



Our Lady of Mt Carmel School Mullewa

BULLYING POLICY

Originally released: 2002

Revised: 2003

Due for Review: 2008

Revised: 2009

Due for Review: 2014

RATIONALE

Our Lady of Mount Carmel School has a responsibility to provide an educational environment that promotes the dignity and respect of the person and, therefore, aims to eliminate bullying and harassment in all forms. Learning outcomes, physical health, emotional, psychological and spiritual well being can be adversely affected by bullying and harassment.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel School recognizes the rights of all individuals to be able to learn, thus it is our responsibility to provide an environment in which all members of our learning community are given the opportunity to learn and to achieve their potential physically, mentally, socially and spiritually. The personal and developmental growth of all children is paramount and must be nurtured according to the Gospel values espoused by Jesus.

DEFINITION

Our Lady of Mount Carmel School does not tolerate bullying and harassment by students in any form whatsoever.

“In summary bullying is now generally seen as having these elements: a desire to hurt; the perpetration of hurtful behaviour (physical, verbal or relational); in a situation in which there is an imbalance of power favoring the perpetrator(s); the action being regarded as unjustified, typically repeated, and experienced by the target of the aggression as oppressive, and by the perpetrator as enjoyable” (Rigby 2002)

PRINCIPLES

1. Our Lady of Mount Carmel School owes a duty of care to all its students, and as such recognizes bullying occurs in all school communities.
2. Our Lady of Mount Carmel School acknowledges bullying involves attitudes. As a Catholic school, and within its pastoral care framework, the school aims to provide a supportive environment, which promotes respect for self and others, physical/emotional well being and positive mental health.
3. It is committed to ensuring students are given regular opportunities to be educated in, and reflect on, the sort of forms bullying can take, why children may choose to bully others, and specific ways of dealing with bullying behaviour they may be exposed to.
4. In working toward the prevention of, and in dealing with incidences of bullying and harassment, Our Lady of Mount Carmel School adopts a proactive whole school approach, within the school's Pastoral Care Framework. Each of the four major parties within this approach (the Principal, staff, students and parents) have specific roles and responsibilities. Effective communication with, and between each group, is considered paramount to effectively working towards the prevention of bullying within the school.

PROCEDURES

1. The school seeks to develop supportive environments and relationships, as well as the promotion of tolerance and the acceptance of difference through its Student Management, Social Justice and Evangelisation Policies, the building of relationships within the whole school community by being actively involved, along with individual classroom programs and frequent whole school activities to develop positive relationships between students.
2. All members of staff are made aware of the need to ensure bullying and harassment is not ignored or overlooked; in doing so only serves to condone and reinforce the behaviour.
3. All members of the school community, adults and children, are reminded on a regular basis of the need to report bullying to the Principal, a teacher or adult they can trust. If bullying incidents are not addressed bullying is likely to increase.
4. The four major parties involved in the prevention of, and in dealing with cases of bullying within the school (the Principal, staff, students and parents) are to be made aware of their roles and responsibilities through:
 - school newsletters and notes home and to school through communication books
 - meetings with the classroom teacher
 - classroom programs and general duty of care carried out by the classroom teacher
 - whole school addresses by the Principal at assemblies and other times as needed
 - staff meetings and professional development opportunitiesSpecific Roles and Responsibilities are outlined in the Bullying and Harassment Guidelines and Procedures.
5. A set and appropriate course of action is to be followed for suspected or reported cases of bullying. This is contained in the Bullying and Harassment Guidelines and Procedures and outlined under the heading "Processes".
6. Honest and open communication is to be used in any discussions, action taken and follow up procedures when dealing with bullying.
7. This policy must be publicized across all levels of the school community; particularly being made available for parents to read, so parents are informed of not only the appropriate course of action the school uses for reported cases of bullying, but the types of actions that can constitute bullying, both overt and subtle.
8. In the management of sensitive information appropriate measures of confidentiality will be taken by those staff members involved in dealing with bullying behaviour so as to protect the rights of both parties. In particular, there is a need to ensure the victim does not become exposed to worse, or more frequent bullying behaviour, as a result of any incident already reported.
9. School support systems which promote messages to students of a positive mental health, need to remain set in place within the school. These occur naturally under the general heading of pastoral care, but programs specific to this remain.
10. As a school community, members need to work toward the seeking of the broader needs of the whole school community as a result of any cases of bullying, and seek to discover the prevailing attitudes within the school, including the 'culture' of the school.
11. Our Lady of Mount Carmel School shall provide professional development to meet the needs of its staff in implementing this policy. Staff are to be provided with opportunities for regular education on current research about what is effective when dealing with bullying. Staff members also need to become personally responsible for keeping themselves up to date in the current readings and research in this area. In turn, and if appropriate, the school's responses to dealing with bullying need to be reviewed to determine their effectiveness.

12. Our Lady of Mount Carmel School will also provide, when possible, information for parents on important issues surrounding bullying.
13. This school based policy shall be developed using a broad consultative process, in particular, consultation with people with expertise outside of the school. This includes: information provided by CEO, the School Psychologist, information and understanding from staff members attending Professional Development in the area of bullying, (Robert Pereira), along with current research.
14. This policy shall be monitored and have regular review, keeping in mind current research in the area of bullying.