



BULLYING PREVENTION

Policy

“You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbour as yourself: I am the Lord.” Leviticus 19:18

1. INTRODUCTION

At Our Lady of Sion College the dignity of the human person is the foundation of all Catholic social teaching and is intrinsic to our education ministry. Consequently, the principle that the person is made in the image and likeness of God is central to the mission of our school.

The prevention of and responses to incidents of bullying, inappropriate use of technology and disrespectful behaviour are more readily achieved in a caring and supportive school culture that promotes positive relationships and reflects Gospel values. Bullying, cyber-bullying, harassment, racism, aggression and violence are not tolerated or accepted in our school as they disregard core values of our faith, including dignity, respect, justice, equity, compassion, trust and courage.

2. PURPOSE

This policy promotes the prevention of bullying at Our Lady of Sion College and encourages school cultures that are explicit about unacceptable student behaviour and are responsive to all incidents of bullying.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Principal, all staff and volunteers (staff), students and school community regarding the prevention and response to incidents of bullying against students.

This policy includes bullying, abuse and harassment behaviours that are exhibited online. Cyberbullying can be an extension of in person (offline) bullying or can be isolated to the online world. Throughout this policy, the word ‘bullying’ encompasses the term cyberbullying as per the *Online Safety Act 2021* (Cth). Additional procedures and guidelines relevant to cyberbullying can be found in the Our Lady of Sion ICT Acceptable Usage Policy.

This policy applies to the school environment, including but not limited to the physical; the online; or virtual places, used during or outside school hours (as per the VRQA definition of school environment). In accordance with MO 1359, all forms of bullying, abuse and harassment of students in the school environment, on campus, online and in other locations (provided by the school) are considered relevant in this policy.

4. PRINCIPLES

This policy is founded in the beliefs that:

- every person has the right to be treated respectfully and feel safe from any form of verbal, physical and emotional abuse
- all members of the College community must be aware of the possibility of bullying and take action to prevent bullying if it is reasonably foreseeable.
- the College is committed to building and nurturing a community that values and respects diversity
- particular attention must be paid to vulnerable children, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds,



children with a disability, children who are unable to live at home, international students, and LGBTIQ+ students

- parents/carers play an important role in nurturing respectful behaviour the school community is involved in the actioning of school policies and procedures
- identification and reporting of unacceptable behaviour are essential to the effective implementation of this policy
- complainant(s) will be protected from further harm
- ICT systems are used ethically and responsibly in the school environment, and in a way that minimises the opportunity for students to be harmed
- all forms of communication are respectful and human dignity is valued
- regular monitoring of school policies and procedures is necessary, and improvements are made where appropriate.

5. POLICY

Our Lady of Sion College Principal, employees and volunteers share responsibility for child safety with a zero tolerance of child abuse and all forms of bullying.

All Staff have a duty of care to take reasonable steps to prevent students from foreseeable harm. This includes taking reasonable steps to prevent physical or psychological harm occurring because of bullying.

The College will implement school-wide approaches and measures to educate and inform the school community to help prevent and respond to all forms of bullying, including a specific focus on an eSafety approach to the safe and respectful use of ICT and communication systems.

All incidents perceived or actual, of bullying, harassment and cyberbullying will be recorded, and responded to sensitively, fairly and promptly. Records of all reporting are to be kept in a secure manner in accordance with Ministerial Order 1359 – Child Safe Standards, the relevant the College's record keeping and information management policies and Public Record Office Victoria Recordkeeping Standards.

The College has procedures in place that apply to when repeated incidents of bullying are reported and will work in partnership with parents/carers when responding to incidents of bullying.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 All staff will:

- respond to all reported incidents of bullying, perceived or actual, sensitively, fairly and promptly.
- treat all members of the school community with dignity and respect and build respectful relationships that respond effectively and sensitively to the needs of each student.
- work in partnership with parents/carers in responding to incidents of bullying.

6.2 Students at the College are expected to demonstrate respectful behaviour towards all members of the school community.

6.3 Parents/carers are expected to:

- demonstrate and model respectful behaviour towards all members of the school community as outlined in the Code of Belonging (Parents/Carers). Our Lady of Sion
- work in partnership with parents/carers in responding to incidents of bullying.



6.4 Roles, Responsibilities and Reporting

Role	Responsibility	Reporting requirement (if applicable)
Principal	Ensure all policies for the care, safety and welfare of students are publicly available	Annual attestation to the Executive Director
Principal	Retain all reports of incidents, perceived or actual, of bullying in the school in accordance with Child Safety and Wellbeing Recordkeeping Policy	

7. PROCEDURES

The College will follow the procedures related to bullying prevention and responding.

