



Mary MacKillop College

South Gippsland

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Procedure

Mary MacKillop 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 College has developed the following work practices and procedures for assisting with the management of bullying issues.

Bullying Prevention Strategies

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/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;
- Promotion of a supportive environment that encourages the development of positive relationships and communication between staff, students and parents/carers;
- Promotion of responsible bystander behaviour amongst students, staff and parents/carers;
- Reporting of incidents of alleged bullying by students, bystanders, parents/carers 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; and
- Statements supporting bullying prevention are included in students' college planner.

Reporting Bullying

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 Mary MacKillop 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; and
- The College has a clear strategy for dealing with bullying issues.

Bullying incidents can be advised to the College verbally or electronically through wellbeing@mmcrc.catholic.edu.au to any of the following:

- Informing a trusted teacher;
- Informing the College counsellor;
- Informing a student's sub school Director or Wellbeing Co-ordinator; or
- Informing one of the Deputy Principals or Principal

Responding to Bullying

Bullying behaviours vary enormously in their extent and intent and, as a consequence, each incident needs to be dealt with on its facts.

In all circumstances the College:

- Takes bullying incidents 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 the victim, the bully and any bystanders;
- Takes time to understand any concerns of individuals involved;
- Maintains records of reported bullying incidents; and
- Will escalate its response when dealing with persistent bullies and/or severe incidents.

Actions that may be taken when responding to bullying may include:

- The "Method of Shared Concern" Approach (Pikas);
- The "No Blame" Approach (Maines & Robinson);

These approaches may be used to intervene in group or relational bullying situations. They are only appropriate during the initial stages. They are not appropriate for persistent or severe bullying incidents.

- Notification of/Consultation with parents/carers;
- Offering counselling to persistent bullies/victims;
- Implementing effective follow up strategies; and
- Disciplinary action at the Principal's discretion including suspension and expulsion of persistent bullies, or in cases of severe incidents.

Employees' Responsibility

All employees are responsible to:

- Model appropriate behaviour at all times;
- Deal with all reported and observed incidents of bullying in accordance with this policy;
- Ensure that any incident of bullying that they observe or is reported to them, is recorded appropriately;
- Be vigilant in monitoring students that have been identified as either persistent bullies or victims; and
- Acknowledge the right of parents/carers to speak with college authorities if they believe their child is being bullied.

Signage

Anti-bullying posters may be posted in strategic locations in the College to promote appropriate behaviour and encourage students to respect individual differences and diversity.