Anti-Bullying Policy

Policy management	
Date final version prepared	March 2020
Date reviewed by the Board	
Policy monitored by	Principal
Responsible for review	Principal
Date for review	
Policy pertains to	All staff, students, parents/caregivers

Version History

Version	Date	Notes
1.0	March 2020	Prepared for RANGS application as new school

Important related documents: Child Protection Policy Welfare Policy Discipline Policy

Relevant Legislation:

Enrolment Policy Complaints Framework ICT Policy suite Anti-Discrimination Act 1977
Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998
Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW)
Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 (NSW) Ombudsman Act 1974

1 INTRODUCTION

Schools exist in a society where incidents of bullying behaviour may occur. Preventing and responding to bullying behaviour in learning and working environments is a shared responsibility of all staff, students, parents, caregivers and members of the wider school community. The school's Duty of Care provides for the school to take the necessary steps to protect students from physical, psychological or emotional damage arising from issues such as bullying, and to take the necessary steps to avoid foreseeable risks of such behaviour. The school makes every effort to teach students to use the internet in a safe and responsible manner. Parents ensure their child's safe and responsible use of the internet and mobile devices outside of school. Bullying is serious. It may be a criminal offence if there is physical violence or threats, made either in person or by digital technology.

2 RATIONALE

The occurrence of bullying behaviour relates to a breakdown in human relationships and the failure to love one another as Christ loves each person. God intends for us to live together in a community that acknowledges differences, and accepts others, because every person is made in His image. The St Sava College is a community where every person is valued and has a unique part to play. The school seeks to build a supportive, caring community which aims to protect all people from behaviour by others which may cause distress of any kind; and to foster the restoration of relationships of mutual regard and honour.

This policy aims to facilitate processes that will deter and prevent bullying; support and strengthen the victim; and address the cause, and suitable restitution, with the offender. The careful resolution of each incident will be for the benefit of each person involved, as they grow in discipleship; and of the whole school, *so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ*. (Ephesians 4:12b-13)

3 PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This policy applies in all cases of student bullying behaviour, including cyber bullying, that occurs in the school; and off school premises, and outside of school hours, where there is a clear and close relationship between the school and the conduct of the student.

4 TABLE OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities

Principal

Implement the policy within the school

Review the policy in collaboration with school community

Report to relevant authorities

Investigate reports and incidents of bullying

Oversee appropriate follow up after investigation

CPL weeks: communicate anti-bullying policy and procedures to teachers in their section

Ensure anti-bullying curriculum in teaching programs

Assist class teachers in maintaining anti-bullying behaviours in class

Teachers

Include anti-bullying content in PDHPE programs

Promote and enforce anti-bullying behaviour standards within the school

School Staff

Respect and support students

Model and promote appropriate behaviour

Respond in a timely manner to incidents and reports of bullying

Support students to develop an understanding of bullying and its impact

Evidence of Compliance

Calendar of Policy Review

Records of investigations

Executive Child Protection training & schedule of meetings

Staff Appraisals - Program Registration & Review

Teaching Programs - responsible use of technology

Staff Code of Conduct

Teaching Programs

Student Code of Conduct Discipline records

Students

Behave appropriately, respecting individual differences and diversity

Behave as responsible digital citizens

Behave as responsible bystanders

Report incidents of bullying

Parents and caregivers

Support their children to become responsible citizens and to develop responsible on-line behaviour

Assist their children in understanding bullying behaviour

Support their children in developing positive responses to incidents of bullying

Report incidents of school related bullying behaviour to the school

Work collaboratively with the school to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur.

School community

Model and promote positive relationships that respect and accept individual differences and diversity within the school community

Abide by Code of Conduct for Parents

5 DEFINITIONS

Bullying: "Bullying is an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more persons. Bullying can happen in person or online, and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert).

Bullying of any form or for any reason can have 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." National definition of bullying for Australian schools (www.bullyingnoway.gov.au).

Cyber bullying: causing hurt via information and communication technologies, such as the Internet, social media, and through the use of mobile phones and other devices.

Harassment: on-going verbal or physical attacks on another person.

Procedural Fairness: investigations of an allegation of bullying, and any decisions made, will be impartial and without bias. A person against whom an allegation has been made will be: informed of the allegations being made, and other information which will be considered; informed of the process to be followed in investigating the matter; given opportunity to respond to the allegations; and informed of the process to seek a review of any decision made in response.

