Star of the Sea College
Student Anti Bullying Policy

Star of the Sea College is a Catholic Independent Girls' school, founded by the Presentation Sisters in 1883. Since 2014, Star of the Sea College has operated under the auspices of Kildare Ministries.

At Star of the Sea College we hold the care, safety and wellbeing of our students as a central and fundamental responsibility of our College. Our commitment is drawn from, and inherent in, the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ, with love, justice and the sanctity of each human person at the heart of the gospel: CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety:

The person of each individual human being, in his or her material and spiritual needs, is at the heart of Christ's teaching: that is why the promotion of the human person is the goal of the Catholic School (Congregation for Catholic Education 1997, n.9).

This policy is directed to all members of the College community – students, staff and parents – with the expectation that all will collaborate in supporting its intentions and procedures. It should be read and observed in conjunction with other College policies.

Principles
- Every person has a right to be treated with respect and as a worthwhile individual.
- Every member of the community has a right to a safe environment, free from bullying.
- Bullying behaviour seriously undermines the ethos of the College, is not acceptable, and will not be tolerated.
- If students are bullied they have the right to complain.
- All bullying matters will be taken seriously.
- All matters will be investigated with discretion, confidentiality and sympathy.
- Positive action will be taken and where necessary disciplinary action will be put in place.

Definition of Bullying
- Bullying is a repetitive attack that causes distress at the time or in the future. It involves an imbalance of power and leaves people feeling distressed and without power.
- Bullying behaviour can be of a personal, sexual, emotional, psychological or physical nature.
- Bullying is unwelcome or uninvited behaviour that students find humiliating, intimidating, offensive or frightening.

Bullying may include:
- **Physical:** where fighting, pushing, punching, shoving etc. happens
- **Verbal:** where name-calling, put-downs, talking behind someone's back, or picking on someone because of the way they look, talk or act occurs.
- **Visual:** where offensive notes are passed around, personal property is damaged, taken or vandalized
- **Victimisation***:* where threats to "get" someone are made
- **Sexual***:* where someone is touched in a way that makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable, when rude names, jokes or comments are made about the way a person looks or behaves, where comments are made about a person's sexuality
- **Body Language***:* where others turn their backs on someone or make rude gestures to them.
- **Rumours***:* where untrue stories about someone are made up and told to others or when stories about someone are exaggerated and spread to others.

- **Technological**: where verbal or written messages are sent which are insulting, untrue, intimidating or frightening or images posted that may have been altered or comments added. This can occur via telephone calls, sms messaging, e-mail or via websites such as Facebook or other social media websites. This can even include publishing photos of any member of the Star of the Sea community without their permission.
- **Exclusion:** where girls are deliberately not included in groups or activities.

In this policy, bullying behaviour is inclusive of cyberbullying. All forms of bullying behaviour can offend and harm others, cause them pain, embarrass and endanger them, or damage their self-esteem**.**

Definition of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is a form of bullying which is carried out through an internet service such as email, chatroom, discussion group, online social networking (e.g. Facebook), instant messaging or web pages. It can also include bullying through mobile phone technologies such as SMS or MMS. Cyberbullying can occur when people are involved in:

- **Flaming**: Sending angry, rude, vulgar messages about a person to an online group or to that person via email or other text messaging

- **Online harassment**: Repeatedly sending offensive messages via email or other text messaging to a person, repeated calls or hang-ups

- **Cyberstalking**: Online harassment that includes threats of harm or is excessively intimidating

- **Denigration (put-downs)**: Spreading rumours, sending harmful, untrue, or cruel statements about a person to other people or posting such material online

- **Masquerade or Identity Theft**: Pretending to be someone else, taking on their identity and sending or posting material so that another person looks bad

- **Outing**: Sending or posting material about a person that contains sensitive, private, or embarrassing information, including forwarding private messages, photos or images

- **Exclusion**: Cruelly excluding someone from an online group.

As with bullying in real life, students have **rights** and **responsibilities** when it comes to dealing with cyberbullying. There are a number of ways to prevent cyberbullying from happening and suggestions about what to do if it does occur.

