

## **Bullying Prevention & Intervention**

### **The Hazard – Bullying**

Bullying is the repeated and intentional behaviour of causing fear, distress or harm towards another person that involves an imbalance of power. It can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and harassment. In any bullying incident there are likely to be three parties involved: the bully, the person being bullied, and bystanders.

Bullying can take many forms including:

- Physical bullying which involves physical actions such as hitting, pushing, obstructing or being used to hurt or intimidate someone. Damaging, stealing or hiding personal belongings is also a form of physical bullying.
- Psychological bullying is when words or actions are used to cause psychological harm. Examples of psychological bullying include name calling, teasing or making fun of someone because of their actions, appearance, physical characteristics or cultural background.
- Indirect bullying is when deliberate acts of exclusion or spreading of untrue stories are used to hurt or intimidate someone.
- Cyber bullying is the ongoing abuse of power to threaten or harm another person using technology. Cyber bullying can occur in chat rooms, on social networking sites, through emails or on mobile phones.

### **What Bullying is Not**

There are many negative situations which, whilst being potentially distressing for students, are not bullying. These include:

- Mutual Conflict Situations which arise where there is disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Mutual conflict situations need to be closely monitored as they may evolve into a bullying situation; or
- One Off Acts (of aggression or meanness) including single incidents of loss of temper, shouting or swearing do not normally constitute bullying.

### **Marist College Ashgrove's Policy**

A VISION FOR MARIST EDUCATION: Father Champagnat's great desire and legacy is that we relate to each other and to the young people in our care as the member of a loving family would do. Each person should feel at home among us. A warmth of welcome, acceptance and belonging should prevail where everyone has a sense of being valued and believed regardless of their role or their social standing. ('In the Footsteps of Marcellin Champagnat', p. 45)

Marist College Ashgrove recognises its duty to students to provide a safe and positive learning environment where individual differences and diversity within the College is respected and accepted.

Bullying is not tolerated at Marist College Ashgrove and parents/carers are encouraged to notify a member of the College staff, such as a class teacher, Pastoral Group Teacher, Head

of House, College Counsellor immediately if they suspect their son is a victim of bullying. The following actions are taken by the College as a preventative measure against bullying:

- Bullying be managed through a 'whole of College community' approach involving students, staff and parents/carers;
- Bullying prevention strategies be implemented within the College on a continuous basis with a focus on teaching age appropriate skills and strategies to empower staff, students and parents/carers to recognise bullying and respond appropriately;
- Bullying response strategies be tailored to the circumstances of each incident;
- Staff establish positive role models emphasising our no-bullying culture; and
- Bullying prevention and intervention strategies are reviewed on an annual basis against best practice.

### **Bullying Prevention Strategies**

Marist College Ashgrove recognises that the implementation of whole College prevention strategies is the most effective way of eliminating, or at least minimising incidents of bullying within our community.

The following initiatives form part of our overall bullying prevention strategy and our strategy to create a caring culture within the College:

- A structured curriculum and vertical house system, that provides age appropriate information and skills relating to bullying (including cyber bullying) and bullying prevention, to students over the course of the academic year;
- Education, training and professional development of staff in bullying prevention and response strategies;
- Regular provision of information to parents/carers, to raise awareness of bullying as a College community issue to equip them to recognise signs of bullying, as well as to provide them with clear paths for raising any concerns they may have relating to bullying directly with the College;
- Promotion of a supportive environment that encourages the development of positive relationships and communication between staff, students and parents/carers;
- Promotion of responsible bystander behaviour amongst students, staff and parents/carers;
- Reporting of incidents of alleged bullying by students, bystanders, parents/carers and staff are encouraged, and made easy through the establishment of multiple reporting channels (as specified below);
- Regular risk assessments of bullying within the College are undertaken by surveying students to identify bullying issues that may ordinarily go unnoticed by staff;
- Records of reported bullying incidents are maintained and analysed, in order to identify persistent bullies and/or victims and to implement targeted prevention strategies where appropriate;
- Statements supporting bullying prevention are included in students' College diaries;
- Anti-bullying posters are displayed strategically within the College; and
- Promotion of student awareness and a safe school environment by participating in events such as the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence.

