Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools

Bullying Prevention Policy for MACS Schools

St. Anne's Primary School

Introduction

Bullying, cyber-bullying, harassment, racism, aggression and violence are not tolerated or accepted in Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (MACS) schools as they disregard core values of our faith, including dignity, respect, justice, equity, compassion, trust and courage. The prevention of and responses to incidents of bullying, inappropriate use of technology and disrespectful behaviour are more readily achieved in schools that promote positive relationships and reflect Gospel values.

Purpose

This policy promotes the prevention of bullying in schools and encourages school cultures that are explicit about unacceptable student behaviour and are responsive to all incidents of bullying.

Scope

This policy applies in all MACS schools, including specialist schools operated by MACS subsidiary, Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Specialist Schools Ltd (MACSS) and school boarding premises operated by MACS schools.

Principles

MACS school communities have a moral, legal and mission-driven responsibility to create nurturing school environments where students are respected, their voices are heard and where practices and protocols for their safety and wellbeing are clearly articulated.

MACS school communities exemplify the Gospel values of love, forgiveness, justice and truth. Each school community recognises that everyone has the right to be respected, to feel safe and be safe; and, in this regard, understands their rights and acknowledges their obligation to behave responsibly.

All involved in MACS schools – staff, volunteers, students and parents/guardians/carers – have a responsibility to understand the importance of and specific role they play individually and collectively to ensure and promote the wellbeing and safety of all students.

MACS schools have robust, structured risk management procedures and processes, as prescribed by the MACS board, that help establish, promote and maintain a child safe environment. This involves consideration of possible broad-based risk factors across a wide range of educational contexts, environments, relationships and activities and minimising the opportunity for children, young people and students to be harmed.

Policy

The MACS Board, MACS Management, principals, employees and volunteers in each school share responsibility for child safety with a zero tolerance of child abuse and all forms of bullying.

Principals and all staff in MACS schools have a duty of care to take reasonable steps to prevent students from foreseeable harm. This includes taking reasonable steps to prevent physical or psychological harm occurring because of bullying.

Principals and school leadership teams must implement school-wide approaches and measures to educate and inform the school community to help prevent and respond to all forms of bullying, including a specific focus on an eSafety approach to the safe and respectful use of ICT and communication systems.

All incidents perceived or actual, of bullying, harassment and cyberbullying will be recorded, and responded to sensitively, fairly and promptly. Records of all reporting are to be kept in a secure manner in accordance with Ministerial Order 1359 – Child Safe Standards, the relevant MACS record keeping and information management policies and Public Record Office Victoria Recordkeeping Standards.

MACS schools must have procedures in place that apply to when repeated incidents of bullying are reported.

MACS schools will work in partnership with parents/guardians/carers when responding to incidents of bullying.

Schools are required to develop a bullying prevention policy for their school, contextualised for their school environment, using the approved MACS policy and procedures templates.

Roles, responsibilities and reporting

Delegation reference number
Role Responsibility Reporting requirement (if applicable)

Principal	Ensure all policies for the care, safety and welfare of students are publicly available
Principal	Retain all reports of incidents, perceived or actual, of bullying in the school in accordance with Child Safety and Wellbeing Recordkeeping Policy

Procedures

Annual attestation to the Executive Director

Principals are to document the procedures in their school for prevention of all forms of bullying using the approved MACS templates for schools.

Definitions

Bullying

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. Bullying can be direct (physical or verbal) or indirect. Forms of bullying include:

Cyber-bullying: The use of various forms of ICT systems to spread text and visual messages that threaten, intimidate, harass or humiliate a person or group of people.

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.

Gesture bullying: Non-verbal signals used to silence and intimidate a victim.

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.

Physical bullying: Pushing, shoving, fighting, pinching and any other unwelcome physical contact used intentionally to intimidate or hurt someone.

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.

Social Bullying: Also called Relational, Emotional or Exclusion bullying, examples include deliberately excluding someone, spreading rumours, sharing information that will have a harmful effect on the other person and/or damaging a person's social reputation or social acceptance.

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.

Visual bullying: Offensive notes or material, graffiti, or damaging other people's possessions.

Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS)

The Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS), implemented by the Victorian Government is a scheme enabling information sharing between authorised organisations to promote a child's wellbeing or safety. All Victorian children and young people from 0 to 18 years of age are covered by the CISS.

Child safety

Child safety encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to suspicions, incidents, disclosures or allegations of child abuse (Ministerial Order No. 1359).

Communication systems

Email, video conferencing, instant messaging (public or private), electronic bulletins/noticeboards, electronic discussion/news groups, weblogs (blogs), social and professional networking (e.g., use of Facebook, TikTok, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Twitter, in accordance with age restrictions) and any other material (video / image, etc) sent electronically.

Discrimination

Occurs when a person is treated unfavourably compared to another person/s. It can be either direct (i.e., a person is treated unfavourably because they have an attribute protected by law such as age, race or religion) or indirect (i.e., when a condition, requirement or practice has the effect of disadvantaging people with a particular attribute protected by law and that condition, practice or requirement is not reasonable). It is irrelevant whether a person intends to discriminate against another person.

ICT systems

Systems of technology that includes a variety of hardware and software, learning and digital technologies including but not limited to computers, devices, internet and network services, local and web-based applications, peripheral or external devices such as printers or USB storage, telephones including mobile and VOIP, and all online services including social media and instant,

direct or private messaging systems.

Harassment

Language or actions that are demeaning, offensive or intimidating to a person. It can take on many forms, including sexual harassment and disability harassment. While harassment may not always be considered bullying. It is inappropriate behaviour that is also not tolerated and must have consequences.

Melbourne Catholic Archdiocese Schools Ltd (MACS)

MACS is a reference to Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd, and / or its subsidiaries, MACSS and/or MACSEYE (as the context requires).

MACS board or board

The board of Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (MACS), being also the board of Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Specialist Schools Ltd (MACSS) in an ex officio capacity.

MACS school or school

A school which operates with the consent of the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne and is owned, operated and governed by MACS, directly or through MACSS (as the context requires). References to schools or MACS schools also includes boarding premises of schools operated by MACS and specialist schools operated by MACSS.

MACS Management

MACS executives and employees in MACS offices, including regional offices.

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Specialist Schools Ltd (MACSS)

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Specialist Schools Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of MACS established to conduct and operate specialist schools.

Record

A record is information in any format created, received and maintained as evidence of business activities and decisions. A record may be digital (such as an email, Word, Excel, PowerPoint or finalised and/or scanned PDF documents) or hardcopy (paper) format.

School environment

School environment means any of the following physical, online or virtual places, used during or outside school hours: a campus of the school; online or virtual school environments made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child or student (including email, intranet systems, software applications, collaboration tools, and online services); and other locations provided by the school or through a third-party provider for a child or student to use including, but not limited to, locations used for: camps; approved homestay accommodation; delivery of education and training such as registered training organisations, TAFEs, non-school senior secondary providers or another school; or sporting events, excursions, competitions or other events.

Related policies and documents

Supporting documents

Bullying Prevention Policy – Template for Schools
Bullying Prevention Procedures – Template for Schools

Related MACS policies and documents

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
Child Safety and Wellbeing Recordkeeping Policy
Code of Conduct – Students
Code of Conduct – Parents / Guardians / Carers
Complaints Handling Policy for MACS Schools
Duty of Care Policy for MACS Schools
Enrolment Policy for MACS Schools
ICT Acceptable Usage Policy
Pastoral Care of Students Policy

Legislation and standards

Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.)
Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic.)
Online Safety Act 2021 (Cth.)
Ministerial Order 1359 – Child Safe Standards

Policy information

Responsible director	Director, Learning and Regional Services
Policy owner	General Manager, Student Wellbeing
Approving authority	MACS Board
Assigned board committee	Child Safety and Risk Management
Approval date	October 2023
Risk Rating	Extreme
Next review required by	March 2025
Publication	MACS website, CEVN

POLICY DATABASE INFORMATION	
Assigned framework	Care, Safety and Welfare of Students
Supporting documents	See list of supporting documents and related policies above
Superseded documents	
New policy	New