BULLYING AND HARASSMENT PREVENTION POLICY

VISION

**We strive to deepen our relationship with God and one another
and to intensify our work with those seeking a more just and inclusive world.**

**Faith, Growth and Unity are an expression of our school as a community of
thriving people, capable learners, leaders for the world God desires.**

**We are a community of FAITH with a focus on GROWTH through education,
which is achieved in UNITY with one another
as a thriving community with a shared responsibility.**

1. RATIONALE

1.1 The Bullying and Harassment Prevention Policy reflects:
- Restorative Practice principles that focus on the community, building positive relationships and healing;
- a belief in an education which aims at reconciliation, student autonomy and responsibility;
- a belief in the inherent dignity and respect of each person;
- our deep respect for ourselves, each other and the community in which we live;
- a learning environment that enables reflection, ownership, empowerment and growth.

1.2 Catherine McAuley School aims to create a supportive environment in which students are empowered to be young community focussed people who strive to be thriving people, capable learners and leaders for the world God desires. Students are encouraged to respect and support the rights of others and develop positive, respectful relationships. Particular attention is provided to nurture relationships and reconciliation through restorative practices and frameworks. Catherine McAuley School is a place where the opportunity for learning, growth and reflection is at the heart of our student behaviour education process.

2. SCOPE

2.2 This policy applies to all students in our community and is actively supported by staff working within or for Catherine McAuley School. This document is designed to be read in conjunction with the listed related documents and references.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

3.3 Catherine McAuley School's Bullying and Harassment Prevention Policy aims to provide clear definitions of, and strategies for dealing with, any form of inappropriate behaviour associated with bullying or harassment. Catherine McAuley School is committed to maintaining an environment which is always welcoming, trusting, safe, open and promotes effective and respectful communication.

4. PRINCIPLES

4.1 All members of our school community have an equal right to:
- be treated fairly;
- feel safe and secure;
- learn to grow to his/her full potential;
- feel valued, accepted and cared for as a unique individual;
- have his/her property respected.

4.2 Underlying these rights are the following key principles:
- bullying and harassment does not accord each individual the dignity inherent in their humanity as being made in the image of God;
- bullying and harassment is unacceptable and can be illegal;
- each person at the school has a right to feel safe and be free from bullying and harassment;

- each person at the school has the responsibility to show respect for themselves and others;
- the school aims to contribute to the development of young people through education and their formation in Catholic values;
- the school does not accept bullying and harassment and its response to those involved will be informed by the principles of justice and reconciliation.

5. **DEFINITIONS**

5.1 Bullying is when people **repeatedly and intentionally** use words or actions against someone or a group of people to **cause distress and risk to their wellbeing**. These actions are usually done by people who have more influence or power over someone else, or who want to make someone else feel less powerful or helpless.

https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/commission-general/what-bullying, 2025.

5.2 There are various types of bullying, some include:
- threats or dares;
- cyberbullying;
- verbal abuse and teasing;
- physical behaviour
- pushing, hitting, physical assault, spitting, damaging the property of someone else;
- using 'put downs', sarcasm, name calling, ridiculing, threatening;
- making rude or threatening signs;
- hurting friends by ignoring or isolating them, or by spreading rumours about them;
- unwanted touching;
- deliberately excluding someone due to achievements, personal appearance and abilities;
- making derogatory, insulting, demeaning or mocking comments about a persons' sexuality, race, culture, religious beliefs, ability, background, social or family status;
- whistling, gesturing or making comments about an individual's body or physical appearance (sexual harassment).

5.3 Bullying is not the same as:
- **Being rude** – saying or doing something hurtful that wasn't planned or meant to hurt someone, e.g. someone pushing in front of you in the canteen line
- **Being mean** – doing something hurtful to someone on purpose once or twice, e.g. a friend refusing to play with you one day
- **Conflict** – there's a disagreement, both sides are aggressive/mean and there's no power imbalance (both sides can 'stand up' for themselves or fight back), e.g. two friends getting into an argument or fight and saying mean things to each other
- **Respectful feedback** on behaviours you're doing that aren't ok, e.g. "It's not ok roll your eyes every time they talk about sport."
- **A friend putting in a 'boundary'** e.g. "I don't like it when you keep telling me what to do."
- **Natural consequences in socialising**, e.g. a friend not trusting you because you shared their secret

https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/bullying, 2025.

5.4 We also recognise that there are other possible points of conflict that can be difficult but are not necessarily examples of bullying:
- breakdown in friendship groups;
- renegotiations within friendships;
- misunderstandings between individuals. We know that students can face a number of challenges and may wish to seek support and help when working through these points of conflicts. As such, we recommend students speak with a trusted adult or make an appointment with someone on our School Wellbeing Team.

