



# Good Shepherd Catholic School

## — Lockridge —

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## HARASSMENT & BULLYING POLICY - STUDENTS

### Rationale

Good Shepherd Catholic School has a responsibility to provide an educational environment that promotes the dignity and respect of the person and, therefore, aims to encourage the development of positive relationships between students to reduce all forms of bullying, harassment, aggression and violence.

Learning outcomes, physical health, emotional, psychological and spiritual wellbeing can be adversely affected by bullying, harassment, aggression and violence. Students who are bullied, subject to aggression or harassed tend to have poorer health, lower self-esteem, more interpersonal difficulties, higher levels of loneliness, depression, suicidal ideation and increased anxiety. They are also more likely to have a dislike of and want to avoid school, higher absenteeism and lower academic competence. The effects of bullying can begin early in life and, for some, last a lifetime.

The community of Good Shepherd Catholic School, Lockridge is endeavouring to live out the school's vision statement and the shared value of each person as an image and likeness of Jesus Christ.

**As a developing, loving community the members of Good Shepherd Catholic School find all forms of bullying, as exemplified by victimization, acts of violence, aggression, unkind words, teasing etc, unacceptable.**

Acts of violence or aggression, either physical or verbal, which are random or spontaneous, will be addressed through the Good Shepherd Catholic School Student Behaviour Policy, which is also located under the Pastoral Care Umbrella.

### Definitions

**Bullying** is when, over a period of time, an individual or a group intentionally harm a person, who finds it hard to stop this behaviour from continuing.

Additionally, bullying can be characterised as: causing distress, not only at the time of the attack but also by the threat of future attacks; and, an imbalance of power (that is inappropriate and where there is an intention to hurt).

Its nature may be:

- **Verbal** - name-calling, put-downs, threats (spoken, written, electronic or cyber which may also apply to the following points)
- **Physical** - hitting, tripping, punching, throwing objects, stealing
- **Social** – ignoring, hiding, ostracizing
- **Psychological** – stalking, threatening looks, spreading rumours, damaging possessions?

**Harassment** is any unwanted, unwelcome or uninvited behaviour which makes a person feel humiliated, intimidated or offended. (Adapted from Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia Policy, Harassment in School, 1998). Harassment can be seen as one form of bullying.

Bullying and harassment are often thought of separately, however, both involve a more powerful person or group oppressing a less powerful person or group, often on the grounds of 'difference'. These differences can be related to culture, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, sexual orientation, ability or disability, religion, body size and physical appearance, personality, age, marital status, parenting status or economic status. (Bullying. No Way! website cited in the National Safe Schools Framework, 2003). *Policy statement 2-D6 Dealing with Bullying and Harassment (Students) (Version 3 – 2010) Page 3 of 5*

Unlike bullying and harassment, violence is not necessarily associated with an imbalance of power. It can occur between people of equal power. It implies extreme forcefulness, usually (but not always) of a physical kind. (Rigby, cited in the NSSF, 2003).

## Principles

1. The Harassment & Bullying Policy aims to ensure that each child is able to develop his/her education within a safe, supportive and caring environment free from harassment and bullying.
2. Good Shepherd owes a duty of care to their students.
3. Good Shepherd provides supportive environments which:
  - act to prevent instances of bullying, harassment, aggression and violence
  - encourage socially appropriate behaviour using positive behaviour management and direct teaching of curriculum in areas such as interpersonal and self-management skills
  - promote respect for self and other
  - develop physical/emotional well-being and resiliency
  - develop interpersonal skills and positive mental health
4. Responding to bullying, harassment, aggression and violence requires quality leadership and role modelling to facilitate strategy implementation and sustained change, together with a whole-school community approach that is consistent with the Catholic Education Office of Western Australia's Pastoral Care Framework, Good Shepherd's Pastoral Care practices and the school's Evangelisation Plan and which partners with parents and other agencies.
5. Bullying, harassment, aggression and violence may occur outside of the school. When these behaviours impact on a student's learning and behaviour in school, Good Shepherd will take action to support the continued wellbeing of those involved.
6. All bullying, harassment, aggression and violence shall be responded to. When bullying, harassment, aggression and violence are ignored or overlooked, it serves to condone or reinforce the behaviour. Bystanders, (those who observe bullying) can encourage or assist those who bully simply by doing nothing.
7. While the aim is to promote and encourage positive behaviour, procedures shall clearly state the range of appropriate consequences that may be applicable for unacceptable behaviour. In looking at consequences relating to specific issues, consideration should be given to other circumstances which may have bearing such as family or mental health matters.
8. All parties to incidents of bullying, harassment, aggression and violence are entitled to appropriate support.

