

St Michael 's College



ST MICHAEL'S
COLLEGE

...a friendly learning Catholic community

Bullying Document Revised 2017

Introduction

Students have a fundamental right to learn in a safe, supportive environment and to be treated with respect. Providing safe and supportive environments for learning is essential to achieving school improvement, raising student achievement and attendance levels, promoting equality and diversity, and ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community. At St Michael's College, a culture is prevalent where all acknowledge and understand that student safety and wellbeing is the responsibility of everybody. The College does not condone any behaviour which compromises the safety and wellbeing of any student or staff. Any behaviour that results in harm, or is likely to result in harm to a student or staff member will be reported and responded to in line with BCE Student Protection processes and the College's Positive Behaviour Support document which can be viewed on the College Website under Pastoral Care.

It is a basic entitlement of all at St Michael's that they participate in our community free from humiliation, oppression and abuse. It is our responsibility to ensure that education takes place in an atmosphere which is caring and protective.

In addition to the above, the purposes of this policy are to ensure that:

- Action is taken to prevent bullying/harassment rather than having to cure it.
- Whole school action is taken against bullying/harassment i.e. parents, teachers and students are involved.
- The community agrees on what counts as bullying/harassment at St Michael's

Preventative anti-bullying/anti-harassment action could include the following:

- Maintaining and reviewing a policy
- Knowing the school environment
- Supporting the students
- Using the curriculum to affirm acceptable behaviour
- Active Communication of the policy to all
- Parents, staff and students are briefed on steps to take when bullying occurs

Policy Statement

Any form of harassment, bullying or violence is unacceptable behaviour. All persons connected with St Michael's College are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect.

St Michael's College will take all reasonable steps to ensure that all students, staff and voluntary workers are not subject to bullying or harassment. All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure that persons who complain of bullying or harassment or who are witnesses to such behaviour are not victimised in any way.

Guidelines

All hurtful behaviour, irrespective of whether or not it meets the definition of bullying, will be addressed by the College. St Michael's College takes the issue of bullying and cyber safety very seriously. Bullying is when one student (or a group) targets another student again and again to upset or hurt them. They might hurt them physically, try to socially isolate them or say and do many mean or humiliating things to them.

What is NOT Bullying?

Although it's neither respectful nor acceptable if someone behaves in a mean or aggressive way on one occasion, it isn't considered bullying. Conflict or fights between equals and single incidents are not defined as bullying. A fight or disagreement between students of equal power or status isn't considered bullying. There are also some behaviours, which, although they might be unpleasant or distressing, are not bullying:

Mutual conflict - which involves a disagreement, but not an imbalance of power. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.

Single-episode acts of nastiness or physical aggression, or aggression directed towards many different people, is not bullying unless it becomes a pattern of behaviours.

Social rejection or dislike is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

Again, while these actions may not be labelled as bullying they are still not acceptable.

What should I do if my child tells me they are being bullied?

Help your child to identify the bullying behaviour and ask them:

- What has been happening?
- Who has been involved?
- Where have the incidents occurred?
- Has anyone else seen the bullying behaviour?

Discuss with your child some immediate strategies. Make a plan to deal with the bullying. Encourage them to:

- talk with the teacher
- stay calm
- move away from the situation
- firmly say "No!", tell the bully to stop

Contact the school to check that your child has spoken to someone about the problem.

What a student should do if they are being bullied:

- stay calm
- tell the bully to stop
- move away from situation
- talk to someone you trust about what has happened, for example a parent/carer, teacher or friend, and get them to help you to take the right steps to stop the bullying When talking about what has happened make sure you tell them:
 - What the person/s has been doing?
 - Who has been involved?
 - Where have the incident/s occurred?
 - Who else has seen the bullying behaviour?
 - How often has it happened?
 - What have you already done about it?

- keep on talking until someone listens to you and the bullying stops
- don't blame yourself for what is happening.

What should a student do if they see someone being bullied?

If a student sees someone being bullied (or witness' it online), keep safe and choose your response to match the situation:

- speak up and let the person doing the bullying know that what they are doing is bullying
- refuse to join in with the bullying and walk away
- help the student who is being bullied to ask for help
- ask a teacher or support person for help
- report what happened

How should a student handle cyberbullying?

- Tell a parent, teacher or other trusted adult – don't stay silent and hope it will go away – it won't!
- Save, store, screenshot emails, chat logs, posts or SMS's.
- Block and delete the bully from all contact lists
- Do not respond to nasty emails, chats, SMS or comments – this is what the bully wants so ignore them. (They will need your help to do this)
- Use the 'report abuse' button which all websites/applications have. Tell them the problems you are having and they are obligated to investigate.
- Have some 'down time' without computer or mobile. Give yourself some time away from technology just for a break
- If the bullying continues – delete your current email, msn, Hotmail, Facebook etc. and start a new account. Only give your new details to a small list of trusted friends.
- Get a new phone number if being harassed on your phone. Report the problem to your phone company and insist on a new number for free.
- If the bullying continues get mum or dad to report the bullying to the College & Police.

Investigating Potential Bullying

1. When an investigation about bullying is required, the following procedures will be followed:
 - A 'no blame' approach and process in the first instance.
 - Those involved to be interviewed and made aware of the suspected bullying.
 - They will be given the opportunity to give their side of the story and will be asked to complete an incident report.
 - At this stage, there might not be any consequences and an educative conversation with the student regarding respectful and right behaviours followed by the completion of a Responsible Thinking Plan and recorded in the SBS. The incident may be deemed as not bullying (Refer to bullying definition). The student also to be informed that a courtesy call home will be made.
 - Parents contacted as a courtesy to let them know their child has been spoken with.
2. If bullying is identified, leadership team (including Middle Leaders) members may choose to use the following methods with the students involved:
 - Mediation
 - Individual counselling
 - Withdrawal
 - Planning

Parents of both the perpetrator (the child exhibiting the bullying behaviour) and the target will be notified of the level and severity of the incident and its consequences. A record of the incident is kept on file.

3. Continued bullying would result in a further action plan being devised, appropriate consequences for the child, and further dialogue with the parents. The Guidance Counsellor, Middle Leader and /or Learning Support may be involved in formulating this action plan.

Support for the target and perpetrator.

We support the target in the following ways:

- Offering them an opportunity to talk about the experience with their Pastoral Leader, Counsellor or member of administration;
- Work through a safety plan with the student;
- Informing the child's parents and meeting with the parents
- Suggesting and role playing appropriate, positive anti-bullying behaviours with the child;
- Offering continuing support when they feel they need it, and encouraging immediate reporting of incidents;
- Mediation

We support the perpetrator in the following ways:

- Offering them an opportunity to talk about the experience with their Pastoral Leader, Counsellor or member of administration; about what has happened and the behaviours they have been displaying;
- Informing the child's parents and meeting with the parents
- Continuing to monitor the student's behaviour and offering appropriate support; and
- Enforcing appropriate consequences that are directly linked to the child's bullying Behaviour;
- Responsible Thinking Plan and working through appropriate strategies and skills to stop behaviours