appropriately to reported incidents of bullying
- supporting the student anti-bullying and responsible use of technology procedures through positive modelling and the promotion of appropriate behaviour
- engaging in professional learning to support appropriate anti-bullying responses which could include cyber safety, restorative justice practices, mediation and developing social skills in students. Such opportunities are made available to staff on the same basis as other professional learning.
- supporting all aspects of related school policies
- remaining vigilant in how students are using technology through positive modelling and the promotion of appropriate behaviour
- embedding critical thinking, values clarification, respectful relationships and developing empathy into our teaching practice
- responding to bullying and cyber-bullying concerns by providing age appropriate guidance and boundaries so that students can learn to self-regulate.

Responsibilities: Students

Students at Emmanuel College have responsibilities to use technology appropriately and respectfully. The staff at Emmanuel College will encourage and support students to:

- follow the anti-bullying and responsible use of technology procedures
- immediately seek help from a trusted adult if they are aware of or involved in a bullying or cyber-bullying incident
- seek support if bullied and refrain from retaliating in any bullying incident
- understand that any social networking site that identifies the school by name or image or implication is part of the school environment
- in age-appropriate circumstances the student should keep evidence of alleged bullying and produce it on request (for example phone text messages).

Responsibilities: Parents/Guardians

Parents/guardians at Emmanuel College have responsibilities to use technology appropriately and respectfully. Emmanuel College will work in partnership with parents/guardians in responding to incidents of bullying. Staff at Emmanuel College will:

- remind parents/guardians/carers about the need to reinforce the school messages in the proper use of technology to help children grow into ethical and responsible digital citizens
- encourage parents/guardians/carers to report serious matters of out-of-school hours bullying and cyber-bullying to the Police or other appropriate authority (such as the Internet Service Provider) and, as relevant, to the school

- ask parents/guardians/carers to contact the school immediately through the class teacher or directly through the principal if they know of any bullying incident
- expect that parents/guardians/carers will model behaviour that is indicative of Gospel values and that reflect the school's Vision and Mission statement. Thus parents/guardians/carers are required to act respectfully to all members of the school community at all times.
- encourage parents/guardians/carers to report serious matters of out-of-school hours bullying and cyber- bullying to the Police or other appropriate authority (such as the Internet Service Provider). When such bullying concerns the wellbeing of their own child, parents/guardians/carers are to contact the principal.
- encourage parents/guardians/carers to be involved in decisions regarding incidents of bullying that affect their child, where this is appropriate.

List of Appendices

- Appendix 1: The Method of Shared Concern
- Appendix 2: Step-by-Step Guide: Online incidents of inappropriate behaviour affecting students.

References

- [Privacy Compliance Manual](#) (2020). Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) (CEVN website)
- Department of Education and Training (Vic). 2021. [Bullying Prevention and Response Policy](#)
- Department of Education and Training (Vic). 2021. [Cybersafety and Responsible Use of Digital Technologies](#)
- Department of Education and Training (Vic). 2020. [Mobile Phones - Student Use](#).

Resources

[Bully Stoppers](#) – a resource containing information and advice for the school community, including students, parents and school staff.

[Bullying. No Way!](#) – a website for Australian schools, managed by the Safe and Supportive School Communities Working Group (SSSC) which has representatives from all states and territories, including the Catholic and independent schooling sectors.

[eSmart](#) – assists schools to develop a culture that promotes the safe, smart and responsible use of technology.

[eSafety Commissioner](#) – provides a range of up-to-date information and resources, coupled with a complaints system to assist children who experience serious cyberbullying and image-based abuse.

[Australian Student Wellbeing Framework \(2018\)](#)

[Student Wellbeing Hub](#)

Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV). (2018). [Positive Behaviour Guidelines](#)

Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV). Child Safety Commitment Statement

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools. (2018). [eXcel: Wellbeing for learning in Catholic school communities](#)

Catholic Education Melbourne. (2017). [Horizons of Hope: Vision and Context](#)

Catholic Education Melbourne. (2017). [Horizons of Hope: Wellbeing](#)

Catholic Education Melbourne. (2017). [Horizons of Hope: Learning Diversity](#)

Catholic Education Melbourne. (2018). [Identity and growth: A perspective for Catholic schools](#)

[Public Record Office Victoria Recordkeeping Standards](#)

Related MACS Policies

- Enrolment Policy
- Student Behaviour Policy and related CECV Positive Behaviour Guidelines
- Pastoral Care of Students Policy
- MACS Duty of Care Guidelines

Appendix 1: The Method of Shared Concern

The method of shared concern is an approach to deal with bullying developed by the Swedish Psychologist, Prof Anatol Pikas. The assumptions of this model have been maintained in our implementation of the approach. We have attempted to give more details in order to select the correct students/staff to implement this approach. What follows is a basic script of the “method of shared concern”, an appraisal by Australia’s leading researcher into bullying, Dr Ken Rigby and some factors that we have found have improved the rate of success that we achieve in implementing the model.