8. DEFINITIONS

Bullying

Repeated unreasonable behaviour directed towards a person that creates a risk to health and safety. 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. Bullying can be direct (physical or verbal) or indirect.

Forms of bullying include:

Cyber-bullying: The use of various forms of ICT systems to spread text and visual messages that threaten, intimidate, harass or humiliate a person or group of people.

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.

Gesture bullying: Non-verbal signals used to silence and intimidate a victim.

Indirect bullying: This form of bullying is harder to recognise and often carried out behind the bullied person's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Indirect bullying includes: lying and spreading rumours playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate, mimicking, encouraging others to socially exclude someone damaging someone's social reputation and social acceptance cyber-bullying, which involves the use of email, text messages or chat rooms to humiliate and distress someone

Physical bullying: Pushing, shoving, fighting, pinching and any other unwelcome physical contact used intentionally to intimidate or hurt someone.

Sexual bullying: 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, asking questions about someone's private life.

Social Bullying: Also called Relational, Emotional or Exclusion bullying, examples include deliberately excluding someone, spreading rumours, sharing information that will have a



harmful effect on the other person and/or damaging a person's social reputation or social acceptance.

Verbal bullying: Put downs, particularly those referring to physical characteristics, can result in loss of self-esteem. Racial discrimination of any kind is a form of bullying. Visual bullying: Offensive notes or material, graffiti, or damaging other people's possessions.

Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS)

The Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS), implemented by the Victorian Government is a scheme enabling information sharing between authorised organisations to promote a child's wellbeing or safety. All Victorian children and young people from 0 to 18 years of age are covered by the CISS.

Child safety

Child safety encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to suspicions, incidents, disclosures or allegations of child abuse (Ministerial Order No. 1359).

Communication systems

Email, video conferencing, instant messaging (public or private), electronic bulletins/noticeboards, electronic discussion/news groups, weblogs (blogs), social and professional networking (e.g., use of Facebook, TikTok, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Twitter, in accordance with age restrictions) and any other material (video / image, etc) sent electronically.

Discrimination

Occurs when a person is treated unfavourably compared to another person/s. It can be either direct (i.e., a person is treated unfavourably because they have an attribute protected by law such as age, race or religion) or indirect (i.e., when a condition, requirement or practice has the effect of disadvantaging people with a particular attribute protected by law and that condition, practice or requirement is not reasonable). It is irrelevant whether a person intends to discriminate against another person.

ICT systems

Systems of technology that includes a variety of hardware and software, learning and digital technologies including but not limited to computers, devices, internet and network services, local and web-based applications, peripheral or external devices such as printers or USB storage, telephones including mobile and VOIP, and all online services including social media and instant, direct or private messaging systems.

Harassment

Language or actions that are demeaning, offensive or intimidating to a person. It can take on many forms, including sexual harassment and disability harassment. While harassment may not always be considered bullying. It is inappropriate behaviour that is also not tolerated and must have consequences.



Record

A record is information in any format created, received and maintained as evidence of business activities and decisions. A record may be digital (such as an email, Word, Excel, PowerPoint or finalised and/or scanned PDF documents) or hardcopy (paper) format.

School environment

School environment means any of the following physical, online or virtual places, used during or outside school hours: a campus of the school; online or virtual school environments made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child or student (including email, intranet systems, software applications, collaboration tools, and online services); and other locations provided by the school or through a third-party provider for a child or student to use including, but not limited to, locations used for: camps; approved homestay accommodation; delivery of education and training such as registered training organisations, TAFEs, non-school senior secondary providers or another school; or sporting events, excursions, competitions or other events.

9. RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

9.1 Supporting documents

[Bullying Prevention Procedures](#)

9.2 Related policies

Complaints Handling Policy
Duty of Care Policy
Enrolment Policy
Pastoral Care of Students Policy
Student Behaviour Policy
ICT Acceptable Usage Policy
Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
Child Safety and wellbeing Recordkeeping Policy

9.3 Legislation and standards

Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.)
Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic.) (as amended)
Online Safety Act 2021 (Cth.)
Ministerial Order 1359 – Child Safe Standards

10. Bullying Prevention Policy Status and Review

STATUS OF POLICY	
College Leader Responsible	Deputy Principal Student Wellbeing
Approving Authority	College Leadership Team
Approval Date	July 2026
Date of next review	July 2028



Publication	Website; Staff Portal; Staff Handbook
--------------------	---------------------------------------

Record of Review

Details of Amendments	By Whom	Date
	Deputy Principal Student Wellbeing	July 2026