St Gerard’s Catholic Primary, Carlingford
School Policy Against Bullying

“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another”
John 13:15-35.

INTRODUCTION

St Gerard’s Catholic Primary School, Carlingford is a two streamed co-educational school located in the North Shore cluster of Catholic schools in the Diocese of Broken Bay, Sydney.

Purpose

At St Gerard’s Catholic Primary School, we believe that all members of the community have the right to a learning and work environment free from intimidation, humiliation and hurt. We all share a responsibility to foster, promote and restore right relationships, ensuring a safe and caring environment which promotes personal growth and positive self-esteem for all. We believe that bullying is unacceptable and we [students, staff and parents] all share a responsibility for preventing it.

This policy builds on the school’s Pastoral Care and Behaviour Management Policies to provide clear and agreed procedures and strategies to prevent, reduce and respond to bullying. The procedures and strategies aim to educate all members of our school community on the nature of bullying and provide guidance on how to respond to bullying behaviours by protecting and supporting all parties involved.

This Anti-Bullying Policy has been formulated to:

- educate students, staff and parents about bullying
- make clear to the school community the types of behaviours that constitute ‘bullying behaviours’
- promote our school as a school that will not accept bullying behaviour in any of its forms
- instil in students the understanding that they all have a right to feel safe all the time.
- develop procedures for reporting incidents of bullying behaviour
- develop procedures for dealing with bullying behaviour
- provide a support program for children affected by or involved in bullying behaviour
- raise the school community's awareness of our Anti-Bullying Policy

Policy Framework

Flowing from the Christian vision expressed in the Diocesan Pastoral Care Policy, schools are called to establish relationships which are grounded in love, compassion, reconciliation and justice. In witnessing Christian values we reject ideas, beliefs and behaviours which marginalise or victimise people.
This policy builds on the school’s Pastoral Care and Behaviour Management policies that assist us in building a safe and supportive school community where all grow in *Wisdom and Faith* by being Respectful, Responsible, Learners.

Our school rules are discussed regularly in class by the classroom teacher and each class teacher develops classroom rules annually that are supportive of our whole school approach to maintaining a learning environment based on central school rule of being Respectful, Responsible, Learners. At St Gerard’s we support students by teaching, guiding, leading, encouraging and demonstrating Christian behaviour within a framework of Catholic Gospel values.

It should be noted that the use of corporal punishment is expressly forbidden in CSO systemic school. No corporal punishment is to be carried out by any member of the St Gerard’s community. This includes teachers and other staff members, students, parents, tutors, volunteers, contractors or visitors to enforce discipline in the school.

**Definition**

Whilst there is no universally accepted definition of bullying, there is general consensus that bullying behaviour:

- is deliberate and often repeated
- intends to cause fear, distress, hurt or harm to another
- is action by a more powerful individual or group over a less powerful individual or group

This definition is consistent with the widely accepted definition adopted by the Peer Support Foundation which states that:

> “Bullying behaviours are about an imbalance of power where there is deliberate intent to cause harm or distress. These behaviours can be verbal, social, psychological or physical. The impact upon the lives of the person/people being bullied, those doing the bullying and those looking on”

(The Peer Support Foundation, 1998)

Bullying takes many forms, all of which will cause distress. Examples of bullying include:

- **Physical** - hitting, pushing, tripping, kicking, spitting on others etc
- **Verbal** - teasing, using offensive names, ridiculing, spreading rumours etc
- **Non-Verbal** - writing offensive notes or graffiti about others, using e-mail or text messaging to hurt others, rude gestures etc
- **Exclusion** - deliberately excluding others from group, refusing to sit next to someone etc
- **Extortion** - threatening to take someone’s possessions, food or money etc
- **Property** - stealing, hiding, damaging or destroying property etc
- **Cyber** - any form of bullying which is carried out through electronic means such as mobile phones, email, chat room, social networking, ‘sms’, web page etc

**How do we prevent bullying at St Gerard’s Catholic Primary School?**

We believe based on research that prevention strategies through education that involve the whole school community [students, staff and parents] are more likely to reduce bullying. Therefore, at St Gerard’s Catholic Primary School we recognise that we all share the responsibility to prevent bullying. The Catholic Worldview which represents the antithesis of bullying will be taught explicitly, continually modelled, clearly demonstrated and generously affirmed across all facets of school life.
Our School Mission

At St Gerard’s Catholic Primary School we honour the traditions of our founders, the Sisters of Mercy and work to perpetuate their values of

JUSTICE, RESPONSIBILITY AND RESPECT.