## Procedures

1. The Harassment & Bullying Policy relates to the children of Good Shepherd Catholic School
2. Good Shepherd will
  - a. Promote positive social health, mental health, safety and wellbeing
  - b. Shall provide professional development and appropriate resourcing to meet the needs of our staff in implementing this policy
3. All teachers will reinforce the school's ethos and expectations in regards to the principles of this policy by:
  - a. Maintaining a proactive philosophy and anti-bullying awareness within the educational processes and relationships
  - b. Having access to the Social Worker's educational resources on any programs concerning harassment and bullying.
  - c. Educating community members to:
    - i. Differentiate between "dobbing" and reporting
    - ii. Asking for help and acting responsibly
    - iii. Empathize with the feelings of those targeted for bullying or harassment.
  - d. Encouraging students to recognise the Christ-image in their peers and to take responsibility for the more vulnerable members of the community
4. All incidents of suspected or reported bullying:
  - a. Will be fully investigated by the teacher first identifying the incident or to whom the disclosure is initially made
    - i. Unless agreement is achieved with another teacher or member of the Administration Team
  - b. Will be documented and a copy emailed to The Principal
5. The investigation process will:
  - a. Honour the principles of:
    - i. Natural justice
    - ii. Confidentiality
  - b. Ensure that all parties and witnesses are interviewed independently and in an appropriate manner using a shared concern or "no Blame approach"
  - c. Recorded and emailed to the Principal
6. Reporting Process:
  - a. All incidents of bullying should be reported immediately to:
    - i. The class or duty teacher or
    - ii. The parent who should then report the incident to the class teacher or The Principal or
    - iii. The Principal by the child or parent

***Each child has the right to report incidents to The Principal in the yard or through the School Secretary who will facilitate immediate access to The Principal or their delegate.***

7. Where Bullying or Harassment is found to have occurred the process will aim to:
  - a. Establish the reason for the bullying
  - b. Heal the relationship between the parties
  - c. Reinforce the relevant school rules and policies by providing consequences consistent with the Student Behaviour Policy
8. The written notification to the bully's and target's parents, for example a Behaviour Slip, will contain:
  - a. Details of:
    - i. The incident
    - ii. The consequences or sanctions imposed (Bully's only)
  - b. A section which the parent is required to sign acknowledging receipt of the notification

- c. The option for the parent to discuss the incident with the author of the notification
- 9. To support those who are bullies in changing their behaviours community members will:
  - a. Be encouraged to influence bullies positively and to model appropriate behaviour for the bully
  - b. Develop a no tolerance approach to bullying behaviour.
- 10. The reconciliation process will aim to change the attitude and behaviour of bully by:
  - i. Supporting the bully to take responsibility for his/her behaviour
  - ii. Developing his/her ability to make more appropriate choices
  - iii. Assist bullies to develop appropriate non-violent ways to meet their needs
  - iv. Reason with the bully and help him/her to empathize with the feelings of the target
  - v. Assist the bully to understand the consequences of his/her actions on others
  - vi. Healing the relationship between the bully and the target
  - vii. Provide the target with the strategies and empowerment to deal with future such incidents should they occur.
- 11. The targets will be:
  - a. Supported throughout the process
  - b. Educated in reporting procedures
  - c. Encouraged to use appropriate assertive and help seeking strategies to avert future incidents.
  - d. Access to support agencies e.g. School Social Worker, Psychologist or teacher where a relationship exists.
- 12. Good Shepherd Harassment & Bullying Policy shall be monitored and regularly reviewed. It will be reviewed every 3 years or immediately following any incident that raises issues in respect to policy and practice.

## APPENDIX A

### SUPPORTING ROLES

*Teachers will:*

1. Act as role models, demonstrating caring and tolerant behaviour
2. Listen to reports of bullying as well as the student's other concerns
3. Protect victims from further harm
4. Try to stop the bullying from recurring
5. Enforce disciplinary consequences if necessary
6. Enlist the assistance of the school social worker for counselling if appropriate

*Targets will:*

1. Be encouraged to speak up
2. Be encouraged to try to stand up for themselves
3. Report incidents to a teacher or the Office staff

*Students who witness bullying will:*

1. Not encourage the bullying behaviour
2. Intervene if they are able
3. Seek teacher assistance if they cannot intervene

### How parents can help

Whether their child is a target of bullying or involved in bullying someone else the following steps may help:

1. Be alert to the signs of possible bullying (eg unexplained bruises/scratches, unwillingness to attend school, loss of confidence, declining academic performance)
2. Listen to their child sympathetically and sensitively
3. Being aware that each child involved will have his/her own views of what happened
4. Report the incident to the child's teacher in the first instance, then the Principal if necessary
5. **Refrain** from talking directly with other children, who may have been involved or witnesses, or their parents
6. Refrain from encouraging the child to hit back or return verbal abuse
7. Set a good example when resolving your own conflicts
8. Teach your child to respect differences and to be tolerant

**Strategies that Good Shepherd Catholic School will use to deter bullying include:**

1. Being alert to the signs of bullying
2. Investigating incidents of bullying
3. Empowering targets of bullying
4. Ensuring the physical safe of the students
5. Giving bullies the opportunity to explore and address their unacceptable behaviour.
6. Providing supervision
7. Providing awareness-raising exercises in the curriculum about the impact of bullying and about conflict resolution
8. Make counselling by staff available to both victims and bullies
9. The implementation of the Managing Student Behaviour Policy and the imposing of sanctions

