

Respectful Relationships Policy

Values

Love, Respect, Dignity, Justice, Care, Trust, Community, Forgiveness, Peace, Mercy

Policy Statement

Bullying Behaviours in Our Context

The members of St Joseph's School community commit to live out "The St Joseph's Way" of learning, love, community and respect. We are therefore opposed to bullying behaviours involving *students, staff and parents* in all of its forms. All members commit to a Christ Centred approach to dealing with bullying. Aspects of our St Joseph's School Mission statement which supports this include:

We strive to be a faith community through:

- Being welcoming to all who seek a Catholic education
- Following in the footsteps of Jesus as expressed through the St Joseph's values of learning, love, community and respect
- Acknowledging and honouring the sacredness in ourselves, each other and in our environment
- Accepting and embracing our differences
- Creating a safe environment based on a culture of trust and respect

We strive to form positive partnerships through:

- Engaging parents through active and collaborative participation at all levels in the school community
- Collaborating with others in our community

We strive to provide a holistic education for all to reach their full potential through:

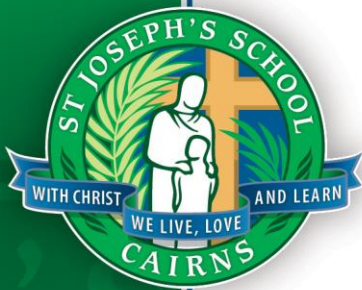
- Prioritising wellbeing by integrating social and emotional learning into all we do
- Focusing on a personal journey of growth
- Choosing a positive, solution-oriented attitude

We strive to provide a quality Christ centred education through:

- Prioritising Religious Education, Social and Emotional Learning, English and Maths as core learning areas

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We strive to strategically innovate through:

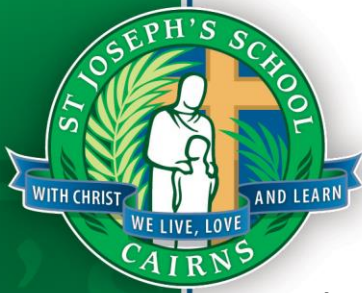
- Respectfully giving, receiving and learning from feedback

Bullying - Definition

Not all conflict between people constitutes bullying. Some conflict is considered a normal and healthy part of life. In fact, imperfect relationships are better than no relationships at all. (No 2 Bullying, 2015)

We define bullying as

- a. Bullying is usually repeated behaviour and usually involves an imbalance or abuse of power between the individuals. The imbalance of power could arise from differences in age, ability, physical strength, social status or some other attribute.
- b. A particular single incident could be considered bullying behaviour if it involves a gross imbalance of power between the aggressor and the victim.
- c. Bullying is usually done with the intent to disrupt physically or emotionally, but it can also be an unintentional process, where people are insensitive to the feelings of others and the effects of their actions. It is “recipient defined”, i.e. “It was only a joke” or “He doesn’t mind” is never an acceptable excuse for bullying behaviour.
- d. Bullying can take many forms including both direct (overt) and indirect (covert). Overt bullying includes face to face, physical and verbal whereas covert bullying includes unfair exclusion, rumour spreading and cyber-bullying.
- e. Bullying and Harassment are terms often used interchangeably with the latter usually related to some form of social discrimination



Our Rights and Responsibilities

All members of the St Joseph's Community have the right to be free from bullying behaviours. Therefore, all members of the school community have a responsibility to actively practice and promote the St Joseph's Way through:

- acceptance of difference
- the values of courtesy, respect, compassion, and care for others in the conduct of relationships
- a supportive and encouraging climate where the achievements and efforts of others are celebrated
- a commitment to adhering to, and upholding, all aspects of the school's respectful relationships policy

Staff, Student and Parents rights and responsibilities are stated clearly in the document ['The St Joseph's Way - School Wide Positive Relationships Framework'](#)

Our Shared Understandings and Research

At St Joseph's we explicitly teach and promote the 'St Joseph's Way' as outlined in the School Wide Positive Relationships Framework, embedding an anti-bullying ethos. Our Religious Education, Faith Life, Social & Emotional Learning and Health Curriculums all support this. Strategies such as Circle Solutions have been cited as helping to prevent bullying and underpin their anti-bullying learning. Thompson, F., & Smith, P. K. (2011). The use and effectiveness of anti-bullying strategies in schools. Research Report DFE-RR098. London: HMSO

St Joseph's sites professional research:

<http://www.kenrigby.net/01-The-prevalence-of-school-bullying>

If you want children involved in bullying behaviour to cooperate with you or be empowered you will focus on their behaviour, not their character, and encourage and guide them to behave more respectfully. We therefore, avoid labelling children 'bullies' or 'victims'.