Step 1: Student reports being the victim of bullying or harassing behaviour.

Step 2: Ask the student the names of the people involved and also the names of several class leaders who are not involved. (Class leaders or students that have influence, not necessarily the best behaved students, primarily a student who others will follow).

Step 3: Briefly interview all of the students mention in Step 2. The following is an example of an interview with a student involved in bullying (name of student being bullied is Jack)

Staff – Thanks for coming along, I only need a couple of minutes of your time. I am really concerned about Jack, he seems to be struggling to settle in at the moment. Is there anything that you have noticed that you can tell me that we might be able to help out with?

Student - ...if they say no, inquisitive suggestions/prompts can be used, like “do kids pick on him?”

Staff – OK, well what do you think we can do about it? Do you have any suggestions that you might be able to help us out a bit with?

Student - 1.

2.

3. (take note of what they suggest)

Staff – Well that sounds great. I would really appreciate your help with this. How about we have another brief chat next week, and you can tell me how these things you mentioned worked.

An appraisal by Dr Ken Rigby

1. It is assumed that bullies typically (not always) are insensitive to the harm they are doing to the victim. The insensitivity is due to their involvement in a group that seems to give legitimacy to their bullying activities and prevents them from feeling really responsible for the outcomes.
2. What they appear to gain through bullying is mainly a sense of being part of a group that is “having fun”.
3. As individuals, bullies commonly feel uncomfortable about what is being done.
4. A hostile blaming attitude on the part of an authority figure is likely to increase the desire to continue bullying – in ways that are more difficult to detect.
5. Working with individuals by initially sharing with them one’s concern for the victim is likely to elicit a more positive response.
6. Note that although the method involves a non-blaming approach, it does not in any way seek to excuse or condone bullying. It is in fact quite direct and confrontational. It strongly invites and expects a responsible response.
7. It is best, if possible, not to start with the victim as this is likely to produce resentment and perhaps further endanger the victim.

8. The victim however must be seen after interview with bullies, in part to ascertain whether he or she is acting passively or provocatively. If the latter, clearly work must be done with the victim too.
9. Although the aim is to re-individualise bullies, the idea is not to “break up” groups (children have a right to enjoy being in a group) but eventually to change their attitude towards the victim and other potential victims.
10. An important benefit from this approach is that it can sometimes lead to a “change of heart” on the part of bullies and remove the need for constant surveillance.
11. It does require some careful thought and planning on how to use the method with students. However, once one is comfortable with it, it need not be time consuming. Short interviews and meetings only are often all that is needed.
12. Remember if the bullying can be stopped this way it may prevent further troubles for the victim and further dislocation in the school.

Factors to consider when implementing the Model:

- Select a member of staff with whom the students involved have a good rapport.
- When interviewing students do it in private, one student at a time.
- Ensure that the student is aware that they are not in any trouble.
- Keep emphasising that it is you as a staff member that is concerned about the student.
- Act inquisitively towards the student; do not accuse the student or any student directly.
- Encourage them to generate options to deal with the situation.
- You must follow-up the student in the following weeks.
- Ensure that your manner in dealing with the students is very concerned, which allays any fears they may have of being blamed.
- Select students who are involved and those who are not involved but have influence in the class.

Pikas, A. (1989) The common concern method for the treatment of mobbing. In E. Roland and E. Munthe (eds), Bullying, an international perspective. London: Fulton.

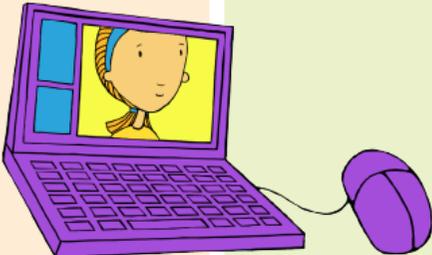
Rigby, K (1996). Bullying in Schools – and what to do about it. Camberwell, Melbourne. Australian Council for Educational Research, pp209-220.

If there are any problems please speak to the School Counsellor or Campus Leader at Emmanuel College.

