



Procedure for Student Bullying Prevention and Intervention

St Francis Xavier College Procedures are designed to enable the College to enact the Policies of the Diocese of Sale Catholic Education Limited (DOSCEL). All College Procedures intentionally promote a child safe culture which prioritises the safety and wellbeing for all students.

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Purpose

The purpose of this Procedure is to create a safe and respectful learning environment within the school community and to prevent bullying, cyber bullying and other related anti-social behaviours.

St Francis Xavier College Procedures are designed to enable the College to enact the Policies of the Diocese of Sale Catholic Education Limited (DOSCEL).

Scope

This procedure applies to all members of the College community.

Student bullying prevention and intervention is managed through a whole school approach involving students, staff and parents/carers.

Both physical and psychological safety are paramount, and all forms of bullying, harassment and violence are unacceptable.

Definitions

What is bullying?

The 3 main features of bullying are:

- the misuse of power in a relationship
- it is ongoing and repeated
- it involves behaviours that can cause harm

Bullying is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening.

Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt/direct) or hidden (covert/indirect). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records).

Bullying of any form or for any reason can have immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.

The following types of bullying may occur and can cause physical, social and/or psychological harm:

Direct physical bullying

hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching and pushing or damaging property

Direct verbal bullying

name calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, discriminatory remarks, or verbal abuse.

Covert bullying Covert bullying can be very difficult for someone outside of the interaction to identify. It can include hand gestures and threatening looks, whispering, excluding or turning your back on a person, restricting where a person can sit and who they can talk with.

Gaslighting (creating psychological stress by making a person question their own memory, perception, or judgment) is also a form of covert bullying.

False accusations (which are often linked to gaslighting) is also a form of covert bullying. This may include: accusing another person of being racist, sexist, abusive, etc.

Social bullying Social bullying is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. It includes deliberately excluding someone, mimicking, playing practical jokes, lying or spreading rumours, manipulation of relationships, sharing information that will have a harmful effect on the other person and/or damaging a person's social reputation or social acceptance. Social bullying can also include involving and encouraging others to partake in the bullying.

Cyberbullying Direct verbal or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technologies. This includes harassment via a mobile phone or other device, setting up a defamatory personal website or deliberately excluding someone from social networking spaces. It can also include filming another and sharing images of people that can cause psychological harm.

What is not bullying?

There are also some behaviours, which, although they might be unpleasant or distressing, are not bullying:

- mutual conflict - which involves a disagreement, but not an imbalance of power. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.
- single-episode acts of nastiness or physical aggression, or aggression directed towards many different people, is not bullying.
- social rejection or dislike is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.

What is a bystander or upstander?

A bystander is considered to be someone who sees or knows about someone being bullied but for a range of reasons is passive and does not participate in the bullying or support the target.

An upstander is considered to be someone who supports the student who is being bullied by getting help from a teacher, distracting the students engaged in bullying behaviour, supporting the student who is being bullied or directly intervening. Upstanders play an important protective role for peers

who are experiencing bullying. However, at no point is any member of the community required to be an upstander by physically intervening in physical altercations.

Procedure

Prevention Strategies

St Francis Xavier College recognises that the implementation of whole school prevention strategies is the most effective way of minimising incidents of bullying within our community. We recognise the importance of bullying prevention and intervention in the creation of a child safe culture.

The following initiatives form part of our bullying prevention strategy:

- The Care Group and Wellbeing Curriculum, and other curriculum areas provide information and skills relating to bullying (including cyber bullying) and bullying prevention, to students over the course of the academic year.
- The Care Group and House system provides age appropriate peer support to promote social inclusion.
- 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 (Positive Learning Partnerships).
- Promotion of responsible bystander and upstander behaviour amongst students, staff and parents/carers.
- Reporting of incidents of alleged bullying by students, bystanders, parents/carers and staff is encouraged, and made accessible through the establishment of multiple reporting channels.
- Regular risk assessments of bullying within the college are undertaken by surveying students to identify bullying issues that may go unnoticed by staff (e.g.: AWE measure).
- 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.
- Anti-bullying posters are displayed strategically within the College.
- Promotion of student awareness by participating in events such as the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence.
- Tracking student wellbeing and reports of bullying at school via the AWE (Assessing Wellbeing in Education) Survey.
- Responding to students who are flagged with a bullying alert via the AWE survey.

