



St Patrick's College  
LAUNCESTON

# ANTI-BULLYING & HARASSMENT PROTOCOL: STUDENTS

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### PURPOSE

The mission of St Patrick's College is to provide an environment of learning, faith, respect and service for students, staff and families in the Catholic tradition. College staff, in partnership with parents, work together to provide for the growth of each individual student by building mutual respect and responsibility within a secure and supportive structure. This draws on fundamental Gospel values regarding the intrinsic worth and dignity of each person and is a living example of the command, "Love one another as I have loved you" (Jn 13:34).

At St Patrick's College, we are committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for all of our students. Bullying/Harassment has a negative impact on relationships and the learning environment. We do not accept bullying/harassment at the College and work actively to eliminate and reduce all types of bullying and harassment by educating, informing, and following up consistently on all occurrences of bullying or harassment which are witnessed or reported to us. We support current research findings that indicate that a consistent group response to bullying/harassment is required for effective intervention.

Each St Patrick's College community member is responsible for ensuring students feel safe, supported, and always valued. When individuals share healthy relationships with one another, personal growth is enhanced and aiming high for levels of achievement in all areas is encouraged.

This protocol is directed specifically towards students at the College, although it is important to acknowledge the broader scope and context for safe and respectful relationships for all members of the community within the rationale. The Tasmanian Catholic Education Office Code of Conduct and Complaints Management Policies provide further information and reference regarding instances of bullying and harassment for staff, parent/guardians, and families, and regarding concerns from staff to student or student to staff member.



## **PROTOCOL STATEMENT**

### **Guiding Principles**

At St Patrick's College, we are committed to:

- Providing a safe, secure learning environment for all.
- Raising awareness of the issues involved with bullying and harassment, providing information to students, staff, and parents.
- Supporting and empowering students to report, intervene and take appropriate measures.
- Helping young people become aware of the impact of their behaviour on others through personal accountability and being open to learning from conflict situations.
- Implementing procedures to address bullying/harassing behaviour so those involved develop respect for others.
- Providing appropriate action, follow up and support, with a focus on the processes of reconciliation and restorative practice, where appropriate.
- Working in partnership with parents/guardians, families, and the broader community to inform, educate and address the broader issues of bullying and harassment within society.

## **DEFINITIONS**

### **Bullying**

Bullying is an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more persons. Bullying can happen in person or online and can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Single incidents, conflicts or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.

### **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; marital, parenting or economic status; age; ability or disability and that offends, humiliates, intimidates or creates a hostile environment. Harassment may be an ongoing pattern of behaviour, or it may be a single act. It may be intentional or unintentional (i.e., words or actions that offend and distress one person may be genuinely regarded by the person doing them as minor or harmless).

St Patrick's College uses the national definition of bullying and harassment for Australian schools definition-sourced from the National Safe Schools Framework and can be found on the Department for Education, Children and Young People website - <https://www.decyp.tas.gov.au/parents-carers/parent-fact-sheets/staying-safe/>

## **RESTORATIVE PRACTICES**

### **Restorative**

To give back; to repair the harm and rebuild; to reintegrate the person(s) who did the harm; restore a sense of wellbeing and connection. Restorative Practices in schools encourage the reparation of relationships, and promote resilience and reconciliation, allowing young people to learn from conflict situations, repair relationships and take personal responsibility for their actions. The use of Restorative Practice emphasises responsibility, accountability, and the opportunity to restore relationships, learn from experiences and develop empathy and compassion among adolescents.

Please note: In cases where the situation is complicated, extremely sensitive or involves sexual harassment or repeated ongoing severe cases of bullying, Restorative Practice may not be suitable.

## **TYPES OF BULLYING/HARASSMENT**

### **Physical**

Involves any harmful actions against a person's body, including hitting, kicking, pushing, or choking. It also includes interference with another person's property, such as stealing or damaging. Physical harassment also relates to sexual harassment in the form of unwanted touching, making suggestive comments or gestures.

### **Verbal**

Involves speaking to or about a person in a way that shows disrespect e.g., using offensive or abusive names, teasing, spreading rumours, making hurtful comments and using putdowns. This includes the use of homophobic, racist and sexist language e.g. "That is so gay".

### **Cyber**

Involves the misuse of technology, such as social networking sites, email etc, to communicate aggressive, sexual, degrading or defamatory information about someone or to start rumours.

Refer to Catholic Education Tasmania – Cyberbullying Policy.

### **Psychological**

Includes behaviours that upset, exclude, or embarrass another person e.g., exclusion, rude gestures, unpleasant looks and silent treatment.

Signs which may indicate a student is being bullied or harassed:

- The student reports that they are being bullied/harassed.
- Change in attendance at the College.
- Change in achievement levels.
- Unexplained injuries.
- Change in sleeping or eating patterns.
- Withdrawal from activities/groups.
- Mood changes.
- Bullying/harassment is observed by others.

## **PROCEDURE**

### **College**

We strongly encourage all students to report any incidents of bullying or harassment they experience personally to a member of the College staff and/or parents/guardians. Students may wish to report to or discuss their concerns with any of the following people at the College:

- Class Teacher
- Tutor/ Home Group Teacher
- House Head or Head of Learning
- Head of School
- Director of Pastoral Care or Director of Curriculum
- Deputy Principal L&A or Deputy Principal W& L
- Principal

Retaliation against someone who reports bullying/harassment will be dealt with very seriously.

**Students** are expected to:

- Respect the rights of all community members and recognise and accept their differences.
- Report any incident, or suspected incident.
- Refuse to take part in any form of bullying or harassment.
- Support the targeted student if possible.
- Take some form of preventative action if appropriate.

**Staff** are expected to:

- Promote an ethos of respect for self and others.
- Model appropriate behaviour consistently.
- Be observant of signs of suspected bullying/harassment or distress.
- Take any allegations seriously and investigate any reports of bullying and harassment.
- Provide information to students about the types and nature of bullying and incorporate these principles into their learning program.
- Explicitly teach appropriate and positive behavioural rights and responsibilities.
- Inform and challenge students when their behaviour is offensive.
- Be receptive and supportive to targets of bullying/harassment.
- Be vigilant in supervision to reduce opportunities for bullying/harassment.
- Respond appropriately to suspected incidents and always report to the relevant College staff members.
- Recognise that bullying is often a complex issue and initiate further discussion with key College staff about ongoing strategies as required.
- Contribute to a process of ongoing monitoring, evaluation and review of policies and procedures.

**Parents/Guardians** are encouraged to:

- Promote an ethos of respect for self and others.
- Encourage their son/daughter to have the confidence to speak up/report concerns.
- Be aware of the College's protocol and support processes of reconciliation and restorative practice (where appropriate).
- Watch for signs of distress or suspected instances of bullying/harassment.
- Treat students' fears seriously and inform the College or encourage the student to talk to a member of staff.
- Support students emotionally by letting them know the situation is unacceptable (it is not a normal part of school life) and will change.
- Encourage students not to retaliate.

## **ACTIONS**

Students found to be bullying/harassing others face a range of interventions.

Interventions include:

- Formal interview with key staff.
- Recording of the incident on College Pastoral Care Management files.
- Parent/Guardian notification and involvement.
- Mediation and processes of reconciliation and restorative practice.
- Restitution for damage to property.
- Detention.
- Counselling and/or formal referrals.
- Suspension (for serious offences or persistent inappropriate behaviour).
- In cases of persistent and severe incidents of bullying and/or harassment, transfer to an alternative school or being asked to exit.