**Children can deal with bullying situations by:**

1. Calmly walking away
2. Avoiding children who bully
3. Not fighting or teasing
4. Ignore teasing and mean words
5. Find someone else to play with

6. Tell themselves they are not the mean words being said about them
7. Practice a quick verbal retort that sounds confident

If these strategies do not work, the child should tell a caring adult eg:

1. Their parent/guardian
2. Their class teacher
3. The duty teacher
4. Receptionist in the office
5. The Social Worker
6. The Principal

### *Key points in any lesson plan when addressing anti bullying strategies.*

The plan should include the following headings. Please note that the wording and strategies included here:

1. Are suggestions only and not exhaustive.
2. Need to be tailored to the developmental needs of the children.

The bullying *behaviour* should be emphasised, instead of labelling children as “victims”, “targets” and “bullies”.

### **Definitions of Terms can be found in the Harassment & Bullying Policy**

It needs to be emphasised at all levels that bullying can be done by individuals, or groups.

### **The effects of bullying**

People who are bullied feel very hurt, upset or angry. The effects of bullying can last a long time.

### **Types of bullying behaviours, with examples:**

*Physical:* Hitting, tripping, punching, shoving, pinching, spitting, scratching, damaging, hiding or stealing belongings, throwing objects at someone, locking someone in or out

*Verbal:* Name-calling, making offensive remarks, taunting, teasing, put-downs, threats (spoken, written, electronic or cyber which may also apply to the following points)

*Social /Emotional:* Ignoring, hiding, ostracizing or alienating, gossiping about, embarrassing someone, making fun of someone, excluding or threatening to exclude from groups, ignoring

*Psychological* Stalking, threatening looks or gestures, spreading rumours, damaging possessions

It needs to be emphasised that bullying is not limited to hurting someone physically.

### **How bystanders may encourage bullying:**

- Standing around looking on
- Agreeing with mean comments
- Not supporting someone who is bullied
- Passing on mean/nasty notes/messages
- Passing on rumours
- Laughing at the bullying behaviour
- Helping to hide the behaviour from adults.

## **Action students can take if they are bullied**

These are not in any particular order; the extent to which children can try self-help strategies first, before asking an adult for support will vary according to the child's age, developmental stage and the seriousness of the bullying behaviour. All students need to be made aware that in all cases of serious injury or upset they must go to a teacher straight away.

### *Lower Primary Students:*

- Tell the person who is bullying you that you don't like it
- Look strong and walk away
- Don't tease or hit back
- Go to a safe place
- Stay around other people
- Go to a teacher and tell them what is happening; try and be as honest as you can

### *Middle/Upper Primary Students:*

- Pretend not to hear what is being said
- Tell your self that you are not the nasty things that are said about you
- Believe in yourself
- Consider your own behaviour
- Choose somewhere else to play, eat etc
- Look strong and walk away
- Control your anger
- Be assertive
- Explain how you feel
- Don't be mean back
- Ask your friends for ideas, but don't 'badmouth'
- Leave/avoid situations that could lead to bullying
- Talk to a teacher (classroom or duty)
- Ask to see the social worker
- Talk to your parents

## **Actions students can take if they see bullying going on**

- Refuse to watch bullying
- Don't join in with the bullying
- Tell the person bullying to stop
- Ask the person being bullied to walk away with you
- Allow the person being bullied to play with you and your friends
- Tell a teacher what is going on
- Don't take on the person bullying; it's not safe and could lead you into bullying behaviour too

Students need to be reminded that asking for help when someone is hurt or upset is not dobbing. Dobbing happens when a student tells an adult something about another student only to get someone else into trouble.

## **What students can do if they feel tempted to bully someone else**

- Think about what is making you angry or upset
- Think of some other ways to deal with someone who has annoyed/hurt you
- Talk to someone about what is happening to you, how you are feeling
- Think of doing something else instead of bullying eg play with other children, suggest a new game, go somewhere quiet to calm down

### **What students can expect teachers to do**

If teachers see or hear about someone being bullied they will try and help. They will also ask questions like:

- What happened?
- How do you feel?
- What did you do to try and solve the problem?
- What happened then?
- What can you do now?
- Do you need more help?

If teachers are told about or see someone bullying they will remind them of the school's rule against bullying. They will also ask questions about what happened, how the other person may have felt and what the person doing the bullying can do to make things better. The teacher may also use consequences from the school's discipline policy.

It needs to be emphasised that teachers will take all complaints seriously, will check up on how the children are coping and may contact the parents.

### **How family members may be able to help**

Parents will probably be interested in hearing about what happened and will support you and encourage you to try the ideas you have learned.

At Good Shepherd Catholic School we try to make everyone feel safe, happy and valued. We can stop bullying if we all work together.