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Catholic Education
Diocese of Parramatta

Student Anti-Bullying

1. Definitions

1.1. Bullying refers to the repeated verbal, psychological, physical or social behaviour that is harmful, and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. It includes cyberbullying (See Section 3 for further information about defining bullying).

1.2. CEDP refers to Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta, both schools and the central office.

2. Context

2.1. CEDP is committed to developing an educational and organisational culture based on mutual trust and respect that assists people to recognise and develop their personal capabilities. This is based on the inherent dignity of the human person as the foundation of all Catholic social teaching and central to the ministry of Catholic education.

2.2. This procedure provides a framework for school communities to work together to prevent and address issues of student bullying, in order to build respectful relationships that respond effectively and sensitively to the needs of each person.

2.3. Essential to this is the creation and maintenance of a respectful, safe and supportive learning environment that promotes student wellbeing and enables school communities to engage a diverse range of learners in an inclusive manner.

2.4. A caring and supportive school culture that promotes positive relationships and reflects Gospel teachings is a core aspect in the prevention of and response to incidents of bullying, including cyberbullying. Bullying and cyberbullying disregard core values of the Catholic faith including dignity, respect, justice, equity, compassion, trust and courage. Bullying can adversely affect the wellbeing of students and is unacceptable.

3. What is bullying?

3.1. Bullying is repeated verbal, psychological, physical or social behaviour that is harmful, and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons.

3.2. Bullying can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and all forms of harassment including that based on sex, race, disability, sexual orientation or practice of religion. Bullying of any form, or for any reason, can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.

3.3. Bullying can happen anywhere: at school, travelling to and from school, in sporting teams, between neighbours, or in the workplace.

3.4. Bullying behaviour can be:

3.4.1. verbal, e.g. repeated name calling, teasing, abuse, putdowns, sarcasm, insults, threats

3.4.2. physical, e.g. repeated hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting

3.4.3. social, e.g. repeated ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating, making inappropriate gestures

3.4.4. psychological, e.g. repeated spreading rumours, hostile looks, hiding or damaging possessions, malicious SMS and email messages, inappropriate use of camera phones, negatively targeting a person or group via social media.

3.5. The term bullying also includes cyberbullying, which is bullying that takes place using the ICT mediums such as, but not restricted to, social media platforms – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc., email, mobile phones, camera phones.

3.6. Conflict or fights between equals and single incidents are not defined as bullying. Bullying behaviour is not:

3.6.1. children not getting along well

3.6.2. a situation of mutual conflict (e.g., disagreements)

3.6.3. single episodes of nastiness or random acts of aggression or intimidation.

3.7. This definition is based on the NSW Public Schools Website.

4. Pastoral care and student management policies

4.1. School prevention of and response to bullying must be part of a holistic school based pastoral care and student management policy, developed collaboratively with the school community. Bullying is one negative behaviour that the school based policy will address.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1. The principal is responsible for:

5.1.1. ensuring that the school has appropriate policies, training and procedures in place to create and maintain a safe and supportive school environment

5.1.2. ensuring the regular review of these policies. School based policies must include prevention strategies as well as processes in response to bullying allegations

5.1.3. providing annual opportunities for staff to be trained to recognise and respond effectively to bullying including the schools behaviour management framework, either as part of a staff meeting or professional development seminar or day.

5.1.4. providing opportunities for students to learn about positive behaviour including problem solving and conflict resolution, bullying and the school process for responding to bullying.

5.1.5. ensuring parents/carers receive regular advice about CEDP and school based anti-bullying and pastoral care policies.

5.1.6. maintaining partnerships with parents and carers in the prevention and appropriate response to bullying behaviours.

5.1.7. responding in a timely way to allegations of bullying, following this CEDP procedure, other relevant CEDP procedures and school based policies and procedures.

5.1.8. ensuring that consequences for bullying include opportunities for students to learn more appropriate social skills.

5.2. Teachers are responsible for:

5.2.1. notifying the principal or other senior staff as per the school process of allegations of bullying and ensure that bullying behaviour is addressed according to the school policy and procedures

5.2.2. familiarising themselves with CEDP and school based policies and procedures for preventing and responding to bullying

5.2.3. promoting positive behaviours with students

5.2.4. ensuring that students have the opportunity to learn appropriate social skills and responsible behaviours through explicit teaching of these behaviours.

