ANTI-BULLYING AND BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY

1.0   INTRODUCTION

This policy establishes the rights of all students to an environment free from fear, intimidation and harassment. All students have the right to feel safe and comfortable at school and to be treated with understanding and respect by others.

The prevention of and responses to bullying, inappropriate use of technology and disrespectful behaviour are more readily achieved through a whole school approach, focusing on creating and maintaining caring and supportive environments and a culture that promotes positive relationships and reflects Catholic Social Teaching. Bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, aggression and violence can adversely affect the wellbeing of our students and are therefore unacceptable.

2.0   PURPOSE

This policy:

2.1   Encourages a culture that is firm about the unacceptable nature of bullying.

2.2   Articulates how bullying is defined and addressed; including the means taken to prevent incidents and the response taken when bullying occurs.

2.3   Supports the school's Mission and Vision Statements and guidelines of Catholic Education in the Diocese of Sale.

2.4   Actively promotes respect and positive relationships to prevent bullying.

3.0   PRINCIPLES

3.1   Every person has the right to be treated respectfully and feel safe from any form of verbal, physical and emotional bullying.

3.2   The school is committed to building and nurturing a community that values diversity.

3.3   Parents are the prime educators of their children.

3.4   Complainant(s) will be protected from victimisation.

3.5   Communication is respectful and human dignity is valued.

3.6   A whole school approach is adopted to prevent and address bullying.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

4.1 **Bullying:** is repeated unreasonable behaviour directed towards a person, causing fear, distress or harm that involves an imbalance of power. It creates a risk to the mental and physical health and safety of others. It occurs when an individual or a group deliberately upsets or hurts another person, their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion.

4.2 **Cyberbullying:** the ongoing abuse of power to threaten or harm another person using technology. Cyber bullying can occur in chat rooms, on social networking sites, through emails or on mobile phones and includes abusive texts and emails, hurtful messages, images or videos, imitating others, excluding others, humiliating others, spreading nasty gossip and chat, and creating fake accounts to trick someone or humiliate them.

4.3 **Direct bullying:** behaviour that hurts, harms, or humiliates and is overt, obvious, and apparent to anyone witnessing it. The actions and words are easy to identify, the identity of the person bullying is usually known, and the acts are focused toward the person being bullied – they know about the bullying as it is happening.

4.4 **Exclusion bullying:** deliberately and continuously being left out of activities.

4.5 **Extortion bullying:** physically stronger and more powerful students may bully other students into giving up their possessions, buying food and drink, or taking part in rule breaking activities.

4.6 **Gesture bullying:** non-verbal signals used to silence and intimidate a victim.

4.7 **Indirect bullying:** behaviour that hurts, harms, or humiliates, which is often covert, subtle, and not always immediately acknowledged as bullying. The words and actions can be harder to identify, can be done anonymously and discreetly, and the target might not find out about the bullying until long after it has happened.

4.8 **Physical bullying:** pushing, shoving, fighting, pinching, damaging, stealing or hiding personal belongings and any other unwelcome physical contact used intentionally to intimidate or hurt someone.

4.9 **Psychological bullying:** words or actions are used to cause psychological harm. Examples of psychological bullying include name calling, teasing or making fun of someone because of their actions, appearance, physical characteristics or cultural background.

4.10 **Harassment:** when a person is treated less favourably on the basis of certain protected attributes, such as race, religion, sex, age, disability, medical conditions, sexuality, gender identity or intersex status. Treating a person less favourably can include harassing or bullying a person.

4.11 **Sexual harassment:** touching, sexually orientated jokes, drawings of, or writing about someone's body, using rude names or commenting about someone's morals, unwanted invitations of a sexual nature, continuously asking questions about someone's private life.

4.12 **Verbal bullying:** put downs, particularly those referring to physical characteristics, can result in loss of self-esteem. Racial discrimination or any kind of discrimination based on age, sex, gender, disability, belief or culture is a form of bullying.

4.13 **Visual bullying:** offensive notes or material, graffiti, or damaging other people's possessions.

4.14   **What Bullying is Not:** many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying, even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management. There are three socially unpleasant situations that are often confused with bullying:

    4.14.1   **Mutual conflict:** In mutual conflict situations, there is an argument or disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Unresolved mutual conflict sometimes develops into a bullying situation, with one person becoming targeted repeatedly for 'retaliation' in a one-sided way.

    4.14.2   **Social rejection or dislike:** Social rejection is bullying when someone feels alone or left out because of the manipulation of their peer relationships and social status. It is not bullying when, say, people make new friends and distance themselves from old friends. That old friend may feel as though they are being "socially excluded" but if there is no aggressive intention to cause harm, they are not being bullied.

    4.14.3   **Single-episode acts:** Single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If a student is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion, they are not being bullied. Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different students is not the same as bullying.

