

St James College

The Pastoral Management of Bullying at St James College

A. INTRODUCTION

St James College is a co-educational Catholic Secondary School in the Edmund Rice Tradition. The school was established in 1868 by Catholic lay teachers and the administration of the school was taken over by the Congregation of Christian Brothers in 1893. The school's philosophy is based on Gospel values and the tradition of Edmund Rice, the founder of the Christian Brothers. This philosophy is to integrate faith, life, learning and culture in an environment of respect for individual worth.

Three key documents which are foundational in the formulation of this policy statement are:

- St James College (2006.) *Mission Statement*
- Edmund Rice Education Australia (2004). *The Charter: A Proclamation of an Authentic Expression of Edmund Rice Education as applied to Catholic Schools in the Edmund Rice Tradition*
- MCEETYA (2008). *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*

1. ST JAMES COLLEGE MISSION STATEMENT

- Challenged by the Gospel and inspired by Edmund Rice, St James College as a Catholic School in the Edmund Rice Tradition, engages and nurtures the heart and mind of each person.
- We honour the dignity of each member of our diverse community through our lived pastoral environment inspired by a living spirit of community and compassion.
- Our holistic curriculum promotes relevant pathways for the growth of each person.
- We are called to live and promote justice to all through service in the spirit of Jesus and in the tradition of Edmund.

2. THE CHARTER: A PROCLAMATION OF AN AUTHENTIC EXPRESSION OF EDMUND RICE EDUCATION AS APPLIED TO CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN THE EDMUND RICE TRADITION

St James College acknowledges its commitment to *The Charter*. The following statements adapted from this document enunciate this commitment:

- We acknowledge the dignity of all individuals as created in the image and likeness of God.
- We conduct all aspects of school life in a manner that is sensitive to the needs of each student and to the common good.
- Our pastoral care program is designed to empower each student to embrace the fullness of life within a variety of pastoral care experiences.
- Our school community is characterised by a culture of good relationships which evidence respect, community, hospitality, nurturance, humour, care and justice.
- We acknowledge the primary role of parents in the growth and development of the child and we provide opportunities for their participation in the life of the school.
- We recognise and respect traditional ownership and heritage of Indigenous peoples of Australia.
- We practise inclusivity as fundamental to our enrolment policy and in our procedures and practices throughout the school.
- We foster in our school community the mind and heart of Edmund Rice, who acted with compassion.
- We provide special support for students at risk, students at the social margins, and student with diverse learning needs and differences.
- We model the Gospel values of forgiveness and reconciliation through restorative procedures and practices.

3. MELBOURNE DECLARATION ON EDUCATIONAL GOALS FOR YOUNG AUSTRALIANS

St James College affirms its commitment to the goals of the *Melbourne Declaration*. Of particular relevance to this policy statement is Goal 2 which states: ‘All young Australians become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens.’ Within the context of this goal, the Declaration describes the successful learner as a young person who

- is motivated to reach their full potential
- has a sense of self-worth, self-awareness and personal identity that enables them to manage their emotional, mental, spiritual and physical well-being
- has a sense of optimism about their lives and the future
- develops personal values and attributes such as honesty, resilience, empathy and respect for others
- acts with moral and ethical integrity
- relates well to others and forms and maintains healthy relationships
- embraces opportunities, make rational and informed decisions about one’s own life and accepts responsibilities for one’s own actions

B. RATIONALE

This policy statement *The Pastoral Management of Bullying at St James College* embraces and emphasises the rights and responsibilities of all members of the school community to enjoy a safe and supportive learning environment. All procedures, protocols and practices included in this policy statement are derived from and are founded upon the fundamental premise that all persons are entitled to be afforded respect and dignity as human beings created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27)

C. DEFINITION

Bullying is characterised by a desire to hurt. It can involve a hurtful action, a use of power imbalance, a (typically) repeated action, or an unjust use of power. It may take the form of repeated physical, psychological or verbal abuse by one person or group towards another person or group. Incidents of bullying normally demonstrate evident enjoyment by the aggressor and a sense of being oppressed on the part of the victim. Bullying is “recipient defined”, i.e. the victim ‘feels’ they are being bullied. Excuses such as “It was only a joke” or “They don’t mind” are considered unacceptable reactions by the perpetrator.

D. TYPES OF BULLYING

PHYSICAL

Physical bullying such as kicking, punching, pushing, shoving, spitting, damaging or destroying other people’s property, jostling, pinching, fighting, touching or any other unwelcomed physical contact.

VERBAL

Verbal bullying such as offensive or abusive comments, sarcasm, crude jokes, ridiculing appearance, actions or beliefs, obscene phone calls, teasing or putting other people down (sledging or pay outs), verbal intimidation, whistling rudely.

SOCIAL

Social bullying such as exclusion, rejection from groups, spreading rumours, gossip, racial or sexual comments, graffiti, passing notes, including emails and texting, and posting inappropriate comments on social networking sites.