Appendix 2 - Step Guide: Online incidents of inappropriate behaviour affecting students




Step-by-Step Guide: Online Incidents of Inappropriate Behaviour Affecting Students

<h3>Step 1</h3> <h4>Identify Concerns</h4> <p>Is the student distressed? A student may feel distressed by events including cyberbullying, sexting, exposure to pornographic images or a breach of the school's Bullying Prevention Policy or Student Engagement Policy.</p> <p>Has a student been exposed to inappropriate behaviour? A student may have been exposed to and affected by inappropriate behaviour online. This may put them at risk of suffering significant physical, psychological or emotional harm. They may be in need of immediate protection.</p> <p>Has a student engaged in inappropriate behaviour affecting ANOTHER student? A student may have engaged in inappropriate behaviour online that may cause psychological or emotion harm to ANOTHER student(s). All students may be in need of immediate protection.</p> <p>Has a student engaged in inappropriate behaviour affecting THEMSELVES? A student may have engaged in inappropriate behaviour online that could be psychologically and/or emotionally damaging to THEMSELVES (e.g. sexting). They may be in need of immediate protection.</p> <p>Has the student engaged in CRIMINAL behaviour? A student may have engaged in inappropriate behaviour online that could be deemed as CRIMINAL activity.</p> <p><small>*Please note: an incident of concern may include one or more of the above.</small></p>	<h3>Step 2</h3> <h4>Take Action</h4> <p>Ensure the student is safe If you suspect or have identified an incident of concern, it is important to first make sure the student/s are in a safe environment.</p> <p>Further inquire into the incident Inquire into the inappropriate incident. This may include discussions with all staff and students who have been directly or indirectly involved in the incident and/or its effects.</p> 	<h3>Step 3</h3> <h4>Contact the Appropriate Supports</h4> <p>Leadership team If your inquiry leads you to believe that a concern is real, but it is NOT CRIMINAL then immediately advise and/or consult a member of the school's leadership team to report the incident and plan the appropriate response and support.</p> <p>The Victoria Police If your inquiry leads you to believe that a CRIMINAL offence may have occurred, contact the Police. In such cases seek advice about contacting the parents of all students involved in the incident. If a school is unsure whether an incident should be reported, the Police will advise the school as to whether they will investigate or whether the school should handle the situation.</p> <p>Security Services Unit All reportable incidents should be reported to Security Services Unit. If a school is unsure whether an incident is criminal or not they can also contact the Security Services Unit. This will alert regional staff. Phone: (03) 9589 6266</p>	<h3>Step 4</h3> <h4>Respond and Provide Support</h4> <p>Support all involved people Provide reasonable and ongoing wellbeing support to all students and staff who were involved in or witness to the incident.</p> <p>Refer to the School's Policy In responding to online incidents of inappropriate behaviour, Principals and teachers should refer to their Bullying Prevention and/or Student Engagement Policy and follow the appropriate processes and procedures. Each Victorian government school has developed a Bullying Prevention and/or Student Engagement Policy that sets out the rights, responsibilities and shared expectations of everyone in the school community, including students, parents, teachers and school staff. The policy clearly defines the consequences for students who behave inappropriately, (online and offline)</p> <p>Work with Leadership Team Work closely with your school's Leadership and/or Student Wellbeing Team to discuss strategies that can be used to respond to and support ALL students at risk from the inappropriate behaviour. This may include counselling and support or the development of a Behaviour Support Plan to implement targeted strategies. Keep a record of the Behaviour Support Plan, make notes on any relevant observations, and review it as necessary. For more information, visit Behaviour Support Plans: www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/teachplans.aspx.</p> <p>Contact Parents Where appropriate, contact the parents of all students involved. If a school is unsure whether parents should be contacted, the Department's Legal Division or Security Services Unit can assist to make a decision.</p> <p>Consult Regional Staff Contact your student wellbeing or Community Liason Officers in your Regional Office for support.</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>North Eastern Victoria Region</p> <p>Benalla: (03) 8392 9500 Glen Waverly: (03) 8392 9300</p> <p>North Western Victoria Region</p> <p>Bendigo: (03) 5440 3111 Coburg: (03) 9488 9488</p> </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>South Eastern Victoria Region</p> <p>Dandenong: (03) 8765 5600 Moe: (03) 5127 0400</p> <p>South Western Victoria Region</p> <p>Ballarat: (03) 5337 8444 West Footscray: (03) 8397 0300 Geelong: (03) 5225 1000</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>North Eastern Victoria Region</p> <p>Benalla: (03) 8392 9500 Glen Waverly: (03) 8392 9300</p> <p>North Western Victoria Region</p> <p>Bendigo: (03) 5440 3111 Coburg: (03) 9488 9488</p>	<p>South Eastern Victoria Region</p> <p>Dandenong: (03) 8765 5600 Moe: (03) 5127 0400</p> <p>South Western Victoria Region</p> <p>Ballarat: (03) 5337 8444 West Footscray: (03) 8397 0300 Geelong: (03) 5225 1000</p>	<h3>Further Information</h3> <p>Remember to Record At all times remember to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record the incident. (e.g. screen shots of the incident, notes from the interviews) • Record the process taken to resolve the incident (e.g. steps taken to remove content, mediation attempts). </p> <p>Bully Stoppers For more information visit DET's Bully Stoppers website: www.education.vic.gov.au/bullystoppers</p> <p>Security Services Unit A 24 hour/7 day a week single reference point to report emergency matters and critical incidents including criminal and unwanted activities. Phone: (03) 9589 6266</p> 
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