Catholic Education
Diocese of Cairns

Procedure

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Student Anti-Bullying

Reflection

"*Do to others as you would have them do to you.*" (Luke 6:31)

Purpose

This procedure establishes a consistent, system-wide approach to preventing, identifying and responding to bullying and other harmful behaviour involving students in Catholic Education Diocese of Cairns (CEDC) schools. It aims to ensure that all CEDC schools provide safe, inclusive, respectful, culturally responsive and supportive learning environments where bullying and other harmful behaviours are prevented and responded to appropriately, so that every student's right to education is upheld.

Application

This procedure applies to all school staff, parents/carers and students attending CEDC schools. The Student Anti-Bullying procedure must be read in conjunction with: Safeguarding Children and Young People policy, CEDC Safeguarding Framework, Student Protection Processes and Guidelines, Student Behaviour Support policy; Restrictive Practices policy; Inclusive Practices policy and Code of Conduct.

Procedure

This procedure outlines the expectations for all CEDC schools to:

1. Prevent bullying and other harmful behaviours through a whole-school multi-tiered approach
2. Develop publicly available and accessible anti-bullying processes tailored to their local school context
3. Ensure school staff are equipped to effectively prevent and respond to student bullying and other harmful behaviours
4. Ensure the regular monitoring and review of bullying and other harmful behaviours data and associated anti-bullying processes

Practices

DEFINITIONS

1. Bullying

The nationally agreed definition of bullying which all Australian schools use is:

"Bullying is an 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 conflicts or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying". Australian Government (2021)

Bullying has three main features:

1. It involves a misuse of power in a relationship, and
2. It is intentional, ongoing and repeated (or has the potential to be ongoing and repeated, e.g. through the sharing of digital records), and
3. It involves behaviours that can cause harm.

Bullying can be:

- *Direct* physical bullying – e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.
- *Direct* verbal bullying – e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.
- *Indirect* bullying – e.g. spreading rumours, playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate, mimicking, encouraging others to socially exclude a person and/or damaging a person's social reputation or social acceptance.
- *Cyberbullying* – direct or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technology e.g. via a mobile device, computers, chat rooms, email, social media, etc. It can be verbal, written and include images, video and/or audio.

Bullying is not:

1. Disagreements, conflict, arguments or fights between equals (where there is no imbalance of power)
2. Single episode acts of nastiness, meanness, aggression, intimidation or violence
3. Social rejection or dislike of someone (where there are no deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others)

2. Harassment

Harassment is any behaviour that intimidates, humiliates, offends, threatens or degrades another person and is based on personal characteristics including race, ethnicity, disability, age, sexuality, religion, gender identity or cultural background. Harassment may be a single act or may also meet the definition of bullying if the harassment is an ongoing pattern of behaviour.

3. Other Harmful Behaviours

Harmful behaviours are any actions that hurt, exclude, intimidate or make someone feel unsafe. Bullying and harassment are two types of harmful behaviours. Other harmful behaviours include any behaviours (single or repeated) that cause harm but do not meet the definition for bullying or harassment and if left unaddressed, may continue or escalate into bullying over time.

CEDC recognises that bullying exists within a continuum of harmful behaviours, and all schools will respond to all harmful behaviours, including those that may not meet the definition of bullying.

1. WHOLE-SCHOOL MULTI-TIERED APPROACH TO BULLYING PREVENTION

All CEDC schools are required to implement a whole of school community, multi-tiered approach to the prevention of bullying and other harmful behaviours. Schools who build a whole-school multi-tiered approach

to address the issue of bullying and other harmful behaviours are much more likely to succeed in preventing bullying than schools who focus on single factor initiatives only. As part of a whole-school multi-tiered approach to bullying prevention CEDC schools will:

- Actively encourage respectful behaviour by establishing clear behavioural expectations, linked to whole school values in partnership with staff, students and parents/carers, documented in the Whole School Behaviour Support Plan
- Build a culture of belonging by ensuring that policies, teaching practices and physical environments are inclusive and celebrate diversity
- Explicitly teach and model appropriate social and emotional skills to all students, through the multi-tiered delivery of consent and respectful relationships education and by embedding the general capabilities from the Australian Curriculum in all learning areas. These general capabilities include:
    - Personal and Social Capability
    - Ethical Understanding
    - Intercultural Understanding (cross curricula priorities)
    - Critical and Creative Thinking
    - Digital Literacy
- Promote authentic opportunities for students to share their perspectives and contribute to the development, implementation and review of bullying prevention and response strategies
- Ensure the school community has access to information and opportunities to support and contribute to student wellbeing and anti-bullying activities.