5.5 Harassment covers a wide range of behaviours of an offensive nature. It is unwelcome behaviour towards another person that intends to trouble or annoy.

5.6 Bullying online, or 'cyberbullying', is when someone uses the internet to be mean to another person, so they feel bad or upset.

https://www.esafety.gov.au/young-people/cyberbullying, 2025.

5.7 Cyberbullying can be both overt and covert in nature. Cyberbullying includes, but is not limited to:
- sending hurtful or abusive messages;
- spreading nasty rumours or lies about someone;
- creating fake accounts in someone's name to embarrass them or to cause drama by sending nasty messages to their friends;
- sharing photos or videos of someone to make fun of them or humiliate them;
- 'trolling' people (posting or commenting online to provoke an argument or emotional reaction);
- threatening to hurt someone, or encouraging others to hurt them;
- making new accounts to try to keep contacting someone who has already blocked you;
- mocking or teasing someone because of personal attributes, like their race, religion, gender, sexual orientation or how they look – this is sometimes known as 'online hate';
- purposely making someone feel left out or ignored.

https://www.esafety.gov.au/young-people/cyberbullying, 2025

6. BEYOND SCHOOL

6.1 Where bullying or harassment occurs in circumstances in which the school is not directly responsible for the care of the student/s involved, it reserves the right to respond in terms of the above procedures if it judges this appropriate in the interests and wellbeing of the student/s and of the school environment.

6.2 Where cyber bullying is occurring outside of school, we encourage parents/caregivers to seek support from the school, in addition to making an incident report on:

https://www.esafety.gov.au/report

7. RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1 The Students will:
- report incidents of bullying and/or harassment to a trusted adult/class teacher;
- follow our Bullying and Harassment Prevention Policy;
- treat others with respect, fairness and courtesy, and not hurt others;
- respect the position and authority of staff;
- respect and care for school property and the property of others;
- respect the right of others to learn and teachers to teach;
- respect all people, who are made in the image of God, equally, fairly and justly;
- behave in a manner that brings credit upon self, family and the school;
- behave appropriately, respecting individual differences and diversity;
- be responsible digital citizens;
- be responsible bystanders.

7.2 The Parents and Caregivers will:
- provide a supportive environment for their children;
- reinforce positive and responsible behaviour;
- support their children to become responsible digital citizens;
- support their child in developing positive responses to incidents of bullying;
- work collaboratively with Catherine McAuley School staff members to promote personal responsibility;
- be aware of the School policy and assist their children in understanding and clearly identifying bullying behaviour;
- contact your child's class teacher if they have any concerns or issues to discuss;
- reinforce and model positive interactions and relationships with others.

7.3 The Staff will:
- be a role model for all members of the community by treating others with respect;
- respond promptly and professionally to any concerns brought to their attention by a member of the school community;
- implement the school policy in a fair, responsible and consistent manner;
- use a restorative approach when working with student behaviour issues;
- educate students towards self-directed right behaviour that respects, promotes, nurtures and protects healthy relationships;
- be positive and authentic in their disposition towards young people and their families;
- engage in ongoing professional learning offered with the school and as part of the wider professional learning community;
- maintain accurate records as necessary using the functions of SEQTA Teach.
- provide curriculum and pedagogy that supports students to develop an understanding of bullying and its impact on individuals and the broader community.

7.4 The School Leadership will:
- treat parents and caregivers concerns sensitively and confidentially;
- respect and support students and staff;
- model and promote appropriate behaviour;
- ensure that the School is adequately resourced;
- provide ongoing professional learning opportunities for staff;

- ensure Catherine McAuley School policies, procedures, systems and processes enable the development of personal responsibility;
- be involved in the management of instances which may involve suspension/mandatory notification/police notification;
- support staff with persistent breaches of policy by students;
- maintain accurate records as necessary;
- respond promptly and professionally to any concerns brought to their attention by a member of the School community;
- respond in a timely manner to incidents of bullying according to Catherine McAuley School's Bullying and Harassment Prevention Policy.

8.   RELATED DOCUMENTS AND REFERENCES

- SACCS Building Respectful Relationships for Suspension and Cancelling Enrolment (2019)
- SACCS Positive Behaviour Education and Student Support Policy (2025)
- SACCS Building Respectful Relationships – Student Support Procedure (2019)
- Catholic Charter for Parents
- SACCS Complaint Response and Resolution Procedure (2020)
- SACCS Pastoral Care in Catholic Schools (2016)
- SACCS Pastoral Care Procedure (2016)
- Responding to online safety incidents in South Australian Schools 9August 2024).
- https://www.esafety.gov.au/key-topics/cyberbullying

DATE FOR REVIEW

Ratified by School Board: 21 MAY 2025

Review Date   2030