United in Baptism
Journeying in faith and learning
We form a vibrant and pastoral community
Valuing the individual
Challenging all learners
Making a positive difference in the world

At St Gerard’s Catholic Primary School we adopt the following strategies to prevent bullying:

- Explicit teaching of positive behaviours embedded within the curriculum addressing positive relationships, conflict resolution, resilience, bystander action etc
  - Specific anti-bullying lessons to be taught each term in all classes K-6 with lessons noted in Teacher Programs
  - Refer to the PD/H/PE Scope and Sequence Chart for further details of units of work with identified anti-bullying components identified

- Regularly recognising and acknowledging students who demonstrate appropriate behaviours that promote and restore right relationships
  - A Principal’s awards is given each team to a student who demonstrates positive relationships in the school community
  - Fortnightly Honour Awards given to students with specific reference to current positive behaviours focus (PBL focus – refer to Behaviour Management Policy)

- Vigilant classroom, playground and transition supervision
  - Teachers are to actively supervise children at all times. Teachers are to be prompt to duty and be aware of playground ‘hotspots’ – toilets, passage ways, canteen area and visit these areas regularly throughout their supervision duty.
  - Teacher to assist students in completing a Report of Bullying form or a Playground Behaviour Report form for any serious incidents in the classroom or playground
  - Completed forms are handed to the Assistant Principal for review of bullying data and maintains a record of incidents for monitoring patterns in student behaviour

- Provision of safe and structured playground spaces and activities at break times
  - Students are provided with age appropriate play areas – Infants Area (with play equipment), Primary Area (with handball courts) and rostered, supervised access to Roselea Oval during 2nd half lunch
At St Gerard’s Catholic Primary School **students** are encouraged to:

- refuse to be involved in any bullying situation
- report bullying incidents to their class teachers or teachers supervising play as soon as possible
- take appropriate preventative action such as speaking out (not physical action)
- make it clear to their peers that bullying is not accepted

At St Gerard’s Catholic Primary School, **staff** are expected to:

- be role models of respectful behaviour to all
- be observant of signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying
- remove occasions for bullying through active patrolling during playground supervision, and addressing any incidents observed or reported
- take some positive action to stop the bullying when they observe an incident
- pass on information about any reported or observed bullying behaviours to the Assistant Principal for further action
- facilitate the sharing of information about the school’s policy on bullying by conducting whole class lessons each term

The Principal or Assistant Principal will be advised of serious or repeated incidents and may then contact parents seeking their cooperation in resolving issues. Consequences for students may include exclusion from classes or special events, and/or removal from the playground.

At St Gerard’s Catholic Primary School, **parents** are encouraged to:

- listen to their child and encourage their child to speak to their teacher at school
- Encourage children to develop resilience in dealing with minor conflicts and assist them to distinguish serious concerns from everyday events.
- contact the school if they have a concern (eg Principal or Assistant Principal)

Note: Parents are asked not to approach children concerned nor their parents about these matters. Approaching children directly may put parents in breach of child protection requirements, and approaching parents will take matters out of the hands of the school.

**PROCEDURES TO DEAL WITH BULLYING**

Bullying is viewed as a major breach of the school rules and behavioural expectations and therefore follow up action will align with our school’s Behaviour Management Policy.

