A Position Statement on Bullying
St Joseph’s School, Gayndah

Definitions of Bullying

The following are the definitions of bullying recognized by St Joseph’s School, Gayndah.

Bullying is a systematic abuse of power. It typically involves repeated acts of aggression that aim to dominate and cause hurt, fear, or embarrassment in another person. Bullying is generally deliberate and planned, but can also be a result of thoughtlessness. It can be perpetrated by an individual or by groups. Bullying may take many forms, for example:

**Physical bullying**: pushing and shoving (where hurt is intended), kicking, invasion of personal space, the destruction of property, tripping, punching, tearing clothes, standing over someone, pushing books from someone’s hands, shooting/throwing objects at someone

**Verbal bullying**: any comment of an offensive nature that refers to ability, race, religion, gender or sexuality; including name-calling, offensive language, spreading of rumours, using words that suggest stupidity or physical problems, mocking, imitating, teasing, abusive phone calls, laughing at someone’s mistakes, using unwelcome nicknames. This can include electronic and digital forms of communication.

**Gesture bullying**: includes making gestures (physical, verbal and written) to intimidate or to embarrass.

**Exclusion bullying**: includes the deliberate isolation (both explicit and implicit) of an individual student from his peer group.

**Extortion bullying**: the use of force to obtain money, food or personal belongings from other students; harassing other boys to do tasks e.g. buying lunch, carrying materials

**Cyber-bullying**: the use of information and communication technologies such as email (mobile) phone and text messages, instant messaging, defamatory personal websites and defamatory personal polling websites, to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or a group that is intended to harm others).
Bullying is not one-off incidents such as exclusion or name-calling but persistent behaviour which is designed to hurt, injure, embarrass, upset or cause discomfort to another.

Guidelines

St Joseph’s School, Gayndah recognizes the duty of care owed to students during school hours and in instances where a school or teacher is aware, or ought to be aware, or there is a risk, that a student is being bullied. **As a school that will not tolerate bullying, St Joseph’s School, Gayndah will ensure:**

1. All claims of bullying are investigated in a timely and reasonable manner and appropriate action taken as required
2. All members of our school community are aware of their joint responsibility in creating and maintaining a safe and supportive school environment
3. All staff are aware of their duty of care relating to all bullying issues and will be alert to signs of distress in students
4. All staff are aware of appropriate intervention and correct procedures to follow when a bullying incident occurs including communication with parents
5. Bullying prevention programs are implemented to promote resilience and to assist in creating supportive school environments
6. All students are made aware of the school’s expectations regarding bullying
7. All students are supported in dealing with bullying and building resilience through prevention and intervention programs
8. All students involved in bullying have the opportunity to be involved in restorative justice practices

**To support the school’s Bullying Position, parents of students will ensure:**

1. Appropriate behaviour is modelled and discussed at home
2. Children are encouraged to be open about bullying behaviour, their feelings and concerns
3. They are alert to signs of distress in their children
4. Appropriate communication is maintained with the school and the Bullying Policy is supported
Procedures

Our school Bullying Position is closely aligned to our school’s Positive Behaviour Support Program. There is a clearly articulated Positive Behaviour Process which details the processes and procedures to be followed in the event of poor behaviour which, in this case, would be bullying. The following procedures need to be followed to ensure bullying is appropriately addressed at St Joseph’s School, Gayndah.

1. **Reporting** – It is essential that all forms of bullying are reported. Anyone who is bullied or who witnesses an incident of bullying **behaviour** should report the incident. Children and parents should initially, in most circumstances, report the matter to their class teacher.

2. **Investigation** - The relevant teachers will investigate the incident. The nature and extent of the investigation will depend on the seriousness of the bullying. A “no-blame” approach will be used initially to gather information. Further **evidence** or **data** may be required to clarify the situation.

3. **Consultation** - The teacher will complete an Incident Register sheet and pass it to a member of Administration. This teacher, the member of the Administration and other staff, including the school counsellor, will **evaluate** the situation and decide on the action to be taken. At this stage parents could be notified and ongoing communication commenced.

4. **Action** - Following the completion of the investigation, the School will implement the **goals** and measures appropriate to the particular circumstance including the level of **consequence** as well as the **strategies** to be put in place. Depending on the seriousness of the bullying, decided by the teacher in conjunction with Administration and the school Counsellor, these could include:
   - Counselling
   - Restitution
   - Individual Behaviour Plan
   - Restorative Justice practices including Method of Shared Concern, Formal Apology and No Blame Approach
· Support for the victim of the bullying including resilience training, self-esteem activities, skill development in responding to bullying
· Social skill development for other children who witness bullying
· Conflict resolution or Mediation with students
· School Community Service consequences
· Suspension or Expulsion
Appendix 1

Prevention Strategies

1. Identify
Identify bullying as an important school issue and promote a whole-of-school approach against bullying involving staff, students, parents and the wider community. Address assemblies, put up posters etc to promote the key messages contained in the school Bullying Policy.

