SECTION:	PASTORAL CARE
POLICY NO:	PAC02
POLICY NAME	BULLYING PREVENTION
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PREAMBLE

Marist-Sion College is a Catholic community that prides itself on forming persons of truth, charity and constancy. In order for this to occur the Christian understanding of personhood must be understood and communicated. It clearly professes that every student, created in the image of a loving God, has a right to respect and a right to learn in a safe, caring and welcoming environment.

POLICY

Marist-Sion College recognises its duty to students to provide a safe and positive learning environment where individual differences and diversity within the college is respected and accepted.

The prevention of and responses to incidents of bullying, inappropriate use of technology and disrespectful behaviour are more readily achieved in a caring and supportive school culture that promotes positive relationships and reflects Gospel values. Bullying, cyber-bullying, harassment, aggression and violence disregard core values of our faith, including dignity, respect, justice, equity, compassion, trust and courage. Importantly, such actions can adversely affect the wellbeing of our students and are therefore unacceptable.

It is our policy that:
- Bullying is not tolerated at Marist-Sion College.
- Bullying be managed through a 'whole of college community' approach involving students, staff and parents/guardians;
- Bullying prevention strategies be implemented within the college on a continuous basis with a focus on teaching age appropriate skills and strategies to empower staff, students and parents/guardians to recognise bullying and respond appropriately;
- Bullying response strategies be tailored to the circumstances of each incident;
- Staff establish positive role models emphasising our no-bullying culture; and
- Bullying prevention and intervention strategies are reviewed on an annual basis against best practice.

DEFINITIONS

1. Bullying

Bullying is repeated unreasonable behaviour directed towards a person that creates a risk to health and safety. It occurs when an individual or a group deliberately upsets or hurts another

person, their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion. Forms of bullying include:

a. Physical bullying: pushing, shoving, fighting, pinching and any other unwelcome physical contact used intentionally to intimidate or hurt someone.

b. Verbal bullying: put downs, particularly those referring to physical characteristics, can result in loss of self-esteem. Racial discrimination of any kind is a form of bullying.

c. Gesture bullying: non-verbal signals used to silence and intimidate a victim.

d. Extortion bullying: physically stronger and more powerful students may bully other students into giving up their possessions, buying food and drink, or taking part in rule breaking activities.

e. Exclusion bullying: deliberately being left out of activities is a most hurtful form of bullying.

f. Visual bullying: offensive notes or material, graffiti, or damaging other people's possessions.

g. Sexual bullying: 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, asking questions about someone's private life.

h. Cyber-bullying: the use of various forms of electronic media to spread text and visual messages to cause hurt, embarrassment, intimidation.

2. Types of Bullying

There are three broad categories of bullying:

a. Direct physical bullying

This form includes hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.

b. Direct verbal bullying

This form includes name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, or verbal abuse.

c. Indirect bullying

This form of bullying is harder to recognise and often carried out behind the bullied person's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Indirect bullying includes:

- lying and spreading rumours;
- playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate;
- mimicking;
- encouraging others to socially exclude someone;
- damaging someone's social reputation and social acceptance; and
- cyber-bullying, which involves the use of email, text messages or chat rooms to humiliate and distress someone.

3. **What Bullying is Not**

Many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying, even though they are unpleasant and may require teacher intervention and management. There are three socially unpleasant situations that are often confused with bullying:

a. **Mutual conflict**

In mutual conflict situations, there is an argument or disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the problem. However, unresolved mutual conflict sometimes develops into a bullying situation, with one person becoming targeted repeatedly for 'retaliation' in a one-sided way.

b. **Social rejection or dislike**

Unless the social rejection is directed towards someone specifically and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others, it is not bullying.

c. **Single-episode acts**

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.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

Reporting Bullying

Bullying incidents can be advised to the college verbally (or in writing) through any of the following avenues:
- Informing a trusted teacher;
- Informing the college counsellor/wellbeing team;
- Informing a student's tutor or head of house; or
- Informing the Deputy Principal: Pastoral Care

Responsibilities for responding to bullying behaviour

Bullying behaviours vary enormously in their extent and intent and, as a consequence, each incident needs to be dealt with on its facts. All incidents should be given due attention and noted. Appropriate steps must be taken to ensure students are not compromised and that immediate and effective action is taken. Relevant tutors and Heads of House must be notified as soon as possible. A harassment report should be completed by the appropriate staff member and the student/s involved and passed on to the Head of House at the earliest opportunity.

Depending on the severity of the incident the Principal and/or the Deputy Principal: Pastoral Care should be notified. Students may be counselled, removed from class, or internally or externally suspended. Parents would be informed of the events and the resulting actions. In severe cases students may be asked to leave the school.

