ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

VALUES: Peace, Justice, Mutual Respect, Forgiveness, Understanding, Dignity, Self-esteem

PREAMBLE: As a Catholic School, we must stand by the calling of Jesus to love one another. Each of us at St Clare’s is recognised as a unique individual bringing special qualities and gifts to share and so we all have a right to be respected and a responsibility to respect each other.

POLICY: St Clare’s School does not tolerate bullying or any form of harassment, whether it be physical, verbal or cyber bullying. All members of St Clare’s community are committed to ensuring a safe and caring environment which promotes personal growth, fosters positive self esteem for all and recognises our goals as a learning community. This policy complements the school’s behaviour management policy and the procedures for dealing with incidents of bullying including cyber bullying will generally follow the same steps used the flowcharts found in the school’s behaviour management plan.

DEFINITION: What is bullying?
Bullying is a repeated pattern of wilful, conscious behaviour intended to hurt, threaten or embarrass an individual or group.
Bullying is characterised by an imbalance of power. It is not bullying when two students of equal strength (physical or psychological) are fighting or quarrelling.

Some examples of bullying include:

- Any form of physical violence such as hitting, pushing or spitting on others
- Interfering with another person’s property by stealing, hiding, damaging or destroying it
- Using offensive names, teasing or spreading rumours about others or their families
- Using ‘put-downs’, belittling others’ abilities and achievements
- Writing offensive notes or graffiti about others
- Making degrading comments about another’s culture, religious or social background
- Hurtfully excluding others from a group
- Ridiculing another person’s appearance
- Forcing others to act against their will.
tormenting, threatening, harassing, humiliating, embarrassing or otherwise targeting another student or staff member through the use of the internet, email, interactive or digital technologies or through the use of a mobile phone.

If we are bullied:
- We may feel frightened, unsafe, embarrassed, angry or unfairly treated
- Our work, sleep and ability to concentrate may suffer
- Our relationships with our family, teachers and friends may deteriorate
- We may feel confused and not know what to do about the problem.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
In St Clare’s School, every person has a right to feel safe. Any person who bullies another is denying them that right. The School will not tolerate any action that undermines a person’s right to feel safe, and it will take whatever steps are necessary to stop such behaviour.

This requires staff to:
- Be role models at all times
- Be observant for signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying
- Remove occasions for bullying by active supervision during yard duty
- Arrive at class on time
- Use a range of responses including the shared concern or no blame method and apply disciplinary consequences when necessary
- Report suspected incidents to the Principal and complete an incident report for the Incident File
- Inform parents using the Incident report sheets and liaise with them to support the child.
- ensure that adequate supervision of students is occurring when they are engaged in the use of digital technology

This requires students to:
- Refuse to be involved in any bullying situation
- Support students who are being bullied
- Actively discourage the bully from continuing the behaviour
- Report incidents of bullying to teachers in order to seek help.
- Not use mobile phones, cameras, ipods or other devices to record, transmit or use in a manner that is not authorised as part of the school curriculum program

Students who remain as observers while an act of bullying takes place become part of the process of bullying by their presence. Always seek help for others if you see them being bullied.

The School recommends that parents:
- Watch for signs of distress in your child, e.g. unwillingness to attend school, a pattern of illness, missing equipment, requests for extra money, damaged clothing or bruising.
- Take an active interest in your child’s social life and acquaintances.
- Advise your child to tell a teacher about any incidence of bullying. If possible, allow your child to report and deal with the situation. Your
child can gain respect and confidence through taking the initiative and dealing with the problem without direct parental involvement.

- Keep a written record (who, what, where, when and how).
- Encourage your child not to retaliate but to seek an alternative solution to the problem.
- Be willing to attend interviews if your child is involved in an incident of bullying and work co-operatively with the School.
- Be willing to inform the School of any cases of suspected bullying even if your child is not directly involved or affected.
- Do not try to deal directly with the other children or their parents but work through and with the School.

PROCEDURES AIMED AT PREVENTING INCIDENTS OF BULLYING

- Providing programs and support networks within the school that promote resilience, life skills and protective behaviours e.g. SEL program, Student Protection Week activities, counselling services
- Provide programs that promote the safe use of technology
- Class teachers to clarify at the start of each year the school policy on bullying
- regular monitoring of student’s activity on the school’s computer network
- have students sign an internet agreement each year
- have students complete a mobile phone agreement form prior to bringing a mobile phone to school
- not allowing other communication devices being brought to school apart from mobile phones

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH ALLEGED BULLYING ISSUES

Step 1
Report of bullying made to a teacher

Step 2
The students concerned will be spoken to separately and if appropriate, may meet together to resolve the issue. Parents may be informed at this stage. The student who is bullying may be dealt with as per the school’s behaviour management plan. Counselling may also be recommended for both the bully and the child being bullied.

Step 3
If the issues of bullying continue then the Principal will become involved. Parents will also be informed. The student who is bullying will be dealt with as per the steps in the school’s behaviour management plan. Consequences may involve: exclusion from class; exclusion from play; withdrawal of privileges; suspension; counselling from appropriate agencies; restriction of the use of school based technology.

Notes will be taken and kept on file at every stage of the process.