

# Holy Cross Anti- Bullying Policy

## Rationale

Holy Cross School believes that in order for students to reach their full potential they need a safe, friendly, inclusive environment, set amongst a culture of respect and genuine care for each and every member of our school community, therefore, we regard any form of bullying, harassment or violence as totally unacceptable. This Policy will be reviewed annually, and we will involve parents and students in the process.

## What is Bullying?

Bullying is behaviour where there is an imbalance of power and where there is deliberate and ongoing intent to cause physical, social or emotional harm or distress. Bullying is a repeated, systematic, and purposeful form of harassment and not a one off incident.

## Recognizing Bullying

Any student can become the target of bullying. Research suggests students who are frequently bullied are more likely to:

- feel disconnected from and dislike school
- lack quality friendships with peers and teachers at school (but not necessarily outside school)
- display emotional behaviours that indicate vulnerability (e.g. look sad or anxious and cry, or become sad or angry easily) and a lack of resilience
- be less accepted by peers, avoid conflict and be socially withdrawn
- have extended absences from school
- have changed behaviour e.g. withdrawal
- display a loss of interest and participation in daily activities
- may have a loss of appetite

## The different types of bullying

### According to The National Safe Schools Framework.....

- Overt bullying (sometimes referred to as direct bullying) involves physical actions such as punching or kicking or overt verbal actions such as name-calling and insulting.
- Covert bullying (sometimes referred to as indirect bullying) is a subtle type of non-physical bullying which may not be easily seen by others and may be conducted out of sight, and often unacknowledged by adults. This includes social, emotional and psychological types of bullying, and includes behaviours such as, whispering, running away, spreading rumors and gossiping.
- Cyberbullying occurs through the use of information or communication technologies such as Instant Messaging, text messages, email and social networking sites. It has many similarities with offline bullying but it differs in that the student(s) who is/are bullying can be anonymous, it can reach a wide audience and the sent or uploaded material can be difficult to remove. Most students who cyberbully also bully off-line. (refer to cyberbullying policy)

## Structure/Content of Anti-Bullying policy

The school will adopt a three-phase approach:

### A. Primary Prevention:

- Holy Cross' Gospel based Social Emotional program, MJR , regularly addresses social emotional learning competencies such as recognizing our own emotions and those of others, including developing empathy and tolerance to views that differ to our own
- Social and Emotional skills are also taught through programs such as Circle Time, which aims to develop such competencies through fun games and activities, whilst fostering relationships within the group.
- At the beginning of each year, all teachers define bullying with the children in their grade, and discuss the negative impacts bullying can have on a child. These discussions include, how to seek help if you or someone else is being bullied, and the powerful role of the bystander in stopping bullying from being allowed to take place.
- At Holy Cross School we have adopted a Positive Approach to Student Behaviour. We have a common set of school rules, which all staff refer to regularly. We believe that positive and effective behaviour management supports both students and teachers, as it provides a structure which maximizes teaching and learning opportunities.
- The staff at Holy Cross School adopt a "Shared Care" approach to all the students in our care. We believe that if children feel supported and cared for, by the staff at school, they will feel more comfortable seeking help, should a problem occur
- At Holy Cross School we encourage parent and local community participation and provide numerous opportunities to be involved. Current research indicates that children are more likely to feel happy at school when their parents and local community are welcomed and feel connected to the school.

### B. Early Intervention:

- The initial report of bullying will usually be made directly to the classroom teacher, who will follow up with the children involved, and decide if in fact bullying has taken place, or if what has taken place is a conflict between children, whereby those involved may or may not need support to resolve the issue. If however, it is deemed that bullying has/ or is still occurring the following processes will take place.
- The victim will be interviewed firstly, to make sure that they know that the school is taking the bullying seriously, and to offer whatever support is necessary for them to feel safe to come to school. At this point they will be told that bullying is never acceptable at Holy Cross school, and that the staff will continue to support them until the bullying has

completely stopped, and they are once again feeling happy and safe at school, no matter how long this takes.

- All children involved will be interviewed by a member of the Student Wellbeing team to gain a clear idea of what has taken place. This may involve interviewing children who have not been directly involved in the bullying, but may be aware of what has taken place, and can therefore shed more light on the events that have taken place.
- When it is ascertained who the perpetrator/perpetrators he/she/they will be interviewed by a member of the SWSG team using either The Method of Shared Concern, or The No Blame Method as a model . At this initial interview it will be made very clear that bullying is completely unacceptable at Holy Cross, and a guarantee sought from the child/children that the bullying will stop immediately.
- The child/children perpetrating the bullying will be counselled ( usually by the school counsellor) as to the harm that can be caused by bullying, and informed of the facts regarding the change in the law, which means that children over the age of 10 years, can be charged with bullying, and if this is upheld in court, ultimately convicted.
- All parents of the children involved will be informed of the situation, and their child's involvement.

#### **Post Intervention**

- In the days weeks and if necessary, months to come the victim, perpetrator/ perpetrators will continue to be counselled and supported.