

**COMMUNITY - CARING BEHAVIOUR POLICY**

***“Mandurah Catholic College is a learning community seeking truth by living out the Gospel values through the Catholic faith and by promoting the holistic and optimal development of each student.”***

In fulfilling Jesus' command of love of neighbour, we at Mandurah Catholic College seek to create a community in which every person feels valued and safe and individual differences are appreciated, understood and accepted. All members of the community have a right to feel safe from any form of harassment.

Bullying is one of the most disruptive influences on a student's participation in school. Learning outcomes, physical health, emotional, psychological and spiritual well-being can be adversely affected by bullying and harassment.

Mandurah Catholic College aims to create a safe school environment. We expect that all members of our College community will demonstrate caring behaviour to one another. Bullying or uncaring behaviour is not tolerated. The purpose of this policy is to promote caring behaviour in the College and to encourage students and parents to immediately report any incidents of bullying.

**HARASSMENT** is perceived or actual demonstrated patterns of behaviour that are offensive, humiliating, intimidating or threatening and that cause a person disadvantage or anxiety over a period of time. Harassment can take many forms including verbal, social, psychological or physical, and may be expressed in many ways such as name calling, abuse, swearing, teasing, inappropriate gestures, minor physical aggravation or interfering with personal property. Harassment may develop into bullying when it involves a misuse of power.

**BULLYING** is defined as any **consistent and repeated**, conscious, targeted behaviour by a more powerful person or groups, which hurts, injures, embarrasses, upsets or frightens another person to the point where it is difficult for the individual to deal with the situation themselves. **Bullying or uncaring behaviour is different from conflict, disagreement, rough-and-tumble or schoolyard arguments.**

Bullying may take place in many different forms including:

1. Verbal (put downs, name calling, teasing), racist or sexist comments
2. Social (repeated rumours, exclusion from group, Facebook comments)
3. Psychological (following student, putdown looks/gestures, Facebook taunts)
4. Physical (fighting, kicking, tripping, pushing, removing clothing)

**PRINCIPLES UNDERPINNING THE CARING BEHAVIOUR POLICY**

Unfortunately bullying occurs in all communities. When bullying and harassment incidents are ignored or overlooked, it serves to condone and reinforce the behaviour. Dealing effectively with bullying requires a whole school approach framed within the College's Pastoral Care system. A key element of any approach to dealing with bullying is to promote honest and open communication regarding the issue.

The Caring Behaviour Policy has been written in conjunction with staff, students and parents to ensure that the policy reflects the views and concerns of all members of the College community. The focus when dealing with bullying is on resolution. It is important that the situation is resolved and that the person who bullied makes a commitment that the behaviour will not continue. Bullying behaviour, which involves an attitude toward others, can be modified through effective education and intervention.

Mandurah Catholic College will:

- ✓ Publicise the Policy by a variety of means, including presentations to students, presentations at Parent Information Evenings and inclusion in the staff handbook.
- ✓ Have each student to sign a "Code of Conduct" on enrolment.
- ✓ Provide counselling and/or other support for staff and students who experience bullying (dependent on need of people involved and nature of bullying).
- ✓ Provide opportunities enabling incidents to be reported confidentially.
- ✓ Monitor incidents and reports of bullying, checking for patterns and evaluating the processes to deal with bullying.
- ✓ Provide professional development for staff on the issue of bullying, including clarification of what constitutes bullying of colleagues and students, what signs might indicate a person is being bullied and how to effectively deal with incidents.
- ✓ Ensure the process for dealing with bullying is followed consistently and sanctions are applied consistently.
- ✓ Regularly evaluate and review this policy so that it may be relevant and effective.
- ✓ Ensure staff and student leaders model appropriate behaviour.
- ✓ Meet with parents of children who have been bullied (if requested) to address their concerns and will keep them informed about progress.
- ✓ Offer a range of preventative, support systems such as peer mentoring.
- ✓ Provide self-esteem building activities and teach skills dealing with assertiveness and non-violent methods of conflict resolution.
- ✓ Create a positive environment in which puts downs are not tolerated in class.
- ✓ Facilitate open discussion in classes regarding bullying and how to tackle the issue.
- ✓ Involve student leaders in monitoring and minimising the incidence of bullying.
- ✓ Involve students in prevention eg, ask them to write about "safe" and "unsafe" areas and what should be done about them.
- ✓ Encourage a collective responsibility with students (e.g. be active bystanders)
- ✓ Have active 'duty of care" and supervision by teachers when on duty around the campus and in areas like the locker bays.

### **SUPPORTING THE CARING BEHAVIOUR POLICY**

All members of the College community have a responsibility to help implement and uphold the Caring Behaviour Policy.

#### **PRINCIPAL**

The role of the Principal is to maintain an active involvement in upholding the Caring Behaviour Policy and monitoring its effectiveness.

#### **STAFF**

Mandurah Catholic College promotes a staff atmosphere, which is friendly, caring, supportive, cooperative and collaborative.