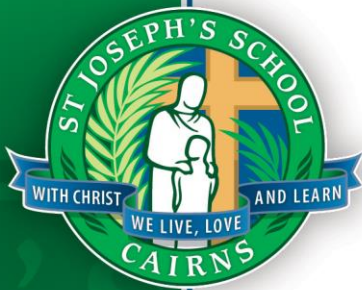
Children who are involved in bullying require help from teachers, counsellors, parents and in some cases, outside of school support agencies.

Despite research over the past 20 years which has provided many answers, there is still much to know, especially on how it can be best reduced.

There is no one solution to bullying; a collection of whole school strategies which support students, parents and staff are needed.

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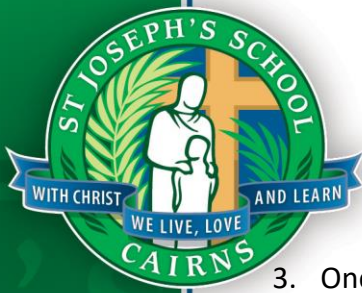
School Response to Bullying: Procedures

St Joseph's implements the following strategies to minimise bullying and respond to incidents.

1. Develop an agreed and well-supported anti-bullying policy which directs operations.
2. Develop an awareness of our moral and legal obligations in responding to incidents of bullying.
3. Explicitly teach students 'the St Joseph's Way' and provide information about bullying which reinforces that this behaviour is *not our way*. We assist students to develop and maintain positive relations with their peers.
4. Help students to learn about all forms of bullying including cyberbullying and ways to protect themselves.
5. Engage the services of our police to assist in the education of students about bullying.
6. Employ the use of appropriate intervention strategies including restorative justice practices when dealing with cases of bullying. This may include the school counsellor and other support agencies.
7. Make students aware of who they can go to if they are feeling unsafe, including when an incident involving bullying behaviours. I.e. their safety network, Student Protection Officers
8. Seek the cooperation and support of parents to prevent bullying and work through incidents.
9. Incidents which are responded to by the teacher on duty are recorded in the Playground folder. A serious incident or known repeated behaviour is reported directly to the classroom teacher in a timely manner.

When an incident of bullying occurs we base our practices on the principles of **natural justice**. The **principles of natural justice** concern procedural fairness and ensure a fair decision is reached by an objective decision maker. Maintaining procedural fairness protects the rights of individuals and enhances public confidence in the process.

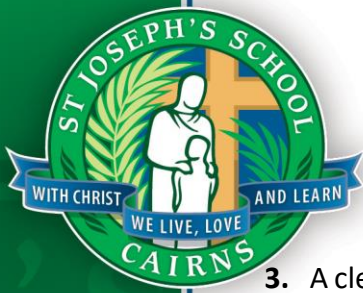
1. Each person is given the opportunity to tell their version of the incident or incidents. This is usually recorded through modes of self-reflection or by a staff member.
2. The facts as they are presented are assessed and if needed, further clarification sought from the students. This may include witnesses.



3. Once there is clarity around the facts an appropriate course of action is taken
 - a. Direct Sanctions: may include verbal reprimands, parental contact, school community service, internal suspension from classrooms and/or playground, short term exclusion.
 - b. Taking Responsibility Talks: draws attention to the seriousness of the offence and possible consequences. Would extend to 're-entry procedures' after a consequence has been applied.
 - c. Positive Behaviour Support: Negative reinforcement of undesirable behaviours and positive reinforcement for desirable behaviours are applied. This requires a time of monitoring and feedback.
 - d. Restorative Practices: Aims to assist the perpetrator to reflect on their behaviour, experience a sense of remorse and act to restore a damaged relationship. The facilitator uses questions and reflection techniques to bring this about. It can involve:
 - i. a meeting of both individuals
 - ii. a meeting of the group of students or class if necessary
4. Records of the bullying incident is recorded on the confidential school portal by the Principal, APRE, LTL

Success Criteria

1. St Joseph's School community will aim to eliminate bullying through whole school community involvement, awareness and education. This will be explicitly taught through Health and Social & Emotional Education programs.
2. The school community will create an environment of trust and understanding where:
 - a) Students will be taught skills which will build their self-esteem and empower them to take the responsibility for themselves and give them the opportunity to practise these skills;
 - b) The victims of bullying feel empowered to seek help to deal with the situation;
 - c) The bully is assisted in changing behaviour; and
 - d) The opportunity for reconciliation is provided.



3. A clear set of procedures will be put into place as a guide for staff, parents and students to manage situations assessed as being bullying.

See also (Related Policies and Guidelines)

[School Wide Positive Relationships Framework](#)

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