2. Educate
Talk with students and in groups about what can be done. Classroom discussions are vital. Convince students that it is in their interest to think how bullying can be overcome. Seek to turn their feelings into actions. Give them suggestions about how they might act in a bullying situation either as victim or as a witness. Aim to get more students to include victimised children in their games. Encourage students to devote time and effort into working with staff to eliminate bullying.

3. Communicate
Have communication systems in place including surveys, posters, bullying “Complaints” boxes to ensure students have every opportunity to relate bullying issues. Ensure teachers encourage open communication with the children in discussing bullying. Promote the view that “Telling is okay.”

4. Supervise
Maintain proactive supervision at all times particularly in places or situations where bullying may be more likely to take place.

5. Support
Introduce Resilience/Social Skills Programs across the school. Integrate into the curriculum.
Appendix 2

Intervention Strategies

Restorative Justice

No Blame Approach

The “No Blame” approach provides teachers with a way of dealing with bullying and harassment behaviours and encourages empathy for others.

Step 1 Interview the victim

Step 2 Discuss the incident with Administration and/or the School Counsellor

Step 3 The Group Process

· Convene a meeting with people involved (not the victim)
· Explain the problem
· Share responsibility
· Develop a sense of how the victim feels
· Ask the group for their ideas

Step 4 Inform Administration and/or the School Counsellor

Step 5 Follow up

1. Method of Shared Concern

This approach encourages children to state their shared concerns and encourages shared solutions to any problems.

Step 1 Gather to understand the problem

Step 2 Meet the perpetrators individually to acknowledge the problem and to develop a plan to change behaviours.

Step 3 Meet the person being bullied

Step 4 Meet perpetrators to review progress of their agreement

Step 5 Hold a combined meeting to reinforce the changes made
2. Formal Apology

A formal apology is a symbolic social contract which can mend relationships and restore well-being. It can help develop empathy and restore harmony.

Step 1 Acknowledging behaviour has been inappropriate

Step 2 Work out an appropriate time and place for the apology

Step 3 Name the particular offence

Step 4 Explain to the offended person why the offence was committed, that the behaviour isn’t characteristic of the offender, and that it won’t happen again

Step 5 Communicate that the behaviour wasn’t intended

Step 6 Genuine regret should be expressed
Appendix 3

Cyber-Bullying

Definition:

Cyber-bullying is when one student is targeted by another or others through the use of digital technology, mobile communication devices or through the internet. The aim of this targeting may be harassment, stalking, threats or other forms of harmful behaviour.

Cyber-bullying takes many forms and may involve websites, mobile phones, chat rooms, email, SMS and uploading of pictures or video. It could involve the sending of threatening messages, communicating false pretences, forwarding other students private communication, posting of humiliating messages or pictures.

Like the traditional definition of bullying, cyber-bullying usually involves systematic communication over a period of time. One-off communication would not normally be considered cyber-bullying except when the communication involves serious threats.

Procedures:

1. Cyber-bullying removes the normal feedback of communication between people. This leads to a situation where empathy for others is reduced. The school processes of restorative justice and other programs will be applied to support the students involved.
2. Students and their parents are aware of the Acceptable Technology Use Policy in the school and, if any incident of bullying involving an electronic medium occurs at school, the usual procedures for bullying, as detailed in the school Bullying Policy, will apply.
3. Students are not allowed to use mobile phones while at school. If they are brought to school, they are to be left in the School Office and are to be collected at the end of the school day.
4. While schools generally have no right to intervene in out-of-school conversations, the school may take appropriate action if the cyber-bullying was intended to have an effect on a student (either academically, socially or
emotionally) or if it adversely affects the safety and well-being of the student while in school.

5. If the school becomes aware of bullying incidents that are occurring outside the school and they are having an effect on the well-being of the student, the school will inform the student’s parents.

6. Students are aware that the misuse of telecommunications devices is considered a breach of the law in Australia and is a federal offence. If the bullying is of a serious nature, police may be contacted by the school.

7. The school will discuss issues of cyber-bullying with the Upper Primary students each year to clarify the school’s Position and to offer advice to all students.

8. The school encourages the reporting of cyber-bullying and seeks to find a balance between supporting the victim and changing the behaviour of the bully.