St. Joseph's School, Sorrento

Cyberbullying Policy and Procedures

Date Reviewed: June 2021   Next Review: June 2023

RATIONALE

At St. Joseph's we aim to work towards providing an educational and workplace environment that promotes the dignity and respect of everyone within the organisation and therefore must aim to eliminate bullying in all of its forms.

Cyberbullying, like all other forms of bullying, will not be tolerated at St. Joseph's for it has a negative impact on all who are touched by it. It adversely affects student learning outcomes. It erodes the rights and the physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual and social well-being of individuals. It lowers workplace moral, as it can interfere with the effectiveness of work and learning environments by making them hostile and unpleasant.

The purpose of this policy is to articulate the rights and responsibilities of all with regards to cyberbullying.

WHAT IS CYBERBULLYING?

Cyberbullying is causing hurt via the use of information and communication technologies, such as the Internet and other forms of social media, and through the use of mobile phones and other mobile devices.

Cyberbullying is a growing problem in society. Modern technologies empower individuals, with an immense capacity to cause harm. It is also an attractive means of bullying as it can, under certain circumstance, be carried out with relative anonymity.

While cyberbullying is similar to real life bullying, it also differs in the following ways

- Cyberbullying can be particularly damaging because of the capacity it has to humiliate, hurt and harm a person in front of a huge audience.
- It can be difficult for the victim to escape and is invasive as it can occur 24/7 and a person can be targeted anywhere.
- It can be done quickly and easily; rumours and images can be posted on a public forum or sent to many people at the press of a button.
- On an impulse, a person can be harmful and can be unaware of the hurt they are causing because cyberbullying seldom occurs face-to-face. The bully is protected from an understanding of the awfulness of their behaviour.

POLICY

At St. Joseph's we recognise our responsibility to ensure that the rights of employees, student, parents and volunteers to be physically, emotionally and psychologically safe while

at school or while being associated with school related activities. Therefore all forms of bullying, including cyberbullying, will not be tolerated.

At St Joseph's School we:
- Owe a duty of care to all members of our school community to flourish free from discrimination, harassment or any form of bullying.
- Is aware of what constitutes bullying behaviour
- Will endeavour to respond to all forms of bullying in a sympathetic, timely and fair manner.
- Do not tolerate, condone or trivialise any forms of bullying behaviour.
- Provide support to victims of bullying.
- Deal firmly and fairly with bullies.
- Provide a deliberate and ongoing focus on promoting positive online behaviour, through everyday promotion of positive, appropriate and constructive online relationship.
- Provide educational activities that assist in deepening knowledge and understanding in Cyber safety and respectful relationships.
- Are an accredited E-Smart school.
- Organise external providers of Cyber safety programmes to run sessions for students, staff and parents.
- Ask all students and parents to complete and sign an annual 'Acceptable Use Policy.'
- Encourage all members of the school community to report any incidents of cyberbullying to themselves or a third party.
- Investigate and take seriously any complaint made.
- Ensure staff and students recognise that support, counselling and mediation will be part of the response to a bullying incidence.
- Provide suitable counselling, monitoring and support for students, teachers and parents through the Principal or Well-being Leader, as appropriate.

PROCEDURES
Strategies the school will use to respond to a confirmed incident of bullying:
- Record any statements from the recipient of bullying. This information will be recorded on the Student Welfare Data file and kept for future reference.
- Record any statements from witnesses
- Record any statements from the student who allegedly bullied
- Discuss a range of possible solutions to manage the situation and find a resolution to which all parties involved agree
- Advise all involved that they may make additional reports if they are not satisfied that the issue has been resolved
- Advise the parents of the recipient, and the student who bullied, of the incident
- Monitor and record the situation on an ongoing basis

- Where necessary provide support and the opportunity for counselling for the recipient and the student who bullied
- Develop an Individual Behaviour Management Plan, where necessary, for the student who bullied and the recipient, to promote and establish positive peer relationships
- Establish graduated behaviour management strategies for the student who has bullied.

Most cases of bullying will be dealt with by the classroom teacher.

Incidents of repeated or ongoing bullying or incidents of a serious nature will be referred to the Principal, Deputy Principal and Student Wellbeing Leader who will deal with them in the following manner:

- Meet individually with the students involved (victim and bully or bullies)
- Give the bully the opportunity to make amends for his/ her behaviour. This is to be acceptable to the victim.
- Determine appropriate action to be taken. Depending on the seriousness of the case this may involve: strict supervision, exclusion from the use of some or all forms of communication and information technology while at school, counselling and/or suspension
- Inform/ involve parent/s
- Referrals to appropriate agencies may be sought (e.g. Victoria Police – if the case poses a serious threat to life or physical well-being or where a child protection offence has occurred.)
- Hold a follow up meeting to discuss the progress of all parties involved