WHITFORD
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
Faith in God, Faith in Self

DEALING WITH BULLYING, HARASSMENT, AGRESSION AND VIOLENCE (STUDENT) PROCEDURE

Sources of Authority	
CECWA Policy	Community
Executive Directive	Student Safety, Wellbeing, and Behaviour

RATIONALE

Whitford Catholic Primary School has a responsibility to provide an educational environment that promotes the dignity and respect of the person and, therefore, aims to encourage the development of positive relationships between students to reduce all forms of bullying, harassment, aggression and violence. The policies and practices that Whitford Catholic Primary School employs enhance the dignity of the human person and reflect the Principles of Pastoral Care as espoused in the Pastoral Care Framework (2007).

Learning outcomes, physical health, emotional, psychological and spiritual wellbeing can be adversely affected by bullying, harassment, aggression and violence. 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, suicidal ideation and increased anxiety. They are also more likely to have a dislike of and want to avoid school, higher absenteeism and lower academic competence. The effects of bullying can begin early in life and, for some, last a lifetime.

The Australian Government's National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF) adopts a whole school approach to safety and wellbeing and is based on the following overarching vision:

All Australian schools are safe, supportive and respectful teaching and learning communities
That promote student wellbeing.

In the NSSF, a safe and supportive school is described in the following way:
In a safe and supportive school, the risk from all types of harm is minimised, diversity is valued and all members of the school community feel respected and included and can be confident that they will receive support in the face of any threats to their safety or wellbeing.

THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE NATIONAL SAFE SCHOOLS FRAMEWORK

This Framework is underpinned by the following guiding principles that represent fundamental beliefs about safe, supportive and respectful school communities. These guiding principles emphasise the importance of student safety and wellbeing as a pre-requisite for effective learning in all school settings.

Australian schools:

- affirm the rights of all members of the school community to feel safe and be safe at school

- acknowledge that being safe and supported at school is essential for student wellbeing and effective learning
- accept responsibility for developing and sustaining safe and supportive learning and teaching communities that also fulfill the school's child protection responsibilities
- encourage the active participation of all school community members in developing and maintaining a safe school community where diversity is valued
- actively support young people to develop understanding and skills to keep themselves and others safe
- commit to developing a safe school community through a whole-school and evidence-based approach

DEFINITIONS

- Bullying is when, over a period of time, an individual or a group intentionally harm a person, who finds it hard to stop this behaviour from continuing.
- Additionally, bullying can be characterised as: causing distress, not only at the time of the attack but also by the threat of future attacks; and an imbalance of power (that is inappropriate and where there is an intention to hurt).
- Its nature may be:
    - verbal - name-calling, put-downs, threats (spoken, written, electronic or cyber which may also apply to the following points)
    - physical - hitting, tripping, punching, throwing objects, stealing
    - social – ignoring, hiding, ostracizing
    - psychological – stalking, threatening looks, spreading rumours, damaging possessions
    - Harassment is any unwanted, unwelcome or uninvited behaviour which makes a person feel humiliated, intimidated or offended. (Adapted from Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia Policy, Harassment in School, 1998). Harassment can be seen as one form of bullying.
    - Bullying and harassment are often thought of separately, however, both involve a more powerful person or group oppressing a less powerful person or group, often on the grounds of 'difference'. These differences can be related to culture, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, sexual orientation, ability or disability, religion, body size and physical appearance, personality, age, marital status, parenting status or economic status. (Bullying. No Way! website cited in the National Safe Schools Framework, 2003).
    - Unlike bullying and harassment, violence is not necessarily associated with an imbalance of power. It can occur between people of equal power. It implies extreme forcefulness, usually (but not always) of a physical kind. (Rigby, cited in the NSSF, 2003).

PRINCIPLES

- Whitford Catholic Primary School owes a duty of care to its students.
- Whitford Catholic Primary School provides supportive environments which:

- act to prevent instances of bullying, harassment, aggression and violence
- encourage socially appropriate behaviour using positive behaviour management and direct teaching of curriculum in areas such as interpersonal and self-management skills
- promote respect for self and other
- develop physical/emotional well-being and resiliency
- develop interpersonal skills and positive mental health

- Responding to bullying, harassment, aggression and violence requires quality leadership and role modelling to facilitate strategy implementation and sustained change, together with a whole- school community approach.
    - Bullying, harassment, aggression and violence may occur outside of the school. When these behaviours impact on a student's learning and behaviour in school, Catholic schools take action to support the continued wellbeing of those involved.
    - All bullying, harassment, aggression and violence shall be responded to. When bullying, harassment, aggression and violence are ignored or overlooked, it serves to condone or reinforce the behaviour. Bystanders, (those who observe bullying) can encourage or assist those who bully simply by doing nothing.
    - While the aim is to promote and encourage positive behaviour, school policy and procedures shall contain clear statements regarding the range of appropriate consequences that may be applicable for unacceptable behaviour. In looking at consequences relating to specific issues, consideration should be given to other circumstances which may have bearing such as family or mental health matters.
    - All parties to incidents of bullying, harassment, aggression and violence are entitled to appropriate support.
    - Whitford Catholic Primary school staff have a responsibility to:
        - Provide an inclusive, safe and stimulating learning environment conducive to effective learning
        - Model respectful, courteous and honest behaviour
        - Establish positive relationships
        - Ensure good organisation and planning
        - Consistently implement school policy
        - Negotiate and display class rules
    - Whitford Catholic Primary school students have a responsibility to:
        - Treat others with respect, empathy and tolerance
        - Be prepared for the day's learning
        - Ensure that their behaviour is not disruptive to the learning of others
        - Ensure that they are punctual, polite and display a positive manner

- Abide by the school rules and accept benefits and consequences
- Ensure that the school environment is kept neat, tidy and secure

- The parents of Whitford Catholic Primary school have a responsibility to: -
  - Provide information about their child or circumstances that may impact on learning at school
  - Ensure that their child attends school, wears the correct uniform and is punctual
  - Support the school in the management of students
  - Treat the school staff with respect, courtesy and honesty

- The Principal of Whitford Catholic Primary School has a responsibility to:
  - Ensure the consistency in the implementation and maintenance of the Student Management Policy
  - Support the classroom management plan of teachers with a focus on providing positive input and celebrating success
  - Support teachers in the development of skills to provide classroom environments which promote effective student learning
  - Refer enquiries in regard to individual students to class teachers
  - Facilitate case conferences if required
  - Include school Social Worker if required
  - Manage procedures for serious and very serious misdemeanours

The above should be read in conjunction with the following Whitford Catholic Primary School Supporting Policies:

- Behaviour Management Procedure
- Health and Wellbeing Policy

Authorised by:	Mark Marando	Signature:	
		Date:	February 2025
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