



Mother Teresa School

Anti-Bullying Policy

Related Policies

Mother Teresa School Behaviour Management and Pastoral Care Policies
CEO Pastoral Care Policy

Purpose

- To provide a school that is safe for all members.
- To minimise the amount of bullying that occurs.
- To deal with bullying in an appropriate way.
- To monitor levels of bullying and take action that is appropriate.

Policy

Mother Teresa School is committed to providing a safe and caring environment that fosters respect for others and does not tolerate bullying.

Definitions

Bullying is defined as repeatedly hurting another person, people or group who is/are less powerful either physically or psychologically. Bullying can take many forms. We consider the following behaviour to be bullying:

1. Physical:

- Hitting, kicking, punching
- Pushing, shoving, spitting
- Making rude gestures
- Taking or damaging something which belongs to someone else
- Forcing others to hand over food, money or something which belongs to them
- Making someone do something they don't want to
- Intimidation through invasion of personal space

2. Verbal:

- Name calling
- Teasing
- Threatening
- Making fun of someone because of their appearance, physical characteristics or cultural background or level of ability
- Making fun of someone's actions
- Belittling your abilities and achievements

3. Indirect:

- Excluding others from the game or group
- Spreading untrue stories about others
- Using negative body language
- Using peer pressure to manipulate others

4. Written

- Writing bad or offensive notes or graffiti about you or others.
- Texting and/or disseminating offensive material or comments on mobile phones or computers.

Bullying can happen in the school grounds, in the toilets, going to and from school, in the classroom or at home e.g. comments made via computer or mobile phone.

Shared Concern Approach: The bully and the victim will be brought together and discussions will take place with a member of the Leadership Team. The victim will be encouraged to express his/her feelings when they are being bullied. The children will be asked to come up with a plan of action that will reduce the incidence of bullying. The three parties will review the situation in a week.

Procedures

1. Implementation

At Mother Teresa School we will:

- Openly talk about bullying - what it is, how it affects us and what we can do about it.
- Teach our children the skills that will build their self-esteem and empower them to take the responsibility for themselves - and give them the opportunity to practise these skills.
- Formulate a policy that clearly states what actions we will take to deal with bullying behaviour.
- Send home a bullying letter when appropriate.

Responsibilities of Staff:

- To model appropriate behaviours at all times.
- To deal with all reported and observed incidences of bullying as set out in this policy.
- To ensure that children are supervised at all times.
- To report incidences of bullying to the principal if this is warranted.
- Inform parents/children of policy each term.

Responsibilities of Children:

- To 'tell' if they are being bullied or if they see someone else being bullied – both at school and on the way to and from school.
- Not to be a passive bystander
- To not bully others.

Responsibilities of Parents:

- To watch for signs that their child may be being bullied.
- To speak to someone on staff if their child is being bullied or they suspect that this is happening. Do not approach individual children or parents.
- To instruct their children to 'tell' if they are bullied.
- To actively support the school in the Anti-Bullying Policy

2. Reporting of Bullying

Children and their parents can report incidences of bullying to any teacher or the Principal. Any bullying incidences that are dealt with will be recorded on STARS. This program records the academic progress and behavioural history of students at Mother Teresa School. the Thinking Centre sheets.

3. Organisation

The staff will be responsible for implementing the program and ensuring that incidences of bullying are dealt with in a manner consistent with the policy and as soon as possible after it is reported or observed.

When a bullying incident is reported or observed we will use the following graded sanctions:

- Talk to the children individually.
- If mediation is unsuccessful, use shared concern approach.
- Warn the bully of the consequences of further incidences. Consequences may include: saying 'sorry' and performing some kind of reparation, walking with the duty teacher, and removal from the playground.

- Inform other staff of the incident and record it.
- Monitor the behaviour of the children involved following this discussion. Try and give the bully some tasks to do or some responsibilities, or praise him/her for doing something right.
- If the aggression is repeated, separate the offending child from the group for 'time out'.
- If the child continues to bully, make an appointment to speak to the parents/carer. Remind them of the policy and ask for their cooperation in stopping the child from bullying other children.
- If none of the sanctions succeed in stopping the child from being aggressive, he/she may be excluded - either from the playground or from school for a short period of time.