6 POLICY

St Sava College is committed to providing an educational environment in which students are valued and feel secure. St Sava College rejects all forms of bullying.

- (a) The school does not tolerate, condone or trivialise bullying.
- (b) All students and staff have the right to feel and be safe in the school grounds, and when travelling to and from school.
- (c) All students and staff have the right to be treated fairly and with dignity in an environment free from disruption, intimidation, harassment, victimisation and discrimination.
- (d) No student, employee, parent, caregiver or community member should experience bullying within the learning or working environments of the school.
- (e) All members of the school community contribute to preventing bullying by modelling and promoting appropriate behaviour and respectful relationships.

- (f) Each member of the school community has a responsibility to ensure the safety of each other member of the community.
- (g) Victims of bullying, and witnesses to bullying, are encouraged to report the incident.
- (h) All reports of bullying will be taken seriously and investigated according to principles of procedural fairness.
- (i) Cyber bullying which is engaged in while not at school, which impacts upon the learning of any student, will be addressed by the School, in conjunction with parents. The appropriate response will depend on circumstances.
- (j) The school will have a suitable program of education for the prevention of bullying.
- (k) Serious incidents, or threats, of violence may be reported to the Commission for Children and Young People, as required by law; and to the Police, depending on circumstances.

7 PROCEDURES

7.1 Creating a Supportive and Caring School Culture

School Curriculum will include age-appropriate programming:

- to educate students about bullying, social responsibility and building personal resilience
- to educate students to exercise digital responsibility in the appropriate use of technology
- to ensure that students understand what constitutes bullying
- to stop bullying behaviour
- to rebuild relationships based on a Biblical pattern
- to develop appropriate social skills and attitudes in the victims, perpetrators and bystanders of bullying; and empower students to resist bullying
- to promote and reinforce the Orthodox Christian ethos of care and respect for each individual at St Sava College

Continued Professional Learning will include sessions each year about bullying:

- to help staff identify bullying when and where it occurs
- to provide clear procedures to deal with bullying

- to adopt classroom management techniques that discourage opportunities for bullying
- to present a vigilant watchfulness in playground duty and other supervision
- to support and restore those who have experienced bullying

7.2 Communication

The School communicates its values and practices for the prevention of bullying behaviour, and receives feedback, through a combination of the following:

- Anti-Bullying Policy published on the School's website
- Enrolment interviews
- Promotion of a safe, caring environment in school communications and meetings
- Incorporation of anti-bullying guidelines in the Student Code of Conduct
- Confidential annual Student Sentiment Survey; including experiences of bullying behaviour, and personal feelings related to bullying
- Exit interviews
- Parent/ teacher meetings

7.3 Responding to a Report of Bullying Behaviour

- Take all reports, allegations or observations of suspected bullying behaviour seriously.
- Stop any altercations, violent or intimidating acts immediately.
- Ensure safety of all students involved, and care for anyone injured or upset.
- Inform the Principal, and relevant Section Coordinator if any of all allegations or incidences of bullying as soon as practicable.
- Acknowledgement (by staff) of the allegation of bullying, and initial assessment of student safety, must take place as a matter of priority.

7.4 Investigating Reports or Allegations of Bullying Behaviour

- Investigations into bullying allegations must be undertaken in a timely manner and should be carried out in such a way as to minimise the risk of escalation.

- Establish facts from victim, bully and bystanders.
- Conduct interviews in a manner intended to reduce the risk of making matters worse for the alleged victim; nor allow the perpetrators to take some action in revenge.
- Establish whether an alleged incident is isolated, or an ongoing pattern of behaviour (bullying).
- Emphasise that it is the school dealing with the behaviour, rather than students being brought into a confrontation.
- All incidents are to be documented in *(school database)*. Additional, detailed confidential reports will be kept on the Principal's behaviour management file.
- Inform appropriate staff about all incidents of bullying so they may be aware of any issues between students.
- Inform parents of victim and bully, and possibly parents of bystanders, throughout the process. Any serious consequences, and disciplinary action, will be communicated to parents in writing. An interview will also be requested.
- Serious issues will be reported to the Board.
- Staff are available for support of all students involved in bullying incidents; with a view to changing inappropriate attitudes and building resilience.
- Should bullying continue, further action will follow in line with the school's Discipline Policy. This can include behaviour contracts, suspension or, in the case of continued bullying, removal from the school.
- Serious incidents involving violence, or threats of violence by any means, may be reported to the Commission for Children and Young People, as required by law; and to the Police, if deemed necessary by the Principal.
- The School may recommend further professional counselling as necessary.

