

# Stella Maris Catholic School

## ANTI BULLYING POLICY

### Purpose

Stella Maris Catholic School seeks to provide for all an environment that is safe from all forms of intimidation. The antibullying policy aims to provide a comprehensive, universally understood definition of bullying behaviour and to outline strategies for all members of the school community to address social, emotional, physical and all other forms of intimidation.

The policy is to provide clear expectations and guidelines for acceptable behaviour, recognising that bullying can occur but is totally unacceptable and dealt with according to school procedures and MOE Guidelines. It also provides opportunities for the celebration of personal differences realising that each student in God is unique, having been made in the image of God.

### Guidelines

The following is our definition of **Bullying**.

**Bullying** usually has four common features:

1. It is deliberate
2. It is repeated over a period of time
3. It is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves
4. It is difficult for those who bully to learn new social behaviours

There are four main types of bullying:

- **Physical:** e.g. Hitting, kicking, taking belongings
- **Verbal:** e.g. Name calling, insulting, racist remarks
- **Indirect:** e.g. Spreading nasty stories, excluding from groups.
- **Cyber :** e.g. inappropriate use of texting, email, social media

Conflict can include aggressive behaviour which does not meet the criteria for bullying above but which inevitably will be inappropriate in the school environment and must attract an appropriate response from the staff.

Parents and students need to be informed of the existence of Stella Maris Catholic School anti bullying policy, and parental support is essential for this policy to work effectively. A copy of this policy will be posted on the school website and steps will be taken annually to promote awareness of the policy.

## **A “NO BULLYING” CULTURE:**

At Stella Maris Catholic school policies and process have been put in place to promote a culture of Marian values where bullying is not acceptable. This includes the following:

- Each classroom will have its own agreed treaty reflective of Key Competencies and Marian values (see Appendix 2 and 3) displayed on the classroom wall. This will be made and agreed to by the pupils at the beginning of each year.
- All teachers will program regular “treaty reflection time” into their class teaching. During this time the whole group will discuss good patterns of behaviour and ‘how we wish to be treated, how we should treat others etc’. The purpose of this time is to ensure that as pupils move through the school, they will become very familiar with expected standards of behaviour.
- Weekly Administration meetings will discuss and identify potential problems both in the classrooms and in the playground so that all staff are aware of potential problems and can therefore take a pro-active or preventative approach.
- Duty teachers are aware of the need to monitor the whole playground area at break times and keep a close but unobtrusive eye on those pupils who have been identified at the weekly administration meeting

## **Principles**

Stella Maris Catholic School treats all complaints of bullying seriously. When considering any issue of bullying behaviour, we believe the following principles are relevant and will be adhered to:

- Reflection of Marian values and the Key Competencies will permeate the process
- All members of the school community have the responsibility to report bullying as soon as possible after it happens. e.g. to the class teacher in the first instance, Office, Senior Management or Principal
- The person who has reported the bullying should be assured that they have acted correctly in doing so.
- Discretion to ensure confidentiality of all parties will be involved
- Staff should always first listen to the victim(s) and make enquiries with all parties to clarify exactly what has happened.
- Stella Maris Catholic School acknowledges that responses must demonstrate a balance between the need for accountability and the need to teach appropriate behaviour.
- The emphasis must be on changing the behaviour of the bullying student(s), while providing support to all involved.
- All involved need to be reassured that action has been taken and that bullying behaviour will not be tolerated.
- Suitable antibullying programmes will be run regularly.

