

Dealing with Bullying, Harassment, Aggression and Violence (Students)

Mission Statement

In the spirit of John XXIII, Mary Ward and Ignatius Loyola, we seek to be people of competence, conscience and compassion who are committed to God and the service of others.

Rationale

As a Catholic school in the Ignatian Tradition, the concept of 'cura personalis' – care of the whole person – is central to the principles and practice of pastoral care at John XXIII College. The College is committed to providing an educational environment which promotes the safety and well-being of every student.

Students who are bullied, subject to aggression or harassed tend to have poorer health, lower self-esteem, more interpersonal difficulties, higher levels of loneliness, depression and increased anxiety. They are also more likely to have a dislike of school, higher absenteeism and lower academic competence. The effects of bullying can begin early in life and, for some, last a lifetime.

John XXIII College aims to encourage the development of positive relationships between students to minimise the incidence of all forms of bullying, harassment, aggression and violence. This is reflected, for example, in the College's Code of Behaviour which enshrines a series of rights, including the right of every person to:

- be treated with respect and dignity
- to live within the College community free of verbal, physical and emotional hurt or harassment
- to hold and express an opinion
- to work in a positive learning environment
- to achieve one's best in all aspects of College learning
- to participate fully in the life of the College
- to work in a clean and safe environment
- to feel proud to belong to John XXIII College
- to have property respected.

Every member of the College community has the responsibility to ensure these rights are respected. These rights and responsibilities apply to all members of the College community whenever they are involved in College-organised and College-run activities, including when such activities occur outside of school hours and off the College grounds. The College Code of Behaviour is also considered to apply outside of school hours where safety issues involve and affect students as a direct consequence of College-based relationships.

The John XXIII College Policy for Dealing with Bullying, Harassment, Aggression and Violence (Students) should be seen as fitting within a broader context of the College's commitment to maintaining a safe, supportive and protective learning community as espoused in the National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF). The nine key elements that schools need to have in place to implement the NSSF are described in the Framework as:

- leadership commitment to a safe school

- a supportive and connected school culture
- policies and procedures
- professional learning
- positive behaviour management
- engagement, skill development and safe school curriculum
- a focus on student wellbeing and student ownership
- early intervention and targeted support
- partnerships with families and community.

Definitions

Bullying

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, and it can be overt or covert. It can vary greatly in form, extent and intent. Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying. However, these conflicts still need to be addressed and resolved.

What Constitutes Bullying?

- repeated, aggressive and unjustifiable behaviour intended to cause fear, distress and/or harm
- such behaviour can be physical, verbal, psychological or relational in nature
- perpetrated by a more powerful individual or group against a less powerful individual who is unable to resist effectively
- perpetrator(s) derives enjoyment from repeated hurtful behaviours targeting a less powerful individual.

Behaviours that do not Constitute Bullying:

- not liking someone or a single act of social rejection
- mutual arguments and disagreements where there is no power imbalance
- one-off acts of meanness or spite
- isolated incidents of aggression, intimidation or violence.

Examples of Repeated Behaviours that can Constitute Bullying:

- name calling, put downs
- threats
- negative social networking
- comments about someone's gender or race
- hitting, tripping, punching, throwing objects
- teasing
- ignoring or excluding individuals
- following someone, glaring, spreading rumours
- touching someone inappropriately, sexual jokes, drawing of someone's body, unwanted sexual overtures
- graffiti, offensive notes, damaging other people's property
- unflattering messages or pictures posted on social networking sites
- offensive messaging from iPads, smartphones and other computer technology
- social exclusion.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies including mobile phones, computers and tablets, as well as communication tools including social media sites, text messages, chat and websites. It involves a person being tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another person. Examples of cyberbullying include:

- sending abusive or malicious emails and text messages
- accessing, altering or deleting another person's work
- writing hurtful comments on social networking sites
- unauthorised recording or publishing of photos.