7.5 Procedures for Students

- Always be respectful towards other students, staff and members of the school community.
- Report any instances of being bullied to school staff and parents or carer.
- Students who witness, or know of, bullying should report it to a teacher.

- Where possible, take appropriate steps to discourage or prevent bullying.

7.6 Procedures for Parents

- Keep the school informed of concerns about behaviour, your child's health issues or other matters of relevance.
- Report bullying concerns to the school. It is important that parents allow the school to investigate allegations of bullying, and not intervene in the process.
- Understand that the whole story may be quite complex. Trust the school to resolve bullying matters according to the aims and procedures set out.
- If dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation and subsequent actions taken by the school, an appeal may be made as described in the school's Grievance Policy.
- Children bullied physically on the way home may be a matter for reporting to the Police.
- Report cyber bullying to your service provider, or the internet site. Cyber bullying, such as Facebook comments, may also be a matter for the Police.

8 APPENDIX – FURTHER INFORMATION

1. Bullying - Examples

Verbal - offensive names, teasing, abuse, sarcasm, insults, threats, making fun of someone, making racist or sexist remarks and putdowns about someone's cultural, religious or social background, ridiculing a person's body appearance

Physical - hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting, violent behaviour, throwing objects

Social - ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating, making inappropriate gestures, threatening or frightening behaviour, forcing a student to do silly or dangerous things

Psychological - spreading rumours about someone or their family, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions, demanding money, food or other items, belittling a person's abilities and achievements, malicious SMS and email messages, inappropriate use of camera phones, writing mean or spiteful notes or graffiti about others

2. Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying can be particularly damaging because of the capacity it has to humiliate, hurt and harm a person in front of a huge 'audience'.

Cyber bullying has been linked to depression, self-harm and even suicide.
Cyber bullying represents unlawful activity that may result in police laying charges.

Examples of Cyber Bullying:

- Sending hateful or threatening comments or pictures electronically
- Using modern technologies to engage in the social exclusion of someone and in hate group recruitment
- Posting rude, explicit or embarrassing messages or pictures about someone on the internet
- Identity fraud or other harm
- Putting pressure on a person to send revealing or compromising pictures of themselves
- Covertly filming, recording or taking pictures of someone and posting the images on the internet to cause hurt
- 'Outing' and disseminating confidential information about someone
- 'Flaming' and multi-messaging to clog up a person's electronic system and to cause them distress

- Using aliases and pseudonyms in chat rooms and on social networking sites in order to harass and upset
- Engaging in cyber-stalking and the invasion of privacy
- Referring to your school in a negative or disparaging way on the internet

Further Issues

Sending sexually explicit images of anyone, including yourself, is a crime if you are under the age of 18 years. If the person in the picture is under 16 years, it is a very serious crime.

Any material sent electronically can never be entirely removed even when 'deleted'. The image may emerge at any stage in the sender's future life and lead to serious consequences. Using pseudonyms, passwords and avatars does not protect the identity of a cyber bully. Technologies exist to identify those who misuse modern technologies to harm others. One's "digital footprint" may be accessed many years after material is posted online and used by others, eg. prospective employers and the media.

Minimise the Risk of Cyber Harm

- Never tell anyone, even your friends, your passwords, private details or access codes.
- When speaking to someone you do not know on the Net, be aware they may not be who they say they are.
- Be aware that there are predators who use the internet to lure young people into inappropriate sexual relationships. Others use tricks, such as pretending to be a bank, to get the victim to share their confidential financial details. This usually results in identity fraud and the stealing of money.
- Never reveal your email address to someone you do not know well; or give them personal information about your address, phone number or how they can meet up with you.
- Always be careful what you say or what you show a person in confidence on the internet for it is never guaranteed to remain confidential. The information may be sent on to others.
- Be aware that the internet is an unsafe place to put personal information and is frequently used for illegal activities. Treat the internet as an unsafe place at all times, be very aware of where and with whom you place any personal information.
- If you find yourself the victim of cyber bullying, keep the evidence and report the bullying to an appropriate adult. It is generally best not to respond to the cyber bully, or give them any satisfaction they have caused you hurt. If you do respond to the bully, do not

do so while hot with anger. This can result in mutual cyber bullying which means both parties become guilty of bullying.