Any reports of bullying will be investigated and appropriate action will be taken promptly. The response to bullying will include:

1. guidance and other support for the recipient of the bullying (eg re-skilling and re-teaching of strategies, resilience and social skills, counselling, conflict management skills, social networking etc)
2. guidance and support for ‘bystanders’, ‘supporters’ and witnesses of the bullying (eg intervention strategies etc)
3. age appropriate and consistent sanctions for the student who bullied
   (eg consistent with school Behaviour Management Policy)

4. interventions and support for the student who bullied included in a Behaviour Support Plan (eg specific
   interventions developed to reduce the bullying behaviour, teaching of replacement behaviours,
   reinforcers etc)

5. where appropriate informing parents as stated in the policy and involving them in any action and
   follow up

Procedures for investigating bullying and follow up

In discerning appropriate responses to bullying, school leaders need to balance the collective welfare
of the school community with the individual needs of the student.

Recommended resource for interviewing and follow up of Bullying incidents - “The Method of Shared Concern”
Dr Anatol Pikas, Sweden, Readymade Productions.

- Preliminary interview(s) will be conducted to ascertain the specific nature of the bullying. These
  interviews should be with individuals initially (ie student being bullied, students witnessing bullying, student
  engaging in bullying behaviour, staff etc)

- The initial interviews should focus on the safety of individuals. This should include:
  o a clear statement on the consequences if the bullying continues or if there are any reprisals as a result of
    the reporting of the incident
  o immediate preventative actions that will be implemented to avoid further incidents.

- Decisions will be made as to the level of severity of the incident and whether the parents of those
  involved need to be informed.

- Follow up interviews should focus on appropriate strategies to assist and support all involved within a
  Behaviour Support Plan. This Plan will specifically identify the inappropriate behaviours, name the
  replacement behaviours, outline strategies to support the replacement behaviours and reinforcers (both
  negative and positive) when behaviours occur.

- A record of the separate interviews should be kept.

- Regular monitoring and follow up with the students involved is necessary. (for example daily, prior to and
  after break times etc)

- Review of the Behaviour Support Plan will take place to modify strategies and supports.

- Any further recurrence of bullying may result in an issue of warning re suspension and could
  lead to the implementation of suspension procedures and, if necessary, removal of the student from the
  school through:
    - Suspension pending negotiated transfer,
    - Negotiated transfer or
    - Expulsion
SUPPORT DOCUMENTS

The Catholic Schools Office will provide materials, professional development and support services to assist school communities with development and implementation of anti-bullying policies and procedures.

RELATED LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

*Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986* (Comm)
Telecommunications Act 1991 (Comm.)
Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)
Children (Criminal Proceedings) Act 1987 (NSW)
Young Offenders Act 1997 (NSW)
Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)
Pastoral Care Policy for Diocesan Systemic Schools
Anti-Harassment Policy for Diocesan Systemic Schools
Occupational Health and Safety Policy for Diocesan Systemic Schools
Acceptable Use Policy for Internet/Intranet and Network Services for Diocesan Systemic Schools

POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed not less frequently than once every three years.

POLICY DATES

Date of revised policy
March 2012
Date of next review
June 2013
Appendix 1:

REPORT OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR RECORD

Name: ___________________________ Class: _______ Date: ___________
Teacher(s) notified: ____________________________________________

Brief description of Incident: (to be completed by the child or note if filled in by teacher)

Who is involved? ________________________________________________

What has been happening?
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

What strategies have you tried?
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

Witnesses: _______________________________________________________

Teacher Comment and follow up:
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

The behaviour observed was: Please Circle/ highlight more than one option if necessary

Breach of rule  Physical Bullying  Verbal Bullying  Emotional/Psychological Bullying

Student: ___________________________ Teacher: ___________________________
Signed: ___________________________

Principal/AP notified: Yes / No
Signed: ___________________________

Parent contacted: Yes / No

Playground behaviour record entered by AP and filed: □
At St Gerard’s School we aim to take a solutions-based approach when discussing behaviour with our children. When a student comes to us with a problem we use our language to encourage a solution-based mindset.

- How would you like things to be?
- What could you do to make that happen?
- What have you tried doing to make the situation better?
- What are some options you could try?
- When have things worked in the past?
- What did you do differently then?
- What could you try again this time?