Harassment

Harassment is behaviour that targets an individual or group due to their:

- identity, race, culture or ethnic origin
- religion
- physical characteristics
- gender
- sexual orientation
- marital, parenting or economic status
- age
- ability or disability.

Examples of Harassment

Harassment occurs when a student:

- ridicules on the basis of cultural or religious difference eg. Manner of speech or clothing
- makes suggestive comments or insults based on sex or sexuality
- makes fun of someone who needs a wheelchair or walking frame for mobility
- ridicule someone for being obese or very thin
- tells offensive jokes deliberately to put down a particular societal group.

Cyberharassment

Cyberharassment is a form of harassment against a specific student, the content of which aligns closely to that defined and described above for 'harassment', which is occurs through the use of Internet technologies. It may consist of a single episode or multiple episodes.

Bystander

A bystander is a person who is present at and observes an incident of bullying but does not take part in the bullying.

Cybersafety

Cybersafety is the use of a set of precautionary policies, practices and actions taken by individuals, the College and its community to prevent harm to users of technologies within the College community and to promote safe and responsible use of computing technology.

Sexting

Sexting is the sending of sexually explicit messages or photographs of oneself or others, using mobile phone technology either by request or spontaneously. It can also include posting of this material online. A student's current, or potential romantic partner, may be the source of a request to engage in sexting. Such photos may be sent, without permission, to many other people, or used to coerce or blackmail after a relationship break-up.

Violence

Violence is the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against another person that may result in psychological harm or physical injury. It may involve provoked or unprovoked acts and can be a single incident, a random act or can occur over time.

Aggression

The term aggression refers to a range of behaviours that can result in physical or psychological harm to oneself or others. Aggression can be expressed and occur in a number of ways, including verbally, mentally, and physically. It is often – but not always – experienced by the person on the ‘receiving end’ as threatening and potentially, if not actually, harmful behaviour.

Not all aggressive or harmful behaviour between people is bullying. While conflicts and aggressive behaviour need to be addressed, it is important to be clear that these behaviours are not always bullying. The definition of bullying has three critical aspects - a repeated pattern, the misuse of power within relationships, and behaviour which causes harm. All three aspects need to be present in order for behaviour to be called bullying.

Principles

- Bullying, harassment, aggression and violence are not tolerated at John XXIII College because such behaviours are inherently opposed to the College’s values, Mission Statement and Code of Behaviour.
- The College recognises that a whole of College community approach involving students, staff and parents/guardians is the most effective way of dealing with, and hopefully eliminating, incidents of bullying, harassment, aggression and violence within the community. Such an approach seeks to:
 - make explicit the College’s zero tolerance for all forms of aggression towards others, particularly persistent and severe bullying and harassment
 - establish a clear framework of systems and processes within the College through which anti-bullying, anti-harassment and cybersafety strategies can be delivered
 - create an environment in which students feel safe and free from hurt and intimidation perpetrated in any form
 - draw upon the best available research evidence and professional experience to develop multiple strategies and processes to respond to bullying and harassment
 - reinforce positive relationships in all dealings that members of the College community have with each other
 - use educative and collaborative approaches to resolve conflict when it arises

ensure that all issues of bullying, harassment, aggression and violence brought to our attention by individual students and/or their families will be taken seriously and investigated.

Procedures

College Strategies for Dealing with Bullying or Harassment

Implementation of Prevention Strategies Involving Staff, Students and Parents/Guardians

The Secondary and Primary Leadership Teams will plan, implement, oversee and evaluate the College’s strategies and responses toward bullying. The College shall implement prevention strategies on a continuous basis with a focus on teaching age-appropriate skills and strategies to enable staff, students and parents/guardians to recognise bullying and harassment and to respond appropriately. Such prevention strategies shall be implemented by the following means:

- Providing staff members with training and professional development in prevention and response strategies for bullying and harassment.

