



# STAR OF THE SEA COLLEGE

## Student Anti Bullying Policy

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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 been a member 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, 2022)

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.



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- 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, Tiktok 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 students 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**

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:**

- Direct physical bullying: This form includes hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.
- Direct verbal bullying: This form includes name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, or verbal abuse.
- 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.

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.

- Keep your username and passwords secret
- Refuse to pass on cyberbullying messages or images
- 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.
- Don't reply:



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- Tell someone: Talk to an adult you trust.
- Contact your phone or Internet Service provider: They can help you to block messages or calls. If messages are threatening or serious, get in touch with the police

### Procedures

A. Students are encouraged not to stay silent or to retaliate. 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
- Head of student Wellbeing
- 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 child to report the incident to their Mentor Teacher or Pastoral Leader. If they are 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.



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Responsible Officer	Deputy Principal- Students
Approved By	Principal
Approved and Commenced	2018
Review	April 2023
Review by	April 2025
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 Ministerial Order No 1359 Privacy and Data Protection Bill 2014 (Vic.) Public Records Act 1973 (Vic.) Working with Children Act 2005
Related Policies & Procedures	MACS Student Antbullying Policy 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	4
Amendments to version	Updated definitions from MACS Antbullying policy Reference to Ministerial Order 1359