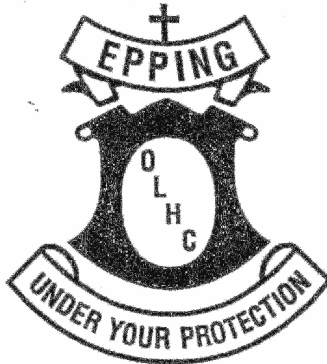


Our Lady Help of Christians
Catholic Primary School
Epping



Anti - Bullying Policy

Celebrating our faith

Challenging students to achieve

Educating students to be life-long learners

Reaching out to others in justice and love

INTRODUCTION

Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Primary School, Epping is a one streamed K-6 co-educational school located in the North Shore cluster of Catholic schools in the Diocese of Broken Bay, Sydney. The school is a mixed community with approximately 33% of students from Language Backgrounds other than English. (LBOTE)

PURPOSE

At Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic School, we believe that all members of the community have the right to learning and work environment free from intimidation, humiliation and hurt. We all share a responsibility to create a culture of caring which will not tolerate bullying. This policy builds on the school's Pastoral Care Policy to provide clear and agreed procedures and strategies for combating bullying in the school, responding to bullying behaviours and protecting and supporting all parties involved.

Flowing from the Christian vision expressed in the Diocesan Pastoral Care Policy, Schools are called to establish relationships which are grounded in love, compassion, reconciliation and justice. In witnessing Christian values we reject ideas, beliefs and behaviours which marginalize or victimize people.

DEFINITION

Bullying behaviours are about an imbalance of power where there is a deliberate intent to cause harm or distress. These behaviours can be verbal, social, psychological or physical. They impact on the lives of the person / people being bullied, those doing the bullying and those looking on. Bullying incidents can be isolated or repeated.

Bullying takes many forms, all of which will cause distress. Examples of bullying include:

- * **Physical** hitting, pushing, tripping, kicking, spitting
- * **Verbal** teasing, using offensive names, ridiculing, spreading rumours
- * **Non - verbal** writing offensive notes or graffiti about others, rude gestures
- * **Exclusion** deliberately excluding others from group, refusing to sit next to someone
- * **Extortion** threatening to take someone's possessions, food, money
- * **Property** stealing, hiding, damaging or destroying property
- * **Cyber** bullying involving technology

THE POSSIBLE IMPACT ON OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Although the effects of bullying may be most painful for the individual victim, bullying can also affect the entire school community. It is therefore necessary for all members of the OLHC school community to work collaboratively to prevent bullying.

HOW DO WE PREVENT BULLYING AT OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS SCHOOL?

Ultimately, strategies to prevent bullying will only be effective when placed within the context of a culture in which respect for others is constantly taught and demonstrated across all facets of school life. The Christian values, which represent the antithesis of bullying, must be continually affirmed in words and actions.

"We are committed to:-

..... Nurturing a welcoming and inclusive community

.....Fostering the confidence and self esteem of each student

.....Teaching students to make responsible choices

.....Valuing the rights of others and respecting difference"

*Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Primary School
Mission / Vision Statement*

Strategies to prevent bullying will fall within the following broad categories:

- 'moral education' in the context of Religious Education, liturgies and assemblies where the value of the individual is affirmed and the importance of qualities such as compassion, kindness, reconciliation, tolerance, respect and justice are encouraged
- 'across the curriculum' values teaching (eg discussing characters in novel, their relationships, imbalance of power etc)
- teaching specifically related to bullying in the PDHPE curriculum (eg Interpersonal Relationships, roles and responsibilities, peers, families etc)
- clear, consistent statements from staff to children about the nature and unacceptability of bullying (supported by School and Class Code of Conduct)
- teaching more positive ways of resolving conflict, such as working cooperatively, sorting out disagreements etc (Social skills programs, affirmative action, conflict resolution etc See appendix)
- staff and students as role models, particularly those in leadership roles such as Year 6 Buddies, school captains, colour house captains etc
- appropriate provision of outside counselling and / or school based social skills development
- provision of support for parents through information seminars, support networks etc

*Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Primary School, Epping
Developed 2003*

To be reviewed at the commencement of each school year

HOW DO WE RESPOND TO BULLYING AT OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS SCHOOL?

