BULLYING
POLICY No: 3.8

DEFINITION
The national definition of bullying for Australian schools:
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. (https://bullyingnoway.gov.au)

Behaviours that do not constitute bullying include:
• mutual arguments and disagreements (where there is no power imbalance)
• not liking someone or a single act of social rejection
• one-off acts of meanness or spite
• isolated incidents of aggression, intimidation or violence.
However, these conflicts still need to be addressed and resolved in accordance with the Behaviour Support Policy.

RATIONALE
Our Lady of Fatima provides an environment where bullying is not accepted. All who learn and work here have these three rights: the right to feel safe, the right to be treated with respect and the right to learn.

All students enrolled, and any child visiting Our Lady of Fatima Primary School, have a right to feel safe and be safe at all times. The wellbeing of children in our care will always be our first priority. We aim to create a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe and are free to enjoy life to the full without any concern for their safety, providing them with the best opportunity to dream, believe and achieve.

AIMS

● To reinforce within the school community what bullying is and the forms it takes and the fact that it is unacceptable.
● To alert everyone within the school community of the signs and evidence of bullying and to ensure bullying is reported to staff whether a person is an observer or a victim.
● To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up appropriately.
● To seek parental and peer-group support and co-operation at all times.
IMPLEMENTATION

● That all parents, staff and students be made aware of Our Lady of Fatima’s position on Bullying.

● That Our Lady of Fatima continues with our Student Wellbeing, School Wide Positive Behaviour Program, Personal Development, Buddy Programs, Positive Behaviour Support and the implementation of Restorative Practices to assist when dealing with bullying issues.

● Each classroom teacher will teach and review The Three Rights and associated positive behaviours at the beginning of each year and continue working with these rights and the positive behaviour matrix throughout the school year.

● Our school will combat bullying by providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment based on the Effective School’s model.

● We have adopted a four-phase approach to bullying.

A. Primary Prevention:

● Professional development for staff relating to bullying, harassment and proven counter measures.

● Each classroom teacher to clarify with students the types of bullying including being a bystander as well as the consequences and impact of bullying.

● Community awareness and input relating to bullying, its characteristics and the school’s programs and response, complemented by clear processes for reporting suspected bullying.

● The provision of programs that promote inclusiveness, resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving will form an integral part of our curriculum. In particular, assertiveness training and bystander training that builds skills in children to challenge and/or report unacceptable behaviour will be central to our curriculum.

● A bullying survey to be introduced administered and responded to biannually.

● The School Wide Positive Behaviour Framework is integrated throughout the curriculum.

● Anti-bullying messages and posters will be displayed around the school.

● Student Representative Council, peer support delegates, staff and students to promote the philosophy of ‘No Put Downs’.

● A Buddy system exists across the school.

● Planned activities will be available to students at recess and lunch breaks.

● Teachers will be trained in cybersafety. Cybersafety awareness programs will be provided for parents and cybersafety will form part of each child’s ICT curriculum.

● Staff supervised designated safe and quiet places for children are available when required.

B. Isolated, Infrequent or Less Serious Incidents:

● All instances of suspected bullying or inappropriate behaviour must be responded to by staff.

● Parents are encouraged to contact the school if they suspect a bullying or behaviour problem.

● The school will reinforce with children the importance of appropriately reporting incidents of inappropriate behaviour involving themselves or others, and the imperative that staff respond appropriately and proportionally to each allegation consistent with the school’s Student Code of Conduct, including the proper reporting and recording of the incident.

● Parents are to be contacted if their child is alleged to have been bullied or experienced inappropriate behaviour, or if their child appears to have behaved inappropriately or bullied someone else.
• Appropriate and proportional consequences may include a verbal apology, writing a letter of regret, completing a Behaviour Incident booklet, explicit teaching of pro-social behaviour, loss of privileges etc.
• Public recognition and reward for positive behaviour and resolution of problems will occur as appropriate.

C. Serious Incidents or Repetitive behaviour

• Serious incidents and/or repetitive incidents of bullying or unacceptable behaviour must be reported, responded to by staff and documented.
• Serious incidents are those that include physical assault, sexual assault, criminal activity involving theft or serious damage of property, serious threats or homophobic bullying etc.
• All such incidents or allegations will be properly investigated and documented. Depending upon the nature of each incident, they may be also be reported to and investigated by police, reported to Regional Office or Catholic Education Melbourne via the School Incident Record.
• The school may contact support professionals such as Welfare officers, Wellbeing coordinators, Counsellors and/or Student Support Officers for assistance and support.
• Students, staff and parents identified by others as bullies will be informed of allegations.
• Both bullies and victims will be offered counselling and support.
• All repetitive or serious incidents must be brought to the attention of the principal and or deputy principal.
• The most appropriate staff member will contact parents of the targeted child. The principal or deputy principal will contact alleged perpetrators unless advised by authorities such as police not to do so.
• Regional office will provide support as appropriate, and the principal will monitor the investigation and review the situation until matters are appropriately resolved.
• Consequences of repetitive or serious incidents may include any combination of the following:
  - loss of privileges
  - negotiated restorative actions
  - counselling
  - conciliation
  - removal from class and/or yard, (in school suspension)
  - external suspension
  - expulsion (only in extreme cases and with the approval of the Director of Catholic Education Melbourne)
• A management strategy for all parties will be developed in consultation with the students and parents involved.
• Parents or community members who bully or harass or abuse staff will be provided with official warnings, and if necessary referred to the police, and/or have Trespass restrictions placed upon them by the principal consistent with the Summary Offences Act.

C. Post Incident:

It is important that appropriate strategies are put in place after the incident has been resolved for all students involved. Appropriate strategies may include:-
• conciliation meetings between all parties
• ongoing monitoring of students involved.
• identification of an agreed key contact staff member for each student involved.
follow-up meetings regarding each child’s management strategy.
ongoing communication with parents.
counselling from appropriate agencies of support officers etc., for both parties.
reinforcement of positive behaviours and appropriate behaviour strategies.

Evaluation:
This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s review cycle. 2016