## **In the event that a complaint of bullying is made:**

- All parties will be treated with dignity and respect.
- It should be recorded in writing and passed to the classroom teacher.
- The classroom teacher will investigate and discuss with their team leader so that the correct action can be investigated and taken and the victim supported.
- If the bullying behaviour continues the matter will be referred to senior management and the principal.
- The victim will be treated with empathy while the extent of the bullying is being investigated and, where appropriate, will be given suitable protection from retaliation.
- A staff member (usually the class teacher) checks regularly (initially on a daily basis) with the victim and also with the alleged bully. A written record will be kept of these follow ups.
- The primary intervention at Stella Maris Catholic School when bullying has occurred is the Stella Maris Procedures(see Appendix 1)
- Parents or Care Givers of both the victim and the bully should be involved in the process and informed of any actions taken.
- All incidents will be documented in the Student Management System Behaviour Module

Other interventions will also include where appropriate:

- Opportunity for face-to-face apology and commitment to future positive behaviour
- Consideration of the social consequences e.g. withdrawal of privileges from the bully
- Isolation and/or withdrawal of the bully

- Stand down, suspension or exclusion may occur following the Ministry of Education guidelines.
- A referral to external agencies as required

It is to be noted that these interventions take place over a period of time and that communication and support must be ongoing throughout the whole process.

**Associated Documentation and Procedures**

- Behaviour Management Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Health and Safety
- Digital Citizenship Policy

## **APPENDICES:**

### **Appendix 1: Stella Maris procedures:**

**Reflection of Marian Values and the Key Competencies will permeate this process.**

#### **Process**

##### **1. *Victim interviewed***

- The victim is reassured that the problem can be solved.
- The main threatening figures, the 'bullies' are identified
- Those present, but not actively involved, the 'neutrals' are identified.
- Those whom the victim finds supportive, or would like to have as friends, are identified.
- Accept all that is said without questioning its validity.
- Tell victim that a group of pupils will be asked to help him/her be happier in school.
- Make a written record of the interview.

##### **2. *Peer Group selected***

- The peer group does not include the victim.
- Members of all 3 groups are selected.
- All selected members understand why they have been selected.
- No members feel that they have been pre-judged.
- Select 6-8 members for the peer group, including all bullies, some neutrals and supporters of the victim.
- Reassure all members that they are not in trouble.
- No-one is to be labelled.
- The group is told that X is unhappy at school and that they have been chosen because they can help, this is what they have in common.
- The term bullying is avoided as it assumes pre-judgement.
- Non-judgemental atmosphere is maintained with the group.
- Parents of victim and peer group are informed of the process

##### **3. *Empathy with victim sought***

- Members of the group develop empathy for the victim.
- Group is asked if they have ever been unhappy at school.
- When members provide examples, say "X may be feeling like that"

##### **4. *Reasons sought for victim's unhappiness***

- The group expresses their view of the problem in a non-judgemental atmosphere, thus owning the problem.
- Explain that X is unhappy at school and as they know X they probably know better than anyone why he/she is unhappy.
- Seek responses – be non-judgemental.
- Maintain non-judgemental atmosphere by not allowing the use of names.
- No punitive action can follow this discussion.
- When members provide examples, say "X must be feeling like that"

##### **5. *The group makes suggestions***

- The group makes suggestions as to how X can be helped to be happy at school.
- The group collectively owns the plan.
- The members are asked to make suggestions.
- No-one is asked to make promises nor are they given jobs.
- The actual suggestions themselves are not significant except insofar they demonstrate commitment to the group goal.
- Inappropriate suggestions are to be gently rejected.

### **6. Responsibility for implementation passed to the group**

- The group is given responsibility for the implementation of the plan – and its success. This is a critical step.
- The group is thanked for their support.
- The plan is raised.
- The members are told that they will report back all they have managed to do in a week's time at the review meeting.
- A time for the review meeting is made.

### **7. Review meetings**

- The staff member overseeing the process will meet daily informally with the peer group members throughout the process.
- The situation is reviewed with the victim.
- The situation is reviewed with the peer group.
- Further review meetings are scheduled as necessary.
- Victim is interviewed separately.
- Members of the peer group express how they feel things are with X, and what they have done to help. Members are asked for their contributions.
- Members are asked if they are willing to continue for a second week.
- A second review is arranged.
- Parents of victim and bully are kept informed of process results.
- Peer group members rewarded for involvement.

### **Appendix 2**

Key Competencies

### **Appendix 3**

Marian Values