St Joseph's Rochester
STUDENT BULLYING AND HARASSMENT PREVENTION POLICY

1. Vision

The vision for Catholic Education Sandhurst Limited (CES Limited) is to provide, in partnership with our families, stimulating, enriching, liberating and nurturing learning environments in each of the Catholic school communities within the Diocese. At the heart of this vision is our commitment to the ongoing duty of care that we have for the safety, wellbeing, and inclusion of all children and young people.

We believe:

- that the values of the Gospel are central to who we are, what we do, and how we act

- in leadership encompassing vision, innovation and empowerment.

2. Introduction

This school is a Sandhurst Catholic School which operates with the consent of the Bishop of Sandhurst and is owned and operated by Catholic Education Sandhurst Limited (CES Limited). This Policy forms part of the Duty of Care Framework which is available at www.sjrochester.catholic.edu.au .

3. Purpose

The dignity of the human person is inherent to the ministry of Catholic education and all members of the school community share the responsibility to teach, foster, promote and encourage positive student behaviour.

In Sandhurst Catholic School communities, there are also important expectations on each person to seek to maintain positive relationships with one another and to resolve conflict in a respectful and dignified manner. Bullying, in all forms, disregards the core values of our Catholic faith and is unacceptable.

All Sandhurst Catholic Schools have a shared responsibility for the pastoral care of their students. This policy outlines the framework used to develop the practices and procedures within each school to promote respectful relationships to prevent and address issues of student bullying and cyberbullying.

All students, their families and CES Limited staff have the right to a safe and supportive learning and work environment. There are specific provisions in law for this for each and every member of the school community.

Teaching staff in Sandhurst Catholic Schools have a duty of care for the safety and wellbeing of students while they are at school or involved in school activities. They need to foresee possible harms that may arise and take reasonable preventative measures. A safe environment for students is one where the risk of harm is minimized and students feel safe. This harm relates not only to the dangers in the built environment, but also to violence, physical threats, verbal abuse, threatening gestures, sexual harassment and racial vilification.

Definitions

Bullying is defined as **an ongoing misuse of power in social relationships (by an individual or group) involving repeated** verbal, physical, or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm towards one or more persons. Conflicts or fights between equals and single incidents are generally not defined as bullying. Bullying can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.

Bullying can be obvious (**overt**) or hidden (**covert**) and can happen in person or online (cyberbullying).

Cyber-bullying is bullying, which is enabled, enhanced, or in some way transmitted through digital technologies. It may include:

- sending abusive texts or emails

- posting negative, inappropriate or private messages or images on social networking sites

- assuming the identity of a target online and representing them in a way that may be harmful to them or cause them distress

Cyber-bullying provides more opportunity for covert bullying as it is easier to act anonymously. Additionally, digital information can be:

- rapidly duplicated, distributed, and accessed

- stored in multiple locations (with varying levels of 'discoverability')

- created and communicated automatically

- leave a permanent record (e.g. photos posted on the internet)

Harassment – Harassment is behaviour that targets an individual or group due to their identity, race, culture or ethnic origin; religion; physical characteristics; gender; sexual orientation; ability or disability.

Scope

This policy applies to all students and staff in Sandhurst Catholic schools. It should be read in conjunction with other school policies including those for ICT Usage, Codes of Conduct, Student Behaviour Management and Pastoral Wellbeing.

The Bullying Prevention Policy and school guidelines apply to the behaviour of students either as individuals or collectively, during school hours or at school events. When a Sandhurst Catholic school becomes aware of serious out of school hours bullying and cyberbullying that is outside the scope of this policy, it will report the matter to parents, guardians and/or carers, the Victoria Police or other appropriate authorities, such as Internet service providers.

Principles

- bullying in any form is unacceptable behaviour at all Sandhurst Catholic schools

- each person is created in the image and likeness of God and the dignity of every member of the school community is respected

- Sandhurst Catholic school communities promote inclusivity and reflects a culture of hope, faith and belonging for students and their families

- wellbeing and learning are enabled in an environment that is safe, inclusive and respectful

- students have an authentic voice and are active agents in their learning and wellbeing

- all members of Sandhurst Catholic school communities take personal responsibility for actions and demonstrate respect for self and others by acting with honesty, courtesy and fairness

- a culture of collaboration and partnership is evident within and beyond the school

- effective record-keeping is a crucial and expected component of a school's response to the issue of bullying

- where appropriate, Sandhurst Catholic schools will collaborate with outside agencies on matters concerning bullying to the extent necessary and permitted by law to resolve the matter.

4.   Policy Statement

7.1   Bullying Prevention Measures

All Sandhurst Catholic schools ensure that there is ongoing education of students about respectful relationships and the issues associated with bullying, including cyber-bullying, and that students are regularly reminded of the school's anti-bullying procedures.

7.2   Bullying Intervention Strategies

Each Sandhurst Catholic school develops their own school bully prevention guidelines, plans, processes and procedures for implementing practices that build a safe and supportive learning environment that minimises bullying. Students must be regularly reminded of their rights and obligations to seek assistance from a trusted adult without delay if they become aware of, or are involved in, a bullying or cyber-bullying incident, and to follow the school's processes to ensure their safety and that of others.

7.3   Documenting Incidents of Bullying

Complaints concerning bullying must be responded to and investigated in a timely manner that respects the dignity and the privacy of those involved, whilst observing due process and procedural fairness. A time frame for responding to the complaint is to be given at the outset. This will be consistent with the CES Limited Complaints Management Framework for managing complaints and grievances. When assessing an appropriate response to potentially criminal acts, or alleged acts, Victoria Police advice may be sought.

7.4   Reporting Incidents of Bullying

Each Sandhurst Catholic school is required to have systems to ensure that the appropriate staff are aware of cases of significant bullying, so that students are supported.

7.5   Record-Keeping

Sandhurst Catholic schools are required to keep records of incidents of bullying and interventions systematically. These incidents will be communicated to relevant staff, maintaining confidentiality as appropriate. School incident data is regularly analysed to identify patterns, known bullies and trends.

5.   Appendices

Appendix 1:   School procedures

6.   External Resources

Bullying No Way   https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/

Kids Helpline   https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/bullying

Student Wellbeing Hub   https://studentwellbeinghub.edu.au/

eSafety Commissioner   https://www.esafety.gov.au/