Dealing with Bullying, Harassment, Aggression and Violence (Students)

Released 2014 due for Review 2019

Rationale

John Paul College has a responsibility to provide an educational environment that promotes the dignity and respect of the person and, therefore, aims to encourage the development of positive relationships between students to reduce all forms of bullying, harassment, aggression and violence. The policies and practices that the school employs enhance the dignity of the human person and reflect the Principles of Pastoral Care as espoused in the Pastoral Care Framework (2007).

Learning outcomes, physical health, emotional, psychological and spiritual wellbeing can be adversely affected by bullying, harassment, aggression and violence. Students who are bullied or subjected to aggression or harassed tend to have poorer health, lower self-esteem, more interpersonal difficulties, higher levels of loneliness, depression, suicidal ideation and increased anxiety. They are also more likely to have a dislike of and want to avoid school, higher absenteeism and lower academic competence. The effects of bullying can begin early in life and, for some, last a lifetime.

The Australian Government's National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF) adopts a whole school approach to safety and wellbeing. It provides a comprehensive range of evidence-informed practices to guide schools in preventing and responding to incidents of harassment, aggression, violence and bullying and to implement their responsibilities in relation to child protection issues.

The National safe Schools Framework is based on the following overarching vision:

All Australian schools are safe, supportive and respectful teaching and learning communities that promote student wellbeing.

In the NSSF, a safe and supportive school is described in the following way:

> In a safe and supportive school, the risk from all types of harm is minimised, diversity is valued and all members of the school community feel respected and included and can be confident that they will receive support in the ace of any threats to their safety or wellbeing.

The Guiding Principles of the National Safe Schools Framework

This framework is underpinned by the following guiding principles that represent fundamental beliefs about safe, supportive and respectful school communities. These guiding principles emphasise the importance of student safety and wellbeing as a pre-requisite for effective learning in all school settings.

Australian schools:

- affirm the rights of all members of the school community to feel safe and be safe at school
- Acknowledge that being safe and supported at school is essential for student wellbeing and effective learning
- accept responsibility for developing and sustaining safe and supportive learning and teaching communities that also fulfil the school's child protection responsibilities
- encourage the active participation of all school community members in developing and maintaining a safe school community where diversity is valued
- actively support young people to develop understanding and skills to keep themselves and others safe
- commit to developing a safe school community through a whole-school and evidence-based approach

Definitions

Bullying is when, over a period of time, an individual or a group intentionally harm a person, who finds it hard to stop this behaviour from continuing.

Additionally, bullying can be characterised as: causing distress, not only at the time of the attack but also by the threat of future attacks; and, an imbalance of power (that is inappropriate and where there is an intention to hurt).

Its nature may be

- verbal – name-calling, put-downs, threats (spoken, written, electronic or cyber which may also apply to the following points)
- physical – hitting, tripping, punching, throwing objects, stealing
- social – ignoring, hiding, ostracizing
- psychological – stalking, threatening looks, spreading rumours, damaging pssissions[2]

Harassment is any unwanted, unwelcome or uninvited behaviour which makes a person feel humiliated, intimidated or offended. (Adapted from Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia Policy, Harassment in Schools, 1998). Harassment can be seen as one form of bullying.

Bullying and harassment are often thought of separately, however, both involve a more powerful person or group oppressing a less powerful person or group, often on the grounds of 'difference'. These differences can be related to culture, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, sexual orientation, ability or disability, religion, body size and physical appearance, personality, age, marital status, parenting status or economic status. (Bullying. No Way! Website cited in the National Safe Schools Framework, 2003).

Unlike bullying and harassment, violence is not necessarily associated with an imbalance of power. It can occur between people of equal power. It implies extreme forcefulness, usually (but not always) of a physical kind. (Rigby, cited in the NSSF, 2003)

Principles

John Paul College is a safe and supportive environment.

John Paul College owes a duty of care to their students.

John Paul College provides supportive environments which:

- o act to prevent instances of bullying, harassment, aggression and violence

- o encourage socially appropriate behaviour using positive behaviour management and direct teaching of curriculum in areas such as

- o interpersonal and self-management skills

- o promote respect for self and other

- o develop physical/emotional well-being and resiliency

- o develop interpersonal skills and positive mental health

Responding to bullying, harassment, aggression and violence requires quality leadership and role modelling to facilitate strategy implementation and sustained change, together with a whole-school community approach that is consistent with the Catholic Education Office of Western Australia's pastoral Care Framework, the school's Pastoral Care practices and the school's Evangelisation Plan which partners with parents and other agencies.

Bullying, harassment, aggression and violence may occur outside of the school. When these behaviours impact on a student's learning and behaviour in school, John Paul College takes action to support the continued wellbeing of those involved.

All bullying, harassment, aggression and violence shall be responded to. When bullying, harassment, aggression and violence are ignored or overlooked, it serves to condone or reinforce the behaviour. Bystanders, (those who observe bullying) can encourage or assist those who bully simply by doing nothing.

While the aim is to promote and encourage positive behaviour, school policy and procedures shall contain clear statements regarding the range of appropriate consequences that may be applicable for unacceptable behaviour. In looking at consequences relating to specific issues, consideration should be given to other circumstances which may have bearing such as family or mental health matters.

All parties to incidents of bullying, harassment, aggression and violence are entitled to appropriate support.

Core Values

We show respect for one another
We share pride in the College community
We support each other
We strive to be the best we can be

Procedures

John Paul College's policy on bullying, harassment, aggression and violence, is based on a comprehensive risk and needs assessment, which includes:

The school does not tolerate bullying, harassment, aggression and violence and encourages all members of the school community to take a pro-active stance that promotes safety and wellbeing.

The school support system promotes positive social health, mental health, safety and wellbeing.

The school encourages the reporting, recording and data collection procedures via MAZE when investigating incidents, as a basis to facilitate evaluation and justify any modification to approach, and to inform prevention and management activities.

A case management model is used when bullying, harassment, aggression or violent behaviours persist.

John Paul College provides professional development and appropriate resourcing to meet the needs of their staff in implementing the school policy.

References

Rigby, K (2001). Stop Bullying. A handbook for Schools. ACER, Australia
Curriculum Corporation (2000), Mind Matters, Commonwealth of Australia
National Safe Schools Framework (2003, revised 2011. Education Services Australia as the legal entity for the Ministerial Council on education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs [MCEECDYA]).

Related Documents

Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia Policy 2-C4 harassment, Discrimination and Bullying
Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia Policy 2 D3 Child Abuse
Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia Policy 2 D-8 Management of Confidential Information in Schools
Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia Policy 2 D-7 Exclusion of Students for Disciplinary Reasons
Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, Framework for the Development of Pastoral Care in Catholic Schools (2007)
Framework for Schools Dealing with Bullying Available on request
        Friendly Schools and Families (Acerpress)

        The National Safe Schools Framework