



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 / imbalance of power in a relationship
- it is ongoing or repeated (on more than one occasion)
- it involves behaviours that creates a risk to the mental or physical health or safety of others
- it involved harm to another person, their property, reputation or social acceptance
- this causes fear, distress, or 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 bullying

behaviour that hurts, harms, or humiliates and is overt, obvious, and apparent to anyone witnessing it. The actions and words are easy to identify, the identity of the person bullying is usually known, and the acts are focused toward the person being bullied – they know about the bullying as it is happening.

Direct physical bullying includes: pushing, shoving, fighting, pinching, damaging, stealing or hiding personal belongings and any other unwelcome physical contact used intentionally to intimidate or hurt someone.

Direct verbal bullying includes: name calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, discriminatory remarks, or verbal abuse, particularly those referring to physical characteristics. Racial discrimination or any kind of discrimination based on age, sex, gender, disability, belief or culture is a form of bullying.

Direct visual bullying includes: offensive notes or material, graffiti, or damaging other people's possessions.

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.

Psychological bullying includes: 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.

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

Online 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 and includes abusive texts and emails, hurtful messages, images or videos, imitating others, excluding others, humiliating others, spreading nasty gossip and chat, and creating fake accounts to trick someone or humiliate them.

Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment includes: touching, sexually orientated jokes, drawings of, or writing about someone's body, using rude names or commenting about someone's morals, unwanted invitations of a sexual nature, continuously asking questions about someone's private life.

What is not bullying?

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

- mutual conflict
 - There is an argument or disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power.
 - Unresolved mutual conflict sometimes develops into a bullying situation, with one person becoming targeted repeatedly for 'retaliation' in a one-sided way.
- single-episode
 - Single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying.
 - If a student is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion, they are not being bullied. Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different students is not the same as bullying.
 - Acts of nastiness or physical aggression, or aggression directed towards many different people, is not bullying.
- social rejection or dislike
 - Social rejection is bullying when someone feels alone or left out because of the manipulation of their peer relationships and social status.
 - It is not bullying when people make new friends and distance themselves from old friends.
 - That old friend may feel as though they are being "socially excluded" but if there is no aggressive intention to cause harm, they are not being bullied.

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:

- i. House and Care Group System
The Care Group and House system provides age appropriate peer support to promote social inclusion.
- ii. College Expectations – Positive Learning Partnerships
Promotion of a supportive environment that encourages the development of positive relationships and communication between staff, students and parents/carers. The following expectations are displayed in every learning area:
 - Unconditional respect
 - A calm and just manner
 - Facing challenges together with optimism
- iii. Curriculum
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. Promotion of responsible bystander and upstander behaviour amongst students, staff and parents/carers.
- iv. Training
Education, training and professional development of staff in bullying prevention and response strategies.
- v. Community communications
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.
- vi. Awareness raising
Promotion of student awareness by participating in events such as the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence. Anti-bullying posters are displayed strategically within the College.
- vii. Clear channels for reporting or raising concerns
 - 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. 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.
- viii. Risk assessment and response
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). Individual responses are initiated and systems designs are reviewed based on responses.

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:

- Are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- Have special education needs and/or disabilities
- Are LGBTQI+
- Are from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds
- Experience homelessness or are in Out of Home Care
- Experience poverty and lack of resources

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
- educate staff and students about the strengths, challenges and hardships of these groups and ways to promote strengths, face and reduce challenges and reduce hardships
- 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 College Executive 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 child pornography
- Defamation

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) and the Department of Fairness, Families and Housing (DFFH) as needed.

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 Anti-Bullying and Bullying Prevention Policy
- DOSCEL Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- DOSCEL Suspension, Negotiated Transfer and Expulsion Policy

Related College Procedures

- College Child Safety and Wellbeing policies and procedures
- College Pastoral Care and Positive Behaviour Support Guidelines
- College Wellbeing Guidelines

Further Information

Further information can be obtained from: Deputy Principal Wellbeing

Status of Procedure	
College Leader Responsible	Deputy Principal Wellbeing
Implementation Date / Last Reviewed	June 2024
Review Date [Commonly 1 – 2 Years]	June 2026
Local Governing Authority Approval	College Executive Team

Review Log

Details of Amendments	By Whom	Date
Multiple minor updates to align with updates from DOSCEL	Deputy Principal Wellbeing	September 2021
Review and update relating to title of Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy	Deputy Principal Wellbeing	July 2022
Minor edits	Deputy Principal Wellbeing	June 2024