- Educating students about bullying and harassment and the College's policy, systems and processes for dealing with incidents of such behaviour. For example, at the start of each year, Homeroom Teachers (Secondary) or Classroom Teacher (Primary) will clarify with students the College's policy on bullying, harassment, aggression and violence.
- Providing information to parents/guardians in relation to bullying.
- Raising awareness among students of bullying and harassment in order to equip them to recognise the signs of these behaviours.
- Providing students with clear avenues for addressing concerns about bullying directly with the College.
- Promoting a supportive environment that encourages the development of positive relationships and communication between staff, students and parents/guardians.
- Encouraging socially appropriate behaviour among students by using positive behaviour management and direct teaching of curriculum in areas such as interpersonal and self-management skills.
- Encouraging students and parents/guardians to report alleged incidents of bullying and harassment.
- Establishing multiple reporting channels to make it easier for students and parents/guardians to report alleged incidents of bullying and harassment.
- Conducting regular risk assessments of bullying and harassment within the College.
- Maintaining and analysing records of bullying and harassment incidents in order to identify students who persistently display bullying behaviour and/or victims and to implement targeted prevention strategies where necessary.

Reporting Bullying or Harassment

A key part of the College's prevention and intervention strategy is to encourage reporting of incidents of bullying or harassment. It is also important to provide assurance to students who experience bullying or harassment, as well as their parents/guardians, that:

- bullying and harassment are not tolerated within the College
- all concerns and/or reported incidents will be taken seriously.

The College can be advised of incidents of bullying or harassment either verbally or in writing through any of the following avenues:

- any staff member with whom a student and or parent/guardian has a trust-relationship
- one of the College Counsellors
- the student's Classroom Teacher or an Assistant Principal (Primary)
- the student's Homeroom Teacher or Assistant Deputy Principal (Secondary).

Student Responses to Bullying or Harassment

Students at John XXIII College will be educated on the importance of reporting instances of bullying and harassment to a College staff member and of not showing signs of approval to a student who bullies or harasses others.

The College's Response to Situations of Bullying and Harassment

Bullying and harassment can vary greatly in scope and intensity, therefore each incident needs to be dealt with on its facts. There is no prescribed solution for resolving all incidents of bullying/harassment simply or easily. A number of different methods for intervening in cases of bullying and harassment are available to the College. These methods include mediation, restorative practice and a disciplinary approach. A prudent determination will be made as to which approach is most appropriate on a case by case basis.

- In the first instance when a report of bullying or harassment is received, the staff member who has been trusted with the information shall seek the student's permission to take the matter

further, involving such persons as the Homeroom Teacher, Classroom Teacher, Assistant Principal, Assistant Deputy Principal, College Counsellor or Social Worker.

- The member(s) of staff dealing with the matter will:
 - assure the victim of bullying or harassment that they are not at fault and that they will be respected throughout the process
 - make every effort to protect from any further bullying or harassment
 - explain the course of action that will be taken in an effort to achieve a good outcome for all concerned, particularly the victim
 - ensure that the victim is feeling secure and confident enough to participate in the approach that will be taken for resolving the matter
 - properly investigate the facts, including discussing the incident with the victim, the student who bullies and any bystanders
 - take time to understand any concerns of the individuals involved
 - maintain records of reported incidents of bullying or harassment, and
 - escalate the response of the College when dealing with persistent bullying or harassment or in the case of severe incidents.
- The objective of the College's intervention is to stop the bullying or harassment immediately and work with both parties towards achieving a genuine reconciliation.
- The College will inform parents/guardians of incidents of bullying at the earliest appropriate opportunity.
- Serious incidents of bullying or harassment, such as those which have not been resolved by intervention and attempts at reconciliation, will be managed by the Assistant Deputy Principal, an Assistant Principal, the Head of Primary, the Head of Secondary or the College Principal.
- Serious physical bullying may result in the matter being referred to the police.
- Ultimately the College will not tolerate any further escalation or continuation of bullying and harassment incidents that have been reported and followed up with a restorative process.
- Students who continue to display bullying or harassing behaviour will be dealt with in a disciplinary manner by a member of the College Leadership Team.