#### **Responsibilities**

- ✓ Watch for early signs of distress in students.
- ✓ Create a positive environment in which "put down" statements are not tolerated and be aware of any continual verbal harassment of particular students in class.
- ✓ Provide an opportunity for students to express their feelings in privacy, ensuring confidentiality.
- ✓ Listen with empathy and allow the student to speak freely and question them with concern not judgment.
- ✓ Offer immediate support and help to deal with the situation.
- ✓ It may also be necessary to communicate concerns to a member of the Pastoral Care team who may then choose to involve parents.
- ✓ Ensure that all areas of the school have maximum staff presence at breaks, between lessons, before and after school.
- ✓ It may be appropriate to alert all staff to a particular situation while being conscious of the need for student confidentiality.
- ✓ It may be necessary for group mediation and counselling to be recommended.

## STUDENTS

Mandurah Catholic College encourages students to develop as confident Christians, secure in their strengths, aware of their needs and able to work academically to be best of their ability.

### Responsibilities

- ✓ Seek out friends and allies and use humour and not sarcasm.
- ✓ Report bullying behaviours that happen to you or others around you.
- ✓ Stay away from places bullying is likely to occur.
- ✓ Build self-confidence. Use positive self-talk; assertive body language etc.
- ✓ Be a caring bystander. Refuse to be an audience for bullying.

## PARENTS

Mandurah Catholic College respects the role of parents as the primary educators of their children. Courtesy, honest communication, understanding and cooperation between parents and teachers are key elements for enhancing the prospects of a successful educational partnership and a congenial environment for students.

### Responsibilities

- ✓ Encourage your child to talk about school. In particular take an active interest in your child's social life and social media usage.
- ✓ Encourage your child to consider assertive (not aggressive) ways to respond to conflict situations.
- ✓ If your child is cyber-bullied, ensure that they **do not use social media** for a period of time.
- ✓ Have your child's friends over to strengthen the relationships begun at school
- ✓ In setting behaviour limits at home be fair, consistent and assertive (not aggressive)
- ✓ If you think your child is being harassed/bullied discuss the situation with your child and inform the appropriate Head of Year.
- ✓ Parents/guardians may be asked to join in a mediation session to resolve the situation.
- ✓ Parents/guardians should work with staff members if required to help resolve bullying.

If your child does report that a bullying incident has occurred it is usually best to encourage your child to talk about the incident. Remember to keep an open mind as you are hearing only one part of the story. Ask questions gently and help your child reflect on what they could do differently in the future.

<b><i>It helps if parents:</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Involve children in making decisions about what to do,</li><li>▪ Listen to what they say and;</li><li>▪ Tell them they are understood and believed.</li></ul>	<b><i>It does not help if parents:</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Get angry or upset or feel guilty</li><li>▪ Trivialise the incident</li><li>▪ Blame the child or blame the College</li><li>▪ Accuse people without knowing the facts and listening to both sides and;</li><li>▪ Look for scapegoats.</li></ul>
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It is important to find out who what, where and when, as well as if anyone witnessed the incident. It is a good idea to write down what you find out and then make an appointment to discuss the issue with the Head of Year.

## **BYSTANDERS – WHAT TO DO IF YOU SEE UNCARING BEHAVIOUR**

Bystanders are people who are present but are not directly involved in a bullying situation. They can actually support, either actively or passively uncaring behaviour and can prevent further bullying by:

- ✓ Refusing to join in the bullying
- ✓ Not spreading rumours or gossip about others
- ✓ Not going along with someone being excluded
- ✓ Telling the uncaring person that their behaviour is unwanted or unfair
- ✓ If possible intervening as the bullying occurs e.g. (leave them alone, or quit it).

- ✓ Seeking out an older student, student leader or staff member to intervene
- ✓ Offering support to the person who is bullied. Make suggestions about handling it and encourage them to get help from an adult, a student leader or their family

#### **WHAT CAN YOU DO IF YOU ARE BULLIED?**

- ✓ Decide how serious the present incident is. If the behaviour is not serious or especially hurtful (such as a single incident of name calling) then ignore it. Often bullies want a reaction and will cease the behaviour if you do not react.
- ✓ Get away from the immediate bullying situation as quickly as possible.
- ✓ Do not retaliate by becoming a physical or verbal bully yourself.
- ✓ Tell the bully to stop it.
- ✓ Build your own protection by establishing friends.
- ✓ Don't be afraid to talk about incidents with friends or family.
- ✓ Talk to people at school to help you decide on how to handle the situation.
- ✓ Be smart about avoiding places and times of high risk.

#### **COLLEGE RESPONSE TO BULLYING INCIDENTS**

All information relating to reported incidents of bullying will be handled in a sensitive manner, with due consideration for the confidentiality requirements of each individual case. **Bullying of a sexual or racial nature will generally be referred immediately to the Deputy of Pastoral Care.**

#### **CONSEQUENCES FOR PEOPLE WHO DEMONSTRATE UNCARING BEHAVIOUR**

Consequences will be decided upon based on the individual nature of each incident. However consequences are likely to involve:

- ✓ Restorative justice group work
- ✓ Written records being kept on student's file
- ✓ Formal letter to student and parents with agreement/contract for appropriate future behaviour.
- ✓ Consultation with parents to modify behaviour
- ✓ Supervised formal apology to the victim
- ✓ Reparations for any damage caused
- ✓ Detentions and school community service
- ✓ Counselling and behaviour modification programmes
- ✓ Exclusion from class, sport, buses, excursions.
- ✓ Suspension from school resuming only on the condition that a formal contract is signed undertaking to cease all bullying behaviour
- ✓ Expulsion for continued bullying behaviour