Bullying is viewed as a breach of the school's Code of Conduct. Any report of Bullying will be investigated and appropriate action will be taken. The response to bullying will provide:

- guidance and other support for the victim
- appropriate and consistent sanctions and support for the bully

Our Lady Help of Christians seeks to promote a culture in which **staff** will:

- take initial steps to protect the victim
- report any suspected incidents of bullying to the class teacher of both the victim and the bully
- record incidents in the Class Code of Conduct Book
- report all incidents of bullying and bully-type behaviour to the Assistant Principal / Principal

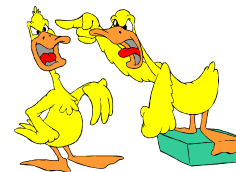
Our Lady Help of Christians seeks to promote a culture in which **students** will be encouraged to:

- take some positive action to stop the bullying if they observe an incident
- report the bullying incident to a teacher as soon as possible
- make it clear to their peers that bullying is not accepted
- D.O.B – Don't Obey Bullies

All students at Our Lady Help of Christians who are experiencing bully-type behaviour will be encouraged to:

- initially ignore the bullying and not show that it is upsetting. Many bullies will stop if they do not elicit a response.
- confront the bully and let them know that bullying behaviour is unwanted and unjustified.
- discuss the problem with friends; tell their class teacher and parents
- if the bullying behaviour continues, continue to tell; tell another teacher, report the incidents to the Assistant Principal or Principal

If someone is giving you a hard time, you should:-



First, try to

- **ignore them**

If they continue

- **tell them to stop, tell them how you feel**

If they still continue, you can

- **walk away**

It is important if they continue ...

- **tell the teacher**

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

Parents play a key role in the support of both the victims and the perpetrators of bullying. The school must work in partnership with parents to ensure the safety and well being of students.

Parents can assist in the following ways:

- let your child know that bullying in any form is never acceptable
- listen to your child and take their fears and feelings seriously and let them know that being bullied is not their fault
- if the bullying is verbal, help your child develop skills to ignore it so that the bully does not get the satisfaction of a reaction. Practice quick (not insulting) responses – eg “that’s your opinion’, ‘tell someone who cares’ etc
- ensure the school is aware of the problem – inform your child’s class teacher, the Assistant Principal / Principal of the situation / incident
- avoid the urge to take everything into your own hands
- help your child feel good about other things in their life. Feed their self esteem
- when it is clear that it is your own child who is demonstrating bully – type behaviour, recognise the seriousness of the issue and support the school in implementing this policy.

PROCEDURES TO DEAL WITH BULLYING

All cases of bullying or suspected bullying will be investigated and followed through.

- The teacher who was informed of the bullying incident will notify the class teachers of both the victim and the bully.
- The bully-type behaviour will be recorded into the Code of Conduct Book and consequences set. eg “ 11th Feb - playground duty teacher, Miss B reported that Ann threatened to take Mary’s watch from her.” The Assistant Principal / Principal must be notified and sign the Code of Conduct Book. Decisions will be made as to the severity of the incident and whether the parents of both parties need to be informed.
- At an appropriate time, the children involved will be guided through a session / or series of social skills sessions where
 - the specific nature of the bullying and its effect on the victim are clearly stated
 - strategies to assist both the victim and the bully will be discussed
 - a clear statement of the consequences if bullying continues, will be negotiated and recorded (including informing parents)
- Together, the class teacher and Assistant Principal / Principal will continue to follow up / ‘check in’ with both parties involved
- If a student continues to engage in bullying behaviour, they will be interviewed in the presence of their parents by the Assistant Principal / Principal and the class teacher. Direct consequences will be negotiated – including development of a plan of action to manage student behaviour, conflict resolution, anger management etc
- The victim of the bullying may need further support to develop strategies to overcome the situation. The class teacher will seek to involve parents in the formulation of this plan.
- When action plans have been implemented, all those engaged in their development will continue to monitor and formally follow up at regular intervals.
- Any further recurrence of bullying may result in an issue of a warning re suspension and could lead to the implementation of suspension procedures, and if necessary the removal of the student from the school through:
 - suspension negotiated transfer

- negotiated transfer
- expulsion

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE PROVISION OF A SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

At Our Lady Help of Christians Primary School we follow the guidelines set down for Safe Schools in Australian schools.

Therefore we:

1. affirm the right of all school community members to feel safe at school
2. promote care, respect and cooperation, and value diversity
3. implement policies, programs and processes to nurture a safe and supportive school environment
4. recognise that quality leadership is an essential element that underpins the creation of a safe and supportive school environment
5. develop and implement policies and programs through processes that engage the whole school community
6. ensure that roles and responsibilities of all members of the school community in promoting a safe and supportive environment are explicit, clearly understood and disseminated
7. recognise the critical importance of pre-service and ongoing professional development in creating a safe and supportive school environment
8. have a responsibility to provide opportunities for students to learn through the formal curriculum the knowledge, skills and dispositions needed for positive relationships
9. focus on policies that are proactive and oriented towards prevention and intervention
10. regularly monitor and evaluate their policies and programs so that evidence-based practice supports decisions and improvements
11. take action to protect children from all forms of abuse and neglect

National Safe Schools Framework, January, 2003

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed annually with staff at the beginning of each school year and communicated regularly to the community through newsletters.