5.0   PROCEDURES

All members of our school community must be aware of the possibility of bullying and take action to prevent bullying if it is reasonably foreseeable.

5.1   **Responsibilities: The school will:**

- Use the Whole School Approach to Positive Behaviour Support (WSAPBS) – Universals to create a positive culture where bullying is not tolerated.

- Continuously reinforce and act on their School Wide Expectations and consistently apply consequences.

- Document the response to any instance of bullying.

- Use the documented processes, procedures and templates within the Catholic Education Office Whole School Approach to Positive Behaviour Support, Intensive document.

- Expect and encourage students, staff, parents (and carers) to report bullying and cyber-bullying to the class teacher, a member of the leadership team or directly to the principal.

- Notify parents and carers when their child has been involved in bullying.

- Principal to notify the Manager: Learning and Teaching, Catholic Education Office Diocese of Sale of any serious bullying incident.

- Report to police when a serious criminal offence has been identified. This is the principal's responsibility, however, where mandated to do so, teachers will notify the principal and leadership team AND report to DHHS or the police as appropriate.

- Teachers are to contact the principal immediately when conduct such as stalking, destruction of property, threats to inflict serious injury and /or kill, physical and sexual assault, offensive behaviour, discrimination, cyber stalking, defamation, breach of privacy, hacking, sexting and creating or possessing and /or disseminating of child pornography are brought to their attention.

- In our school, the WSAPBS Intensive team leader will coordinate strategies for managing bullying behaviour, investigate and record complaints of bullying in a manner that respects the dignity and privacy of all involved. (Appendix).

- The WSAPBS Intensive team and leader will, as appropriate, review records at regular intervals to ensure any emerging patterns of behaviour are managed.

- Bullying prevention strategies are implemented within the school on a continuous basis with a focus on teaching age-appropriate content, skills and strategies to empower staff, students and parents/carers to recognise issues and respond appropriately.

- Information is regularly provided to parents/carers to raise awareness of bullying as a school community issue.

- Utilise evidence-based responses and actions that focus on restoring and rebuilding positive relationships in instances where bullying has occurred.

- Provide a copy of this policy on the school's public website.

5.2 **Responsibilities: Staff**

Staff are aware that the Duty of Care of staff with bullying and related matters may in certain circumstances extend past the school hours of instruction. Staff still have an obligation to immediately notify a member of the school leadership team.

Staff will:

- Continue to work through and enact their Whole School Approach to Positive Behaviour Support – Universals, focusing on building safe, relationship-based environments catering to individual needs.

- Build respectful working relationships that respond effectively and sensitively to the needs of each student.

- Treat all members of the school community with dignity and respect.

- Model appropriate behaviour at all times.

- Deal with all reported and observed incidents of bullying in accordance with this policy.

- Ensure that any incident of bullying that they observe is reported, recorded and managed appropriately.

- Actively supervise all students and in particular monitor those students who have been identified as either persistent bullies or victims.

- Acknowledge the right of parents/carers to speak with school authorities if they believe their child is being bullied.

- Implement anti-bullying procedures by responding promptly and appropriately to reported incidents of bullying.

- Immediately notify a member of the leadership team and, in cases of serious bullying, notify the principal when unacceptable behaviour is perceived to adversely impact on the wellbeing of a student.

- Have in place measures to explicitly teach the Victorian Curriculum Capabilities.

- Inform parents/carers of school's procedures in relation to bullying and who to contact if they know of any bullying incident .

6.0 EXPECTED OUTCOMES

6.1 All instances of bullying will be responded to and managed in an appropriate and timely manner.

6.2 All parties involved in bullying are supported and assisted to learn from the experience.

6.3 The school and parents work in partnership in responding to incidents of bullying.

6.4 All community members have an understanding of bullying and its prevention.

6.5 Students, teachers and families are aware of appropriate and respectful strategies to take to effectively manage bullying in the school.

6.6 The response to complaints or reports of bullying will be sensitive, fair and prompt.

6.7 The school promptly resolves complaints of perceived or actual incidents of bullying.

7.0 APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Bullying Record Keeping Tool

8.0 REFERENCES

Diocese of Sale Catholic Education Limited (2019). *Whole School Approach to Positive Behaviour Support: Intensive*. Warragul: Diocese of Sale Catholic Education Limited.

Diocese of Sale Catholic Education Limited (2020). *Whole School Approach to Positive Behaviour Support: Universals*. Warragul: Diocese of Sale Catholic Education Limited.

9.0 RELATED POLICIES

Acceptable Use of ICT Policy

Behaviour Management Policy

Child Protection Policy

Child Safety Code of Conduct

Cyber Safety Policy

Pastoral Care Policy

10.0 REVIEW

Implementation Date: May 2020

Review Date: May 2022