

# SAFE SCHOOL POLICY

The school has a pro-active approach to dealing with bullying throughout the school. There are programs in place on each campus and it is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that bullying instances are dealt with effectively and immediately. Teachers have the primary responsibility for ensuring that we have a 'safe environment' at St Patricks, both inside and outside the classroom. We must model behaviour at all times that reflects the values and school ethos that we support.

Students on each campus are involved in activities that build resilience and are aimed at making them aware of the relationships that they have with others. Classroom interaction and pastoral activities allow opportunities for students to discuss issues related to their well-being. The indoor home room in Secondary is a chance for students to raise issues with their roll teacher who may then refer matters on through the appropriate channels. Matters of bullying and intimidation should be referred to the Coordinator/Principal / Assistant Principal as a matter of urgency. Subsequent actions might include student interviews, parent interviews, referral to the School Counsellor or to outside agencies who may be able to deal with an issue.

The pro-active approach is evidenced in posters and pamphlets that are displayed around the school to give students strategies for dealing with bullying and provide advice. The school newsletter will often contain advice and/or inserts to give parents advice on how to deal with bullying, particularly in regard to online and cyber-bullying which is often perpetrated outside of school hours.

The effectiveness of an anti-bullying policy is balanced by the effectiveness of behaviour management strategies that are in place within the school, and as are practiced by teachers.

An example of this publicity is set out in the key themes of the Safe School Policy:

## **Are You being Harassed or Bullied?**

There is something you can do about it!

### **Being harassed**

Being harassed means being subjected to behaviour which is unwanted, unwelcomed, uninvited and usually persistent. It often happens when a person is put in an embarrassing or awkward situation. Any form of harassment is wrong, and should not be allowed to continue.

### **Types of harassment**

#### Physical

- Fighting, pushing, shoving, gestures or invasion of personal space
- Bullying, stand-over tactics, picking on others, threats to "get" people, "paying out" people, or where gangs try to dominate others
- Damaging other people's possessions

#### Verbal

- Name calling, offensive language, slander (putting people down behind their back) offensive notes or graffiti about others

## Racial

- Picking on people because of their race or religious beliefs

## Sexual

- Touching or brushing against you in a sexual manner
- Sexually oriented jokes, drawings and literature
- Commenting on the size and shape of your body
- Calling you rude names or making comments on your morals
- Invitation of a sexual nature which you do not want
- Asking questions about your private life which you do not want

**Remember: this type of behaviour becomes harassment when you have said that it is unwelcome and unwanted, and it doesn't stop immediately.**

Sexual and Racial Harassment is against State Law Children's Services and the policies of the Catholic Education Office and the school.

### **How do I know if my behaviour is causing offence?**

Harassment is often unintended. If you are not sure about your behaviour, you can carefully watch the effect of your actions and words on other people and consider whether they are really appreciating your behaviour or just pretending to because they are embarrassed check your behaviour and language by asking if the person minds what you are doing stop behaving in that way apologise, if you are in doubt always treat other people as equals discuss your behaviour with someone who has an understanding of the issues.

### **What can I do about it?**

St Patrick's School is strongly committed to being a safe, caring environment which respects the rights of everyone. You do have the right to be left at peace and to get on with your work.

### **If you are being harassed, you should .....**

- Tell the person, or people, who are harassing you that you don't like it and want them to stop it and leave you alone
- Speak to your class teacher or home room teacher immediately if it continues
- Talk it over with friends or your parents.
- Talk to the student counsellor (arranged through the Principal / Assistant Principal)

**This is not "dobbing". You do have the right to talk it over in CONFIDENCE and ask that it not be reported any further.** (In serious cases, however, teachers are required by law to report instances, or suspected instances of child abuse to the Department of Community Services (DOCS). In these cases, we cannot fully respect your wishes for confidence).

You may wish to report the harassment directly to the Assistant Principal or the Principal. YOU have the power to decide the course of action you wish to take.

### **What can the teachers do about it?**

Provide counselling and / or refer you to an harassment contact person (Principal / Assistant Principal).

Implement the discipline policy.

### **What will happen if I go to a harassment contact person?**

The teacher will listen to you, and keep what you tell them confidential if you wish. They will help you decide the best way to handle the situation. This may be to deal with it under the school's existing procedures, or it may be by helping you to use some other method.

### **Why do we need special teacher contacts?**

Our staff, parents, and our government believe that all students have the right to a school environment in which their self-esteem and educational chances are not hindered by harassment. People who harass others are stopping them from getting as much out of school as they should. Students who are bullied or harassed a lot will often try to change schools, or leave school, or hide in safe places.

People who are harassed or bullied often feel that they would like to talk to someone who is available and who has said that they are willing to just listen, and not interrupt or start telling you what should happen. Our school "contacts" are such people. Our contacts are also able to deal with your formal complaint if that's the course you think best.

### **Who are our school harassment contacts?**

A number of our staff have indicated they would be available to help should you wish to discuss any problem. You should speak to the campus coordinator or Principal / Assistant Principal to arrange this.

Ms Lianne Britten, from Catholicare, is our Student Counsellor in 2013. She is available each Monday to talk to students when you have problems, and to help you if you are being bullied or harassed. Bookings to see the school counsellor are usually done through the Principal or you may put your name in the counsellor's book through the office. You may wish to talk things over with any teacher you particularly like to trust, or a member of our Student Executive could help you.

**Remember, you don't have to take harassment. You can choose to stop it.**

**Additional advice on bullying and cyberbullying is available for students, parents and staff on the Bullyingnoway ([www.bullyingnoway.com.au](http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au)) website and through the Kids Helpline [www.kidshelp.com.au](http://www.kidshelp.com.au)). [www.breakthroughbullying.com.au](http://www.breakthroughbullying.com.au) is also a useful resource on anti-bullying strategies.**