



**Catholic
Education**
Diocese of Cairns

Learning with Faith and Vision

Policy

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Student Bullying: Prevention and Responses in Schools

Purpose

This policy outlines the expectations of all Catholic schools in the Diocese of Cairns to develop and implement effective prevention and response strategies to address school bullying in alignment with the Bullying: Prevention and Responses to Student Bullying Guideline. The policy applies to all student bullying behaviour, including cyberbullying that occurs in schools, 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.

Policy

Cairns Catholic Education is committed to the prevention of bullying by and of students in our schools, and the implementation of appropriate prevention and response strategies which address school bullying, as mandated by law, Church teachings and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. We recognize the need to ensure that all students can learn and work in an environment where they feel safe and are free from bullying behaviour. The primary aim of the school's response to is to restore a positive learning environment for all students.

Rationale

The national definition for bullying in Australian schools is:

Bullying is an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through usually repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that is intended to cause physical and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more people. Bullying can happen in person or using digital or other technologies, 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.

Cairns Catholic Education schools use the national definition of bullying to develop a shared understanding among the whole school and wider community. It also recognises that not all conflict is bullying.

It is important for schools to respond to any inappropriate behaviour between students and to ensure every student feels safe.

In accordance with the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework all Australian schools should be learning communities that promote student wellbeing, safety and positive relationships so that students can reach their full potential via:

- Leadership - visible leadership to inspire positive school communities
- Inclusion – inclusive and connected school culture
- Student Voice – authentic student participation
- Partnerships – effective family and community partnerships
- Support – wellbeing and support for positive behaviour

Consequences

Each school will have effective school based prevention and response strategies which address school bullying, comply with legislation, are guided by current evidence informed research and, are known by, and developed with and for, the whole school community.

An approach based on a contemporary understanding of bullying:

- acknowledges that the reasons for bullying occurring are complex
- recognises that positive change requires a comprehensive and long-term approach
- promotes a positive vision of a safe and supportive school community
- fosters student engagement, leadership and activism for changing social attitudes, prejudices and norms
- targets key development 'windows of opportunity' (i.e. Years 3-5 and the transition to secondary school)
- integrates and embeds concepts within the everyday curriculum
- challenges stereotypes about identity and behaviour
- incorporates critical reflection about social interaction and power
- supports professional learning for a long-term, integrated and sustainable pedagogical approach
- seeks to educate and support the broader community, particularly acknowledging the key role of parents/caregivers, and the role of bystanders, in supporting or challenging bullying behaviour.

Schools demonstrate a safe and respectful school environment by ensuring:

1. a whole school approach to student safety and wellbeing is implemented and reviewed regularly
2. the school develops and promotes bullying prevention policies and programs as part of a school wide positive behaviour framework
3. the school has a leadership team that understands duty of care requirements
4. that staff model pro-social behaviour and intervene when they see bullying or anti-social behaviour
5. they value the expertise of student wellbeing staff
6. they have clearly defined roles and processes for responding to bullying
7. all staff have access to regular professional learning
8. incidents of bullying are addressed swiftly and consistently

Reflection

Queensland Anti-Cyber-Bullying Taskforce <https://www.qld.gov.au/cyberbullyingtaskforce>
Bullying! No Way <https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/>
National Safe Schools Framework
Royal Commission into Institutional Response to Child Sexual Abuse: Final Recommendations
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
Australian Student Wellbeing Framework www.education.gov.au

See also (Related Policies and Guidelines)

Bullying: Prevention and Responses to Student Bullying Guideline
Student Positive Behaviour Support Policy
Guiding Principles for school-based positive student behaviour and relationships support Guideline
Student Protection Policy
Student Protection Processes and Guidelines