4. Evaluating the program

Staff will evaluate the program after six months and then after twelve months. It will be evaluated by:

- Noting if there has been a reduction in reported or observed incidences of bullying.
- Noting if there has been a change in the ethos of our school.
- Speaking to parents who have reported incidences to find out if the problem has been resolved.
- Conduct a survey of students and parents at regular intervals to determine levels of bullying.

Dear Parents,

At Mother Teresa School we take a proactive approach to bullying. Our definition states that bullying is defined as repeatedly hurting another person, people or group who is/are less powerful either physically or psychologically. It can be physical, intellectual or emotional.

By devoting time to developing a harmonious school culture and equipping the children with the skills to handle conflict in a non violent manner, we are addressing bullying. At Mother Teresa School we:

- ✓ Discuss bullying with the children each term
- ✓ Establish clear class rules to deal with put downs and bullying behaviour
- ✓ Teach social skills through role play in classrooms
- ✓ Use the life of Jesus as a model for us to follow
- ✓ Monitor behaviour on the playground
- ✓ Reward correct behaviour (Raffle tickets awards etc)
- ✓ Model correct behaviour
- ✓ Use the buddy system effectively
- ✓ Report bullying to the principal
- ✓ Use a shared concern approach to bullying
- ✓ Follow up with meetings
- ✓ Inform parents if bullying continues
- ✓ Celebrate and promote our safe environment

Mother Teresa School takes the issues of bullying and harassment very seriously. Recent Australian research (from RMIT) suggests that up to 50% of young people, who are bullied, may not always tell adults, as they may be afraid or ashamed. This may result in a student being victimized for a prolonged period of time before it is discovered and carries the potential for serious short, medium and long-term side effects.

In order for the school to carry out its duty of providing all students with a safe environment in which to learn, grow and develop – the school seeks to enlist the support and co-operation of all parents in the school community.

In addition to the standard preventative measures endorsed and practiced by schools across the world, the school is committed to working in a proactive manner with parents.

In the light of the RMIT research, the purpose of this letter is to share with parents some of the signs that they need to be alert to. Young people who are being bullied may display one or (usually) several of the following signs:

- come home from school with torn or disordered clothing, with damaged books.
- have bruises, injuries, cuts, and scratches that cannot be given a natural explanation.
- not wanting to go to school and finding excuses to stay at home (for example, feeling sick).
- wanting to go to school a different way to avoid the children who are bullying them.
- being very tense, tearful and unhappy after school.
- talking about hating school or not having any friends.
- refusing to tell you what happens at school.
- do not bring classmates or other peers home after school and seldom spend time in the homes of others

- may not have a single good friend to share free time with (play, shopping, sports and musical events, chatting on the phone, etc.)
- are seldom or never invited for parties and may not be interested in arranging parties themselves (because they expect nobody wants to come)
- appear afraid or reluctant to go to school in the morning, have poor appetite, repeated headaches, or stomach pains (particularly in the morning)
- choose an "illogical" route for going to and from school
- have restless sleep with bad dreams, may cry in their sleep
- lose interest in school work and get lower grades
- appear unhappy, sad, depressed, or show unexpected mood shifts with irritability and sudden outbursts of temper
- request or steal extra money from family (to accommodate the bullies)

These signs may not necessarily mean your child is being bullied, but if present, it is necessary to check out what is worrying your child and to inform a staff member as soon as possible.

We have in our policy, procedures for teachers to follow should they discover children bullying one another. The matter is taken very seriously and is reported to the principal for action.

In the meantime, parents should be assured that the school is committed to continually reviewing its policies and practices in respect of bullying and harassment.

As a school community we will continue to do all we can to provide a safe and happy environment for all our children.

Yours sincerely

Peter Hughes