1. **Keep your username and passwords secret**
2. **Refuse to pass on cyberbullying messages or images**
3. **Keep a record:** (including the time and date) of any bullying incidents. Do not delete the messages and print them out if you can. This may help to identify who is sending the messages.
4. **Don't reply:**
5. **Tell someone:** Talk to an adult you trust.
6. **Contact your phone or Internet Service provider:** They can help you to block messages or calls
7. **If messages are threatening or serious, get in touch with the police**

What Bullying is Not:

- **Mutual conflict**: where an argument or disagreement occurs but both parties are upset and want resolution to the problem.

- **Social rejection**: this is not bullying unless directed towards someone specific and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

- **Single-episode acts of meanness**, or random acts of aggression or intimidation. These will not be ignored but are not acts of bullying.

  Changes in peer group dynamics and composition: it is not unusual for a shift in friendship groups to occur as students move through adolescence and interests and personalities develop

Procedures

A. **Students** are encouraged not to stay silent or to retaliate. Information is printed in the student diary (p14-15) on what to do if they are feeling harassed or bullied They should discuss the matter with parents /sisters/brothers and report any bullying or harassment to a staff member, such as:
   - Mentor Teacher
   - Pastoral Leader
   - Counsellors
   - Deputy Principal: Students
   - A College Leader
   - Principal

B. **Staff** will always investigate the incident and act promptly. Each incident is recorded by the Pastoral Leader.

   - Students on both sides of the issue are usually interviewed.

   - Contact with parents is made if required.

   - Techniques of a restorative manner will be applied in responding to bullying issues.

   - Students are usually brought together in serious incidents to establish a mediated plan of action.

C. **Parents** should encourage their daughter to report the incidents to their Mentor Teacher or Pastoral Leader. If your daughter is unwilling to do so, then the parent should contact the College. In the case of cyberbullying, parents are reminded of the strength of the law. Contact with police ought to be considered. Many of these issues occur outside of school hours.

Consequences

When it becomes clear that a person has bullied another member of the Star of the Sea community, there will be consequences for their actions. Some of the possible consequences for those who bully or harass others are listed below:

- interview with the Deputy Principal Students and Pastoral Leader;
- a Bullying Incident Report naming the person who did the bullying is placed on the Student Management System - SIMON;
- the person who bullied signs an agreement, witnessed by their parent/guardians, stating that s/he will not bully anyone, in any way, again;
- the student will be responsible for covering the cost of repairing or replacing damaged property;
- withdrawing access to certain privileges/resources at school for a period of time;
- police involvement;
- suspension.

Repeat bullying will be treated as a very serious offence and the consequences will be more severe. Depending on the situation, they _may_ include withdrawing a student from certain subjects or negotiating a student's transfer to another College.

Responsible Officer	Deputy Principal- Students
Approved By	Principal
Approved and Commenced	2018
Review By	November 2020
Relevant Legislation	Child, Wellbeing and Safety Act (2005) (Vic.)
	Children Legislation Amendment (Reportable Conduct) Act 2017
	Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)
	Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.)
	Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic.)
	Electronics Transmissions (Vic.) Act
	2011 Ministerial Order No 870 – *Child Safe Standards: Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools*
	Privacy and Data Protection Bill 2014 (Vic.)
	Public Records Act 1973 (Vic.)
	Working with Children Act 2005
Related Policies & Procedures	• CEM Policy 2.26
	Australian student wellbeing framework: https://www.studentwellbeinghub.edu.au/docs/default-source/aswf_booklet-pdf.pdf?sfvrsn=0
	PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian Schools
	Protective Participation: The voices of Young People on Safety(CEM publication, 2018)
	• Child Safety Policy
	• Child Safety Code of Conduct
	• ICT Student Policy
	• Pastoral Care Policy
	• Respectful Relationships Policy(Code of Conduct)
	• Reportable Conduct Policy
	• Social Media Policy
	• Student Behaviour Management

Version	3
Amendments to version	Reference to PROTECT and Protective Participation documents.