5.3. Parents are responsible for:

5.3.1. notifying a teacher if they think their or another child is experiencing bullying

5.3.2. modelling positive social behaviour and relationships in interactions with the school community, including in interactions with teachers, other parents and students

5.3.3. working collaboratively with the school to promote positive relationships and appropriate behaviour

5.3.4. familiarising themselves with the school's behaviour management plans and anti-bullying policy and assisting their child(ren) in understanding bullying behaviour

5.3.5. working collaboratively with the school to resolve bullying when it occurs.

5.4. Students are responsible for:

5.4.1. following school policies and procedures when responding to bullying

5.4.2. Notifying a teacher if they witness or experience bullying

5.4.3. implementing strategies teachers have suggested when responding to bullying.

6. Prevention

6.1. School based anti-bullying policies and procedures must include prevention strategies. These strategies should include teaching students:

6.1.1. what bullying is and what it is not (see appendix 1 for resources that can be used by schools)

6.1.2. how to manage a situation where a student feels they are either experiencing or witnessing bullying

6.1.3. the impact of bullying

6.1.4. the school processes and procedures for responding to bullying and what happens when bullying is reported

6.1.5. positive behaviours and social skills.

6.2. Schools should also ensure that positive behaviours and appropriate social skills are visibly promoted throughout the school community, within the school behaviour management framework.

7. Responses to bullying

7.1. Principals must ensure there are clear processes and procedures in place that outlines a response to a notification or allegation of bullying. This process should include staff roles and responsibilities in relation to bullying, including who leads the investigation, response, monitoring and follow up in relation to bullying allegations.

7.2. School responses to bullying must be consistent and aligned to the pastoral care and behaviour management framework of the school.

7.3. For the purpose of this procedure, the term nominated staff refers to any staff member who has been authorised to investigate or respond to bullying allegations by the principal and is documented as such in the school based policy and/or procedure. This may be the principal, assistant principal, learning leader or year leader dependent on the situation.

7.4. The school based policy and procedure should specify that procedural fairness must be followed and the timeframe in which a bullying allegation is addressed and responded to.

7.5. The school based process which may include the following steps:

7.5.1. receive notification from child, teacher, parent or carer that bullying has occurred

7.5.2. nominated staff member ensures the notification is documented

7.5.3. nominated staff member assesses/investigates the situation to determine if the notification does relate to bullying, and if so, assesses the severity and the frequency of the bullying. This assessment will determine the response

7.5.4. nominated staff member puts in place consequences and response for the student(s) involved. Consequences should ensure that the student(s) is taught more positive and appropriate social skills and behaviours. This should be part of an ongoing support or management plan for the student(s)

7.5.5. nominated staff member assesses who else needs to be notified of the bullying (for example, other staff members or parents or carers). This notification should be documented

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7.5.6. nominated staff member provides appropriate and ongoing support to the students involved. This may include counselling or ongoing engagement with a particular teacher. The scope of this support will be dependent on the situation

7.5.7. nominated staff member monitors the situation and follows up with all parties, including witnesses. This monitoring and follow up must be documented.

8. Documentation

8.1. Principals and nominated staff must ensure that appropriate documentation of notifications of and responses to bullying are maintained in a central register in accordance with the school's student management framework.

8.2. The school based policy and procedure will determine the specific nature of this documentation, however at a minimum this documentation should include the following information:

8.2.1. names of students involved in the bullying, including witnesses and the staff member originally notified of the bullying

8.2.2. date(s), location(s) and time(s) of specific bullying incidents

8.2.3. number and frequency of bullying

8.2.4. if and when parents were notified

8.2.5. summary of the response to the bullying, including details of an intervention plan for all students involved and how this is to be monitored.

9. Off school premises and out-of-school hours incidents

9.1. Where the school becomes aware of out-of-school hours bullying and cyberbullying that is outside the scope of this procedure, it should report the matter to parents/carers, the police or other appropriate authority (such as the Internet Service Provider).

10. Unlawful acts

10.1. If an act committed by a student is unlawful or presents a serious danger to other school community members, principals should notify the police.

10.2. Principals should refer to the CEDP Weapons Procedure when responding to any incident that includes a student, staff member or parent bringing a weapon onto the school site or to any school event.

11. Procedural fairness

11.1. Schools will ensure that procedural fairness applies in dealing with any incidents of bullying.

11.2. Principals need to ensure that they and their staff follow the CEDP Procedural Fairness Guidelines when responding to and investigating allegations of bullying. This should be reflected in the school based policy and procedures.

12. Relevant Legislation

12.1. *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977* (NSW)

12.2. *Education Act 1990* (NSW)

12.3. *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth)

12.4. *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (Cth)

12.5. *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth)

12.6. *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (NSW)

13. Related Documentation

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