2. CLEAR AND TRANSPARENT ANTI-BULLYING PROCESSES

All CEDC schools are required to have processes for preventing and responding to student bullying in place. These processes must be publicly available, easily accessible and should be tailored to the local school context. Bullying prevention and response processes can be documented in a standalone document or included as part of the school's Whole School Behaviour Support Plan. The *School Anti-Bullying Policy Template* can be modified to reflect each school's local context. All CEDC schools' bullying prevention and response processes must include the following:

- **Definition** of bullying and other harmful behaviours, including recognition that bullying sits within a continuum of harmful behaviours
- **Prevention** of bullying and other harmful behaviours initiatives the school has implemented
- **Reporting** pathways for staff, students and parents/carers to follow to report and an incident of bullying
- **Initial response** processes the school will follow, specifically that the school will make reasonable attempts to respond promptly (within 2 school days) to reports of bullying including:
    - Contacting parents/carers of *all* students involved and communicating next steps
    - Initiating immediate safety action where required to prevent further harm
    - Providing initial wellbeing support to the student/s
    - Making reports to the police or other authorities where required
    - Taking initial and appropriate proportional response actions
- **Support** the school will provide to students who experience bullying, students who engage in bullying and student bystanders affected by bullying. This may include the use of the *Student Wellbeing and Support Plan Template* for students who were impacted by bullying, and the use of either the *Student Risk Assessment Behaviour, Safety and Wellbeing Template, Student Safety Plan Template, Behaviour Improvement Plan Template or Individual Behaviour Support Plan Template* for students who have engaged in bullying behaviours
- **Parent/carer** roles and responsibilities in supporting their child if they engage in bullying behaviours or are impacted by bullying behaviour, including as a bystander

- **Escalation** pathways where students or parents/carer believe the school response has not effectively resolved an incident of bullying, including:
    - Complaint pathway to a relevant person within the school
    - Complaint pathway to a relevant person external to the school

3. SCHOOL STAFF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING, RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

All CEDC must ensure that staff are empowered and equipped to prevent, identify, respond to and monitor bullying and other harmful behaviours effectively. This includes:

- School leadership ensures that all school staff understand the school's policies, processes and practices in the prevention and response to bullying and other harmful behaviours
- School leadership provides support to staff impacted by or responding to student bullying or other harmful behaviours, which may include the use of the *Wellbeing Risk Management Form*
- All staff continue to participate in professional learning on evidence-based prevention and responses to bullying and other harmful behaviours practices (see appendix 1 for examples)
- All staff undertake ongoing cultural awareness professional learning relevant to their local context, to ensure their engagement with students and families is empathetic, trauma-informed and culturally appropriate
- All staff consistently use evidence-based teaching and learning resources on bullying and other harmful behaviours prevention, to promote a common language and understanding across the school community (see appendix 1 for examples)

4. MONITORING AND REVIEW

All CEDC schools are required to regularly review and analyse their bullying prevention and response processes, inclusive of all data relating to incidents of bullying and other harmful behaviours. This includes:

- The regular review and analysis of student behaviour data, to identify any emerging patterns or trends bullying or other harmful behaviours patterns to inform proactive, targeted interventions where most needed
- The continuous documentation of all steps taken in response to an incident of bullying, ensuring alignment with the school's bullying prevention and response processes
- The continuous monitoring of the effectiveness of strategies implemented in response to incidents of bullying, ensuring that the strategies are being implemented as intended and making a meaningful difference for students involved
- The regular monitoring, evaluation and refinement of school bullying prevention and response processes to ensure they remain fit for purpose and to drive continuous improvement

Enquiries

Executive Leader Wellbeing and Learning

Executive Manager Engagement and Wellbeing

Manager Student Engagement

Related Directives, Policies and Procedures

CEDC Safeguarding Framework

Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy

Student Behaviour Support Policy

Restrictive Practices Policy

Inclusive Practices Policy

Code of Conduct Policy

APPENDIX 1 – STAFF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND TEACHING RESOURCES

Professional Learning

Bullying No Way – provides a suite of professional learning opportunities for school staff on understanding, preventing and responding to bullying.

CEDC Student Engagement – provides a suite of CEDC developed professional learning opportunities for school staff on understanding and implementing whole-school multi-tiered approaches to support positive student behaviour and engagement.

eSafety Commission – provides a suite of professional learning opportunities for school staff on understanding preventing and responding to online bullying.

Lets Stop Bullying – developed in response to the 2025 Anti-Bullying Rapid Review, provides a suite of resources for parents/carers, students and school staff on understanding, preventing and responding to bullying and other harmful behaviours

Teaching Resources

BeYou—contains a program directory that is designed to help educators choose mental health and wellbeing programs to implement in their learning community.

Bullying No Way—provides comprehensive resources and support for educators to understand, prevent and respond to bullying, promoting safe and respectful school environments across Australia.

https://www.esafety.gov.au/key-topics/esafety-guide—offers teachers and staff information about the features of popular apps, games and online platforms, helping them educate students on how to safeguard themselves against cyberbullying.

eSafety Commissioner: spotlight on cyberbullying – this eSafety Commissioner website features resources designed to assist in developing a comprehensive school-wide approach to tackling cyberbullying.

Kids Helpline—offers free online learning for primary school students about how to recognise and respond to bullying behaviour they experience or witness.

Lets Stop Bullying – developed in response to the 2025 Anti-Bullying Rapid Review, provides a suite of resources for parents/carers, students and school staff on understanding, preventing and responding to bullying and other harmful behaviours.

QLD Department of Education: resources for primary school students—provides resources for primary school educators to help students stay safe online, protected from cyberbullying and other online dangers.

QLD Department of Education: resources for secondary school students – gives educators resources they can use to teach older students how to manage their online presence and make smart choices to stay safe from cyberbullying and other online risks.

QLD Department of Education: Respectful Relationships Education Hub – provides school staff with information, resources and tools on respectful relationships.

Student Wellbeing Hub – provides educators with resources, lesson plans and tools to promote student wellbeing, including strategies for addressing bullying.