3. Indicators of Bullying

Students who are being bullied or harassed may not talk about it with their teachers, friends or with the school counsellor. They may be afraid that it will only make things worse or they may feel that it is wrong to 'tell tales'.
Parents and teachers have an important part to play in helping the school and the student deal with bullying. A change in behaviour in students may be a signal that they are being bullied or they have some other concern. Some signs that a student may be being bullied:

- unexplained cuts, bruises or scratches
- damaged or ripped clothing
- vague headaches or stomach aches
- refusal to go to school
- asking for extra pocket money or food
- tearfulness, anxiety or difficulty sleeping
- 'hiding' information on mobile phones, emails or in comments on their social networking pages.

4. Advice for Parents

The school needs the assistance of parents to solve any issues involving their child. Staff will make every effort to resolve situations as quickly as possible. Your child needs your support and reassurance; and it will facilitate investigations, and the maintenance of a safe environment for everyone in the school, if parents remember these few points:

Avoid premature judgement

Sometimes parents will react angrily to facts reported by their child, but upon investigation, these 'facts' are sometimes not accurate. Please remember there are two sides to every story.

Be patient

The school is committed to investigating a bullying allegation in a manner that protects the rights of all involved, including the bully. The school will take action as appropriate, but will at all times seek to exercise procedural fairness. It is important to allow the school to investigate

the matter. Parents are advised not to challenge the bully directly, or contact the parents of the bully.

Be aware

With younger children especially, know your child's password and monitor social networking sites. They should be aware you will do so.

Be supportive

Dealing with a child who is a bully can be particularly difficult for a parent. Some will support the school. Others will not; and may even exhibit aggressive behaviour themselves. Other parents may be outraged because their child has been bullied. This can lead to the school being sandwiched between two sets of angry parents. Support and understanding is sought from parents of alleged bullies and alleged victims when the school is investigating an accusation of bullying.

5. INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

If You are Bullied:

- Tell a teacher. Don't be afraid that it will make things worse. The school will do everything they can to protect you. Most other students dislike bullying too.
- Tell your parents so that they can talk to the school about it.
- If you have been physically assaulted or threatened, or your property has been damaged or stolen, a criminal offence may have been committed.
- It can take courage to challenge the bully, to expose them for who they are and to play a part in improving our community by ridding it of bullying behavior.

Ways to avoid, or deal with, bullying behaviour

- When bullied, try not to get angry or show that you are angry. If your anger is obvious, the bully has the satisfaction of knowing that they have controlled your emotions.
- Admit to imperfections. It can send positive messages about you having a realistic understanding of yourself.
- Use non-offensive humour. Bullying can be blunted by a good laugh. The capacity to laugh at yourself can create a bonding with a group that might otherwise remain hostile.
- Review your own behaviours and body language. If you look like a victim you can become a victim. Squared shoulders and a smile can do much to deter a bully.

- Avoid trouble spots. There are always places that are high-risk areas for bullying. Avoid them.
- Develop your 'emotional quotient'. This includes the ability to read body language, to sense mood, to be intuitive and empathetic. Such skills not only make you less of a target, they can enable you to see where a situation may be heading. Early detection of possible bullying can provide options for avoiding it.
- Surround yourself with good friends. Those with strong friendships are usually less of a target for bullies.
- If bullied, try not to retaliate for this can often inflame the situation.
- If you are being bullied, remind yourself that it is the bully who has the problem, not you. Try to think through what inadequacies the bully might have that causes them to behave this way. Understanding a bully is a great way to begin to solve the problem.

Building Personal Resilience

- Maintain good self-esteem.
- Work on fitting in, getting involved and making a rich contribution to the school.
- Model kindness, thoughtfulness and respect.
- Don't build up situations out of all proportion.
- Develop an ability to deal with:
  - Failure and success
  - Threats and fear
  - Rejection and disappointment - Anger and hurt
- Try and maintain good physical fitness.
- Develop your skills and talents.

Further help can be obtained from:

- Kids Helpline – 1800 551 800; www.kidshelp.com.au
- Lifeline – 131 114
- Salvo Youth Line – (02) 8736 3293 Sydney local call; or Salvo Care Line 1300 36 36 27
- www.kidshelp.com.au