Anti-Bullying Policy

At St Augustine's Primary school the dignity of the human person is the foundation of all Catholic social teaching and 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 parish school. This policy identifies the interconnectedness of the characteristics of quality Catholic learning and teaching and is intended to value, respect and promote the self-esteem and dignity of each student. The school will actively promote anti-bullying messages alerting students and staff of the need to be vigilant.

Scope of the policy

It is essential that we create and maintain a respectful, safe and supportive learning environment that promotes student wellbeing and enables the school to engage a diverse range of learners including those with a disability.

This Anti-Bullying policy supports the school's Mission and Vision Statements and Catholic Education in the Diocese of Lismore, Foundational Beliefs and Practices-*The Essential Framework*.

The Diocesan approved poster resource is included in this policy, Nine Elements for a Parish School Approach to Wellbeing and is based on the National Safe Schools Framework. This poster helps to locate bullying issues within a wider pastoral care context.

This policy covers the bullying of students with disabilities. Disabled children and young people enrolled at St Augustine's Primary school need:
- To know they have the right to be safe from bullying. They need to know what bullying is, how to keep safe and what to do if adults do not do enough to stop the bullying
- To be involved in the development and review of school anti-bullying policies
- All children and young people need to know what to do to help stop a disabled child or disabled young person being bullied

At St Augustine's Primary school we expect that learning technologies are used ethically and responsibly in the school environment, so that communication is respectful and human dignity valued. The prevention of and responses to incidents of bullying, inappropriate use of technology and disrespectful behaviour is more readily achieved in a caring and supportive school culture that promotes positive relationships and reflects Gospel values. Bullying, cyber-bullying, harassment, aggression and violence disregard core values of our faith including dignity, respect, justice, equity, compassion, trust and courage. Importantly, such actions can adversely affect the wellbeing of our students and are therefore unacceptable.

All members of this school community are expected to prevent and challenge such actions in order to build respectful relationships that respond effectively and sensitively to the needs of each student.

Context

At St Augustine's Primary school we define bullying as:

A pattern of repeated physical, verbal, psychological or social aggression that is directed towards a specific student by someone with more power and is intended to cause harm, distress and/or create fear. Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term physical and psychological effects on those involved, including bystanders.

Bullying may be carried out overtly (e.g. face – to – face) or covertly (e.g. through repeated social exclusion or via technology). It is a sub-category of aggression and is different to, but also related to, harassment and violence. It is not the same as conflict or social dislike even though, in some cases, the outcome of both can be bullying.

The different types of bullying identified by the National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF) include:

Face-to-face bullying (sometimes referred to as direct bullying) involves physical actions such as punching or kicking or overt verbal actions such as name–calling and insulting.

Covert bullying (sometimes referred to as indirect bullying) is a subtle type of non-physical bullying which isn't easily seen by others and is conducted out of sight, and often unacknowledged by adults.

Cyber-bullying occurs through the use of information or communication technologies such as Instant Messaging, text messages, email and social networking sites. Cyber-bullying involves the use of any information and communication technology involving deliberate, isolated or repeatedly hostile behaviour by an individual or group, that is intended to harm others or is undertaken recklessly, without concern for its impact on others. By virtue of its nature, technology facilitates repeated access to harmful content. It has many similarities with offline bullying but it differs in that the student(s) who is/are bullying can be anonymous, it can reach a wide audience and the sent or uploaded material can be difficult to remove.

Most students who cyber bully also bully off-line. It is now recognised that many forms of covert bullying appear to have significant potential for serious harm.

This definition refers to the use of digital technologies which are very much a part of life and learning, because they offer such a wide range of tools and platforms for social and educational engagement. However, the risks of the digital environment must be acknowledged and constantly addressed. Being cyber safe and acting ethically when using electronic communications is the responsibility of all members of this school community.

At St Augustine's Primary school a conflict between equals and single incidents are not defined as bullying although, of course, such incidents will require intervention by the school and are treated as serious.

Duty of Care at St Augustine's Primary School

Staff at this school must be aware of the possibility of bullying and take action to prevent bullying if it is reasonably foreseeable.

The school will take reasonable actions to develop plans and implement programs aimed at deterring bullying activities. At St Augustine's Primary school the following anti-bullying plans and programs are mandatory:
1. Bounce Back Anti-Bullying Program – Cohort RFF program (K-2)
2. Teaching as part of the PDHPE Curriculum (K-6)

Our Duty of Care means this Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures is disseminated as appropriate to members of the school community in both digital form on our web and in hard copy school policy documents.