The College Response for Dealing with Cyberbullying and Cyberharassment

- The College processes for dealing with individual instances of cyberbullying and cyberharassment are the same as those used for other forms of bullying and harassment; however, an educational approach that is unique to cyberbullying and cyberharassment will complement this approach.
- Each Homeroom Teacher (Secondary) and Classroom Teacher (Primary) will clarify with students at the start of each year, the College's policy on cyberbullying and cyberharassment.
- The College community will be informed about the seriousness of cyberbullying, its impact on those being cyberbullied or cyberharassed and how such behaviours are unacceptable.
- Students will be informed that cyberbullying and cyberharassment that occurs outside of school hours will be dealt with by the College because the main basis of the students' relationship occurs at the College.
- Staff will educate students at age-appropriate levels to understand that the production or distribution (including texting and posting) of lewd images of themselves or others may constitute child exploitation material with a potential criminal penalty.
- Professional development will be provided for staff relating to cyberbullying and cyberharassment.
- The College will provide programs for students that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.

The College Response for Dealing with Incidents of Aggression and Violence

- If an incident of aggressive or violent behaviour is reported by a student or witnessed by a staff member, the matter will be referred to the Assistant Principal (Primary) or Assistant Deputy Principal (Secondary) who will inquire into the circumstances.
- All incidents or allegations of aggressive or violent behaviour will be investigated and documented.
- The College's response to an incident of aggressive or violent behaviour will initially involve an assessment of both the severity of the behaviour and the context in which the incident took place. It would be important, for example, to establish whether the incident was a "one-off" or part of a pattern of bullying or harassment. If the latter applies, the College's procedures for dealing with situations of bullying and harassment will be followed.
- The victim of aggressive or violent behaviour will be offered reassurance and protection from any further such acts, which will require carefully considered intervention on the College's part (see Bullying and Harassment).
- The objective of intervention is to prevent re-occurrence of aggressive or violent behaviour.
- Where such behaviour is based on interpersonal conflict and animosity, College staff will work with both parties towards achieving a genuine reconciliation.
- Serious incidents of aggressive and/or violent behaviour will be managed by the Assistant Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal, Head of Primary, Head of Secondary or the College Principal.
- Parents/guardians will be informed by College staff when an incident of aggression occurs at the College and provided with an explanation of the College response.
- The College's policy for dealing with students who display aggressive and/or violent behaviour is calibrated to offer counselling, behaviour management education and opportunities for restorative justice. In the vast majority of cases, these strategies have proven to be highly effective in enabling students to accept their responsibilities as defined by the College Code of Behaviour.
- Ultimately, the College will not tolerate an individual student perpetrating repeated aggressive and/or violent behaviours. If a student who continues to violate the rights of others to live within the College community free of any verbal, physical or emotional hurt, will be dealt with in a manner proportionate to the seriousness of her or his actions. A member of the College Leadership Team will respond to the matter (e.g. Serious incidents of violence may result in a student being suspended from the College and/or the matter being referred to the police.)

References

- Catholic Education Western Australia, *Dealing with Bullying, Harassment, Aggression and Violence (Students)*, 2003, 1.
- Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood, *National Safe Schools Framework*, 2013, 4. <http://www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/documents/nationalsafeschoolsframework.pdf>
- Safe and Supportive School Communities Working Group, *Bullying, No Way*, 2016, <http://bullyingnoway.gov.au/teachers/facts/definition.html>
- Safe and Supportive School Communities Working Group, *Bullying, No Way*, 2016.

Related Documents

Behaviour Management Plan
Code of Behaviour and College Rules
Duty of Care
Harassment, Discrimination and Bullying (Staff)
Pastoral Care Policy