



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

St Lucy's School is an independent Catholic Special School which is part of Dominican Education Australia (DEA). St Lucy's provides for children with a wide range of disabilities.

Purpose

At St Lucy's School, staff are committed to ensuring a safe and supportive environment where all members of the school community have the right to be respected and have a responsibility to respect each other. We seek to provide an environment that is secure, caring, and physically, emotionally and intellectually safe where students can fulfil their potential.

Scope

This anti-bullying policy applies to the students of St Lucy's School.

Policy

The School rejects all forms of bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination and takes any allegations of bullying seriously. All members of the School community contribute to preventing bullying by being alert to signs of bullying and modelling, teaching and promoting appropriate behaviour and positive relationships. The School works collaboratively with the student(s) and their families to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur.

Definition of Bullying

The National definition of bullying for Australian Schools (bullyingnoway.gov.au) is *the ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening. Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records). Bullying of any form or for any reason can have immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.*

Types of bullying:

- Verbal bullying which includes name calling or insulting someone about their physical characteristics such as weight or height, or other attributes including race, sexuality, culture, or religion
- Physical bullying which includes hitting or otherwise hurting someone, shoving or intimidating another person, or damaging or stealing their belongings
- Social bullying which includes consistently excluding another person or sharing information, images or other digital content that will have a harmful effect on the other person.

Verbal, physical and social bullying can occur in person or online, directly or indirectly, overtly or covertly.

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- Direct bullying includes behaviours which are obvious and easily observed by others, that is, the identity of the person displaying bullying behaviours is usually known. Examples of direct bullying include pushing, kicking, name calling and excluding others from social activities.
- Indirect bullying is not always immediately observable and acknowledged as bullying. Indirect bullying can be discreet and anonymous, and the person experiencing the bullying behaviour may not realise until after it has occurred. Examples of indirect bullying can include damaging another person's social reputation, relationships and self-esteem through actions such as jokes shared with a group demeaning someone's personal attributes, discreetly stealing personal belongings from a bag or anonymously sharing unflattering images or information online without that person's permission.
- Overt bullying involves physical actions such as punching, kicking or pushing, or observable verbal actions such as name-calling and insulting. Overt, direct, physical bullying is a common depiction of bullying (this is sometimes called 'traditional bullying').
- Covert bullying can be challenging for people outside the interpersonal interaction to identify. It can include repeatedly using hand gestures and weird or threatening looks, whispering, excluding or turning your back on a person, restricting where a person can sit and who they can talk with.

What bullying is not:

- single episodes of social rejection or dislike
- single episode acts of nastiness or spite
- random acts of aggression or intimidation
- mutual arguments, disagreements or fights.

These actions can cause great distress. However, they do not fit the definition of bullying and they're not examples of bullying unless someone is deliberately and repeatedly doing them and intentionally using power over a peer.

St Lucy's takes bullying seriously and recognises the potential harm it can cause both physically and psychologically.

Identifying Bullying

Bullying may be identified in a variety of ways at St Lucy's:

- Student report
- Parent report
- Staff report

Staff are required to remain alert to signs of bullying or concerns in relation to interactions between students and report these concerns to the Deputy Principal or Principal.

In order to understand whether an individual student is engaging in 'bullying' - deliberately directing behaviour towards a peer and misusing 'their power' requires an investigation and likely a functional assessment of the behaviour.

The behaviour(s) will be considered in the context of St Lucy's and individual student factors. In the circumstance that the behaviours of concern do not constitute bullying, the behaviours will still be taken seriously and addressed through the teaching of replacement behaviours and mitigants planned and implemented to manage potential harm for the student engaging in the behaviour and the student(s) towards whom the behaviour is directed.



Responding to Bullying

St Lucy's provides a safe and supportive environment through environmental supports, the Student Wellbeing Framework and wellbeing practices and by explicit skill building through the curriculum and individual targeted strategies. Students at St Lucy's learn about appropriate and healthy relationships and interactional skills on an ongoing basis. They also learn about digital safety.

All students are provided with an accessible way of reporting bullying or safety concerns.

Parents/carers and staff report concerns in relation to bullying to the Deputy Principal or Principal.

St Lucy's is committed to raising community awareness of disability which reduces the likelihood of students being bullied for their differences which are celebrated at St Lucy's as what makes them unique.

When responding to bullying

- St Lucy's will take any alleged bullying seriously and address in a fair way and without bias
- St Lucy's will gather information which may include an investigation
- St Lucy's will involve all parties and inform and work with parents to address the behaviours and minimise harm
- Respond sensitively and thoughtfully
- Risk assess and mitigate for students involved
- Keep records
- Refer to psychological/counselling supports if appropriate
- Report to other authorities including police if appropriate
- Inform the student and their family of any outcome(s).

Related Policies and Procedures

Positive Behaviour Support Policy and Procedures

Child Protection Policy and Procedures

Wellbeing Policy and Procedures

Resources

Bullying No Way

Kids Helpline

eSafety Commissioner: Online Safety

Monitoring the Policy

St Lucy's monitors the implementation of the policy and regularly reviews its contents to ensure relevance and accuracy and updates as needed.

Date Approved/Reviewed	June 2024
Contact Person	School Principal
Approval Authority	School Principal