If a serious criminal offence has been identified we will report this to the police. This is the principal's responsibility. 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 child pornography are brought to their attention. .

Teachers must be aware that in many instances, cyber-bullying can constitute criminal conduct, especially when the behaviour is seriously threatening, harassing or intimidating. Cyber bullying and highly inappropriate use of technology could include: child pornography, fraud, impersonation, or sending words or images that cause offence, distress, menace or threaten.

Our Duty of Care with bullying and related matters may in certain circumstances extend past the school hours of instruction. If unacceptable behaviour occurs that has a close nexus with the school or with the wellbeing of a child educated at the school but occurs outside school hours, off-site or through the use of a student's personal mobile devices and/or computer, we may still have an obligation to respond.

Therefore at St Augustine's Primary school if staff become aware of such a circumstance they are obliged to bring the matter to the attention of the principal.

At St Augustine's Primary school we

- Use an Anti-Bullying Response Pathway when we become aware of incidents. The Pathway assists with a regulated and thorough response. (Appendix A)

- Will implement an anti-Bullying Action Plan as part of the Response Pathway. (Appendix B)

- Will keep a written record of any bullying investigation. (Appendix C sample)

- Want students, staff and parent/carers to report bullying and cyber-bullying to the class teacher or directly to the principal.

- Will investigate complaints of bullying and cyber-bullying in a manner that respects the dignity and privacy of those involved.

- Will appoint a nominated person to co-ordinate strategies for the resolution of specific bullying incidents reported in this school.

- Will notify parent/carers of bullying incidents involving your children.

- Will notify the Police Youth Liaison Officer if the bullying situation has involved violence, threat of harm or alleged criminal conduct.

- Will maintain records of bullying incidents and related interventions in accordance with the Catholic Schools Office Compliance manual. At our school this written record is maintained by St Augustine's Primary School. As a staff we will review the record at regular intervals to see if any patterns are emerging.

- Will survey students at least once a year on various matters and include questions about bullying, cyber bullying, safety and wellbeing.

- Will regularly review and evaluate this anti-bullying policy and the responsible use of technology procedures to ensure they are working effectively.

- Will involve parents in this review through communication at Parent Forum and Parents and Friends Association meetings.
- Will purchase Anti-Bullying resources and support material for students, staff and parents and ensure easy access to this material for all staff, parents and students.

Responsibilities: Staff

Staff at St Augustine's Primary school aim to treat all members of the school community with dignity and respect and:

- Implement the student anti-bullying and responsible use of technology procedures by responding promptly and appropriately to reported incidents of bullying.
- Support the student anti-bullying and responsible use of technology procedures through positive modelling and the promotion of appropriate behaviour.
- Access professional learning to support appropriate anti-bullying responses which could include cyber safety, restorative justice practices, mediation and developing social skills in students. Such opportunities are made available to staff on the same basis as other professional learning.
- Support all aspects of related school policies.
- Remain vigilant in how students are using technology.
- Embed critical thinking, values clarification, respectful relationships and developing empathy into our teaching practice.
- Respond to bullying and cyber-bullying concerns by providing age appropriate guidance and boundaries so that students can learn to self-regulate.

Responsibilities: Students

Students have responsibilities as well. The staff at St Augustine's Primary school will encourage and support students to:

- Follow the anti-bullying and responsible use of technology procedures. Assist students from Years 5 to 12 to understand what their signature means on use of technology documents.
- Immediately seek help from a trusted adult if they are aware of or involved in a bullying or cyber-bullying incident.
- Seek support if bullied and refrain from retaliating in any bullying incident.
- Understand that any social networking site that identifies the school by name or image or implication is part of the school environment.
- In age appropriate circumstances the student should keep evidence of alleged bullying and produce it on request (for example phone text messages).

Responsibilities: Parent/Carers

Parent/carers have responsibilities as well. At St Augustine's Primary school we will:

- Ensure parents understand the School Enrolment Application Form inclusions on anti-bullying by discussing this in relevant parent forums.

- Request that parents notify the school promptly of all bullying situations involving their children.

- Remind parents about the need to reinforce the school messages in the proper use of technology to help children grow into ethical and responsible digital citizens.

- Encourage parents to report serious matters of out-of-school hours bullying and cyber-bullying to the Police or other appropriate authority (such as the Internet Service Provider) and, as relevant, to the school.

- Ask parents to contact the school immediately through the class teacher or directly through the principal if they know of any bullying incident.