EMOTIONAL

Emotional bullying such as victimisation, instilling fear in others, extortion (forcing others to hand over money, food or other possessions), coercing students to act inappropriately on their behalf

E. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All students and staff in the St James College community have certain rights and responsibilities:

All students have the right

- To feel safe, cared for and respected
- To be free from intimidation and threat
- To have their property respected
- To a positive and productive learning environment
- To a healthy, safe and pleasant environment

All students have the responsibility

- To respect the rights, person and property of other students and staff
- To be assertive in the face of bullying
- To report bullying in all its forms

All staff members have the right

- To feel safe, cared for and respected
- To be free from intimidation and threat
- To have their property respected
- To work in a healthy, safe and pleasant environment
- To a positive and productive working environment

All members of staff have the responsibility

- To provide a safe, secure learning environment for students
- To provide an environment free from bullying, harassment, intimidation and abuse
- To actively promote a culture where bullying is unacceptable
- To be role models in word and action.

F. PREVENTION OF BULLYING

At St James we work to prevent and manage bullying incidents by

- Providing education on bullying, harassment, rights and responsibilities to students
- Providing ongoing professional development to teaching and non teaching staff
- Visual advertising around the school
- Appointing School Harassment Referral Officers (SHRO)
- Informing students of the roles of SHRO and reporting procedures
- Reminding students and staff frequently about policy document *Pastoral Management of Bullying* at Assemblies and at House meetings
- Inducting new staff and students in this Policy
- Providing a supportive Pastoral Care Program
- Using evidence based responses to deal with incidents of bullying (Restorative Justice Processes, Method of Shared Concern)
- Providing Counselling for victims, perpetrators and families
- Promoting a school culture where bullying is unacceptable

STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS

- Talk to any of the following people for initial advice and support:
 - Homeroom teacher
 - Pastoral Coordinator
 - Classroom teacher
 - Counsellor
 - Parents
 - House Leaders

- SHROs
- College Leadership Team member
- Non-teaching staff member
- Report **any** incident of bullying at school immediately to:
 - SHROs
 - Assistant Principal Pastoral
 - Pastoral Coordinator
 - Counsellor
 - House Leaders
 - College Leadership Team member
- If bullying continues after the incident has been reported, the matter must be brought to the attention of any one of the following people:
 - House Pastoral Coordinator,
 - Assistant Principal Pastoral
 - Counsellor
 - Police Liaison Officer (as appropriate for on-going illegal issues)
 - Principal
- Don't give up until you are satisfied with the outcome.

STRATEGIES FOR PARENTS

- Watch for signs of bullying such as wanting to miss school, unusual behaviour changes, feeling fearful or depressed, a pattern of headaches or stomach upsets, physical injury, damage to or loss of property
- Contact any one of the following people:
 - The student's House Pastoral Coordinator, the
 - Assistant Principal Pastoral
 - Counsellors
 - Principal
- Do NOT encourage your child to hit back physically or be verbally abusive
- Support your child in the reporting process
- Express confidence that the problem can be solved
- If bullying involves severe physical assault, it is your right to consider police action
- Show support of and become involved in school procedures and practices that are used to manage incidents of bullying

G. MANAGEMENT OF BULLYING INCIDENTS

At St James College, all work hard to prevent bullying and manage incidents fairly and effectively if they occur. The following process has been established to deal with bullying.

First Report – Initial Incident

1. Bullying incident reported and referred to SHRO for documenting
2. House Pastoral Coordinator or Assistant Principal Pastoral investigates the incident
3. Possible actions that may be employed:
 - Meetings with the students involved
 - Communication with parents
 - Counselling
 - Resolution procedures such as Restorative Justice Practices, Method of Shared Concern, mediation
4. On-going program of support will be negotiated for all concerned parties (counselling, etc)
5. All parties involved will be asked to express their level of satisfaction with the process and the outcomes. This will be documented.
6. All interviews that are conducted are documented and copies placed in students' files.

Second Report – An incident is reported and substantiated for a second time

1. Interview with parents of the perpetrator is immediately requested

2. A more detailed action-support plan developed. This may involve further Restorative Justice practices, mediation, counselling sessions, disciplinary procedures (eg detention, community service, suspension, etc)
3. A date set for a review of progress
4. All parties involved will be asked to express their level of satisfaction with the process and the outcomes. This will be documented.

Third Report – Incidents have continued and been substantiated

The perpetrator and the student’s parents will be requested to meet with the Principal to discuss further intervention to assist in managing the problem. On-going support (eg counselling, etc) is provided for the victim and family.

Fourth Report – All interventions and disciplinary procedures have been exhausted

When no verifiable change in behaviour of the perpetrator has been demonstrated, the Principal may, after consultation with parents, decide that the student be removed from the school. In cases such as this, the Principal may assist the parents in finding another school for the student.

Selected Legislation and Literature

QLD Government. *Child Protection Act 1999* <http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/CURRENT/C/ChildProtectA99.pdf>

QLD Government. *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000*
www.legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/ACTS/2000/00AC060.pdf

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Commonwealth of Australia. Ministerial Council on Education Employment Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) (2008). *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*
www.mceetya.edu.au/.../melbourne_declaration

MCEETYA (2004). *National Safe Schools Framework* http://www.mceetya.edu.au/verve/_resources/natsafeschools_file.pdf

Edmund Rice Education Australia (2004). *The Charter: A Proclamation of an Authentic Expression of Edmund Rice Education as applied to Catholic Schools in the Edmund Rice Tradition*
www.stjamescollege.qld.edu.au/Home/Charter