Recognising Signs of Bullying

Signs that a student may be bullied include:

- Crying at night and having nightmares
- Refusing to talk when asked “What’s wrong?”
- Having unexplained bruises, cuts or scratches
- An unwillingness or refusal to go to school
- Feeling ill in the mornings
- A decline in quality of schoolwork
- Becoming withdrawn and lacking confidence
- Beginning to bully siblings
- Acting unreasonably or out of character

Parents/carers are encouraged to recognise signs of bullying and notify the College through a trusted staff member immediately (such as a class teacher, head of house, College counsellor, etc), if they suspect their child is experiencing bullying.

The College also recognises that there are risk factors that can leave a student more vulnerable to engaging in bullying behaviours or being the victim of bullying behaviours. These include students who:

- Have special education needs and/or disabilities
- Identify as LGBTQI+
- Are from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds
- Experience homelessness or are in Out of Home Care

As such, we take steps to:

- promote welcome and inclusion of students from these groups
- provide staff with information about these vulnerabilities so they can identify when support for students is needed
- where needed, put in place specific plans to support these students and promote protective factors

Reporting Bullying (occurrences)

Any member of the College community who is aware of bullying taking place is encouraged to report that to a staff member.

The College recognises that 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 the College’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
- The College has a clear strategy for dealing with bullying issues

Bullying incidents can be reported to the College verbally or in writing through any of the following avenues:

- Informing a Teacher or Support Staff member
- Informing a Care Group Teacher
- Informing a student's Head of House
- Informing a College Counsellor, Pastoral Care Worker or Cultural Liaison Worker
- Informing a member of the College Executive or Leadership Team

Bullying can also be reported by students using a Microsoft [Bullying Alert Report Form](#). This form is made accessible to students via SIMON other student platforms and promoted at intervals through the year. The form will be forwarded to the relevant Head of House for Response.

Responding to Bullying

Bullying behaviours vary and each reported incident is managed on a case by case basis in line with Positive Behaviour Support.

In all circumstances the College:

- Takes reports of bullying seriously
- Provides assurance to the victim that they are not at fault and their confidentiality will be respected
- Takes time to properly investigate the facts including discussing the incident with all people involved
- Takes time to understand any concerns of individuals involved
- Maintains records of reported bullying incidents
- Will escalate its response when dealing with persistent bullies and/or severe incidents

Actions that may be taken when responding to bullying may include:

- Communication and consultation with parents/guardians
- Restorative Practices mediation
- Student Support Plan (outline of strategies). This may include a Student Safety Risk Assessment and mitigation strategies
- Access to counselling for all students involved
- Checking that the bullying has stopped
- Disciplinary action (consequences) at the Deputy Principal Head of Campus discretion
- Disciplinary action including suspension and/or expulsion of persistent bullies, or in cases of severe incidents

Persistent or severe bullying is considered a serious antisocial behaviour and will be managed in accordance with the College policy and procedure.

The expulsion of a student is the decision of DOSCEL, in consultation with the Principal.

The following behaviours are considered criminal or potentially criminal. Staff who become aware of any of these behaviours must reported this to a member of the Executive or Leadership Team:

- Stalking
- Destruction of the property of another
- Threats to inflict serious harm and/or kill
- Physical and/or sexual assault
- Serious discrimination or defamation
- Cyber stalking
- Breach of Privacy

- Hacking or cyber crimes
- Sexting and creating or possessing and /or disseminating of child pornography

Reporting (external)

Any incident of serious bullying will be notified to the Manager: Learning and Teaching, Catholic Education Office Diocese of Sale via the Principal / Deputy Principal Head of Campus.

Any incident of where a criminal offence has been identified will be reported to Victoria Police.

Any incident involving sexual misconduct will be reported to Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Team (SOCIT).

Record keeping

All instances of reported bullying should be noted in SIMON Student Notes for all students involved.

Responsibilities

Employee Responsibility

All employees are responsible to:

- Model appropriate behaviour at all times;
- Respond to and follow up all reported and observed incidents of bullying in accordance with these procedures
- Ensure that any incident of bullying that they observe or is reported to them, is recorded in the Students' SIMON Profile
- Be vigilant in monitoring students that have been identified as either persistent bullies or victims
- Acknowledge and promote the right of parents/carers to speak with College authorities if they believe their child is being bullied

Related Legislation

- Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)
- Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic)
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)

Related DOSCEL Policies

- DOSCEL Child Safety Policy
- DOSCEL Suspension, Negotiated Transfer and Expulsion Policy

Related College Procedures

- College Child Safety Program
- College Wellbeing Guidelines

Further Information

Further information can be obtained from:

- Deputy Principal Mission and Compliance
- Assistant Principal Wellbeing

Status of Procedure	
College Leader Responsible	Assistant Principal Wellbeing
Implementation Date	August 2020
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