



DEALING WITH BULLYING, HARASSMENT, AGGRESSION AND VIOLENCE (STUDENT)

Rationale:

The Dignity of the human person is a fundamental Catholic social teaching. It reminds us that every human being is created in the image and likeness of God and therefore, has inherent dignity.

The aim of this policy is to reflect this teaching and clearly define what constitutes bullying behaviour. Through this policy, Chisholm Catholic College attempts to raise awareness about bullying, promote a culture of anti-bullying and counteract incidents that may occur.

Definition:

Bullying is when, over a period of time, an individual or a group intentionally harm a person, who finds it hard to stop this behaviour from continuing.

Additionally, bullying can be characterised as: causing distress, not only at the time of the attack but also by the threat of future attacks; and, an imbalance of power (that is inappropriate and where there is an intention to hurt).

Its nature may be:

- verbal - name-calling, put-downs, threats (spoken, written, electronic or cyber which may also apply to the following points)
- physical - hitting, tripping, punching, throwing objects, stealing
- social – ignoring, hiding, ostracising
- psychological – stalking, threatening looks, spreading rumours, damaging possessions

Harassment is any unwanted, unwelcome or uninvited behaviour which makes a person feel humiliated, intimidated or offended. Harassment can be seen as one form of bullying.

Bullying and harassment are often thought of separately, however, both involve a more powerful person or group oppressing a less powerful person or group, often on the grounds of 'difference'. These differences can be related to culture, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, sexual orientation, ability or disability, religion, body size and physical appearance, personality, age, marital status, parenting status or economic status. (Bullying. No Way! website cited in the National Safe Schools Framework, 2003).

Unlike bullying and harassment, violence is not necessarily associated with an imbalance of power. It can occur between people of equal power. It implies extreme forcefulness, usually (but not always) of a physical kind. (Rigby, cited in the NSSF, 2003).

Chisholm Catholic College does not tolerate any form of bullying or harassment, either physical, verbal, psychological / indirect or social.

Procedures:

At Chisholm Catholic College, the following procedures are adopted to deal with reported incidents of bullying or harassment:

- in the first instance, the problem behaviour is handled as a social interaction problem, rather than as a discipline issue. The aim is to establish the underlying cause(s) of the problem

behaviour

- when an incident of bullying is brought to the attention of any staff member, the Head of Year is informed and the student is directed to report to the Head of Year and/or the Counsellor
- the Head of Year and/or Counsellor work with the student on an agreed process to deal with the harassment incident
- the Head of Year and/or the Counsellor contacts the alleged initiator of the bullying and works with them according to the 'Method of Shared Concern', or 'No Blame Approach', to bring about an understanding of the situation, and to determine strategies to remedy the situation
- parents (and teachers where appropriate) of students involved, are to be informed by the Head of Year or Counsellor and encouraged to take an active role in addressing the situation
- the Counsellor also works with the student being bullied to build self-esteem, assertiveness and resilience strategies, should these be areas of concern or contributing to vulnerability
- through follow-up meetings with all parties, the Head of Year and/or Counsellor monitors the situation to ensure that the problem is being resolved
- should there be no improvement in the situation, or should the same student be involved in a pattern of bullying, the Head of Year will implement the College Discipline Policy. The matter then becomes a breach of Enrolment Policy, parents are notified and appropriate penalties imposed.

The following additional strategies are used at Chisholm Catholic College to raise awareness of what constitutes bullying and the consequences of such behaviour, both for the students being bullied and those who engage in bullying behaviour:

- student education - issues related to bullying behaviour, including bystander responsibilities, are included in the Religious Education and the Health Education programmes, is part of the Peer Support Programme and external providers are accessed where appropriate
- parent education – issues of bullying/cyberbullying are addressed through Parent Seminars, newsletters and external providers.
- supervision - staff carefully supervise activities to minimise opportunities for bullying
- confidential reporting - students are able to report instances of bullying confidentially via email or in person to the Heads of Year and Counsellors
- all staff at Chisholm Catholic College must be committed and proactive in identifying and addressing any acts of bullying or harassment.