Marist-Sion College will:

- Expect students, staff, parents/guardians to report bullying and cyber-bullying to the Tutor, Head of House, college wellbeing team, Deputy Principal: Pastoral Care or directly to the Principal.
- Take time to properly investigate the facts including discussing the incident with the victim, the bully and any bystanders;
- Escalate its response when dealing with persistent bullies and/or severe incidents.
- Will notify parents and guardians when their child has been involved in a bullying incident
- Notify their School Leadership Consultant, Diocese of Sale Catholic Education Ltd, of any serious bullying incident.
- Investigate and record complaints of bullying and cyber-bullying in a manner that respects the dignity and privacy of those involved.
- Maintain written records of bullying incidents and related interventions.
- Consider using Restorative Practices when bullying has occurred
- Provide support to any student who has been affected by, engaged in or witnesses bullying behavior
- Offer counselling to persistent bullies/victims;
- Implement effective follow up strategies and apply student management processes where applicable.

Staff at Marist-Sion College will:

- Build respectful relationships that respond effectively and sensitively to the needs of each student.
- Implement the student anti-bullying procedures by responding promptly and appropriately to reported incidents of bullying.
- Immediately notify Deputy Principal: Pastoral Care, in cases of serious bullying, notify the principal when unacceptable behaviour is perceived to adversely impact on the wellbeing of a student.
- Access professional learning to support appropriate anti-bullying responses which could include cyber safety, restorative justice practices, mediation and developing social skills in students. Such opportunities are made available to staff on the same basis as other professional learning.
- Remain vigilant in how students are using technology.
- Support the student anti-bullying and responsible use of technology procedures through positive modelling and the promotion of appropriate behaviour.
- Respond to bullying and cyber-bullying concerns by providing age appropriate guidance and boundaries so that students can learn to self-regulate.
- Consider implementing restorative practices procedures when bullying has occurred.

Students will:

Students have responsibilities as well. The staff Marist-Sion College will encourage and support students to:

- Immediately seek help from a trusted adult if they are aware of or involved in a bullying or cyber-bullying incident.
- Seek support when bullying occurs and refrain from retaliating in any bullying incident.
- Follow the anti-bullying procedures.

- Understand that any social networking site that identifies the school by name or image or implication is part of the school environment.
- In age appropriate circumstances, keep evidence of alleged bullying and produce it on request (for example, phone text messages).

Parents and Guardians will:

Parents and guardians have responsibilities. The staff at Marist-Sion College will:

- Expect that parents and guardians will model behaviour that is indicative of Gospel values and that reflect the school's Vision and Mission statement. Thus parents and guardians are required to act respectfully to all members of the school community at all times.
- Request that parents contact the school immediately through the Tutor or Head of House, if they know of any bullying incident.
- Remind parents about the need to reinforce the school messages in the proper use of technology to help children grow into ethical and responsible digital citizens.
- Encourage parents to report serious matters of out-of-school hours bullying and cyber-bullying to the Police or other appropriate authority. When such bullying concerns the wellbeing of their own child, parents are to contact the Deputy Principal: Pastoral Care.

BULLYING PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Marist-Sion College recognises that the implementation of whole college prevention strategies is the most effective way of eliminating, or at least minimising incidents of bullying within our community.

The following initiatives form part of our overall bullying prevention strategy and our strategy to create a 'no bullying' culture within the college:
- A structured curriculum and peer group support system, that provides age appropriate information and skills relating to bullying (including cyber bullying) and bullying prevention, to students over the course of the academic year;
- Education, training and professional development of staff in bullying prevention and response strategies;
- Regular provision of information to parents/guardians, 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/guardians;
- Promotion of responsible bystander behaviour amongst students, staff and parents/guardians;
- Reporting of incidents of alleged bullying by students, bystanders, parents/guardians and staff are encouraged, and made easy through the establishment of multiple reporting channels (as specified below);
- Regular risk assessments of bullying within the college are undertaken by surveying students to identify bullying issues that may ordinarily go unnoticed by staff;
- 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 and a 'no bullying' environment by participating in events such as the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence.

Support services
- Students: If you want to talk to someone now, go to Kids Helpline
https://kidshelpline.com.au/
1800 55 1800. It's a free call, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Parents/Guardians: Parentline Victoria www.parentline.vic.gov.au
13 22 89 (cost of a local call)
8am to midnight 7 days a week
- eheadspace also offers online chat or email support services for young people aged 12–25, as well as their family and friends. You can call them on 1800 650 890. its a free call. The **eheadspace** team are available between 9am – 1am (AEDT) 7 days a week.
- https://bullyingnoway.gov.au

Complaint resolution
- The school should always be your first point of contact. Schools need to know if you have any concerns about your child's education.
- If the matter is not resolved by speaking to the Principal or Deputy Principal at your school, you can contact the School Leadership Consultant at Diocese of Sale Catholic Education Ltd, who will assist you and the school to find a solution.
- For further details please refer to the following documents: Resolving Parent/Guardian Issues and Concerns: Management of Complaints and Grievances