## **Reporting Bullying**

Students and their parents/carers are sometimes reluctant to pursue bullying incidents, for fear that it will only make matters worse.

A key part of Marist College Ashgrove's bullying prevention and intervention strategy is to encourage reporting of bullying incidents as well providing assurance to students who experience bullying (and parents/carers) that:

- Bullying is not tolerated within the College;
- Their concerns will be taken seriously; and
- The College has a clear strategy for dealing with bullying issues.

Bullying incidents are able to be reported confidentially and anonymously via the Reach Out Portal located on the College website. Alternatively, students are able to advise the College verbally (or in writing) through any of the following avenues:

- Informing a trusted teacher;
- Informing a College counsellor;
- Informing a Pastoral Group Teacher or Head of House; or
- Informing the Head of Students, Deputy Headmaster or the Headmaster.

Bullying behaviours vary enormously in the extent and intent and, as a consequence, each incident needs to be dealt with on its specific facts.

## **Responding to Bullying**

TEACHERS' RESPONSIBILITIES WHEN CONFRONTED WITH BULLYING ARE AS FOLLOWS:

STAGE 1: When an instance of bullying is reported to or by a teacher, the teacher has a responsibility to:

- Intervene immediately to ensure that the specific incident ceases;
- Record details of the incident - student name, house, etc.
- Report the incident to the relevant Head of House or Year 5 and 6 Pastoral Leader.
- Tutor is informed.

STAGE 2: The Head of House will act according to the degree of gravity of the incident.

Please Note: A severe physical or vindictive action or extensive information arising from the bullying survey would result in an immediate level two response by the Head of House or Year 5/6 Pastoral Leader.

Options available to them are as follows:

- LEVEL 1: Speak to each student who are involved, separately/together. If first offence, use the 'no blame' option. Outline the expectation and record the details.
- LEVEL 2: If a repeat offence occurs, both victim and bully will be interviewed (other students will need to be interviewed to obtain a clear understanding of the situation).
  - Head of Students is informed.

- The parents of both victims and bullies may be notified.
- College counsellor is notified.

Direct consequences that the College may invoke include:

- A period of 'in school' suspension.
- Friday detentions.
- Professional assistance (regarding conflict solution skills).
- LEVEL 3: If the bullying continues in the same pattern of behaviour, the following actions will be taken:
  - The Headmaster is informed by the Head of Students.
  - A formal interview will be conducted with the parents of both parties.
  - Further counselling/professional assistance will be offered.

Direct consequences that the College may invoke may include:

- Suspension for an extended period of time.
- 'On Watch' enrolment.

Any further instance of post level 3 bullying will result in the Headmaster taking further sanctions including possible exclusion.

**Please Note: At all levels of this process the Head of House and the Pastoral Group Teacher should endeavour to establish a process of restorative justice whereby the victim has the opportunity to confront the bully to convey his feelings and the bully be given the opportunity to seek reconciliation.**

### **Workers' Responsibility**

All workers are responsible to:

- Model appropriate behaviour at all times;
- Deal with all reported and observed incidents of bullying in accordance with this policy;
- Ensure that any incident of bullying that they observe or is reported to them, is recorded appropriately;
- Be vigilant in monitoring students that have been identified as either persistent bullies or victims; and
- Acknowledge the right of parents/carers to speak with College authorities if they believe their child is being bullied.

### **Signage**

Anti-bullying posters may be posted in strategic locations in the College to promote appropriate behaviour and encourage students to respect individual differences and diversity.

### **Implementation**

This policy is implemented through a combination of:

- Appropriate training for relevant staff;

- Student and parent/carer education and information;
- Effective incident reporting procedures;
- Effective management of bullying incidents when reported;
- The creation of a caring culture which will not tolerate bullying within the College community;
- Effective record keeping procedures; and
- Initiation of corrective actions where necessary.

### **Discipline for Breach of Policy**

Where a staff member breaches this policy Marist College Ashgrove will take disciplinary action, including in the case of serious breaches, summary dismissal.

### **Related Policies**

- [Assault \(Student against Student\) Policy](#)
- [Cyber Safety Policy](#)
- [Counselling Services \(Student\)](#)