



# STUDENT ANTI-BULLYING

Policy, Resources and Implementation Guidelines



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE DIOCESE OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE



DIOCESE OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE  
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

# STUDENT ANTI BULLYING

## Documents and Resources

JUNE 2012



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# Anti-Bullying Policy for Students

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JUNE 2012

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|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Document Number</b>      | PO-DO2012.4  |
| <b>Responsible Officer</b>  | Assistant Directors of Schools   |
| <b>Effective Date</b>       | 1 May 2012   |
| <b>School Actions</b>       | <b>School Policy</b> – Each school is to develop its own policy consistent with and aligned to the principles and practices outlined in the systemic policy.   |
| <b>Review Date</b>          | September 2015   |
| <b>Associated Documents</b> | Privacy Policy (2002)<br>Censorship Policy (2005)<br>Critical Incident Management Policy (1999)<br>Pastoral Care Policy (2003) Addressing Harassment & Bullying in the Workplace (2010)<br>Workplace Internet, Email and Network Usage Policy (2010) |

# STUDENT ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

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## 1. PREAMBLE

Catholic schools have the responsibility to promote cultures of trust, cooperation and respect in the lived experience of the Catholic Christian setting. Bullying in a school mitigates such a culture and inhibits the development of positive relational outcomes for the common good of students, teachers and caregivers.

It is the goal of every Catholic School to promote a safe environment where individuals may grow and develop. Well articulated, understood and implemented policies and procedures facilitate such a goal and minimise the risk of inappropriate behaviours becoming accepted, tolerated or even endemic.

*".....(Catholic) schools will have as their goal the formation of Christian disciples, with appropriate world view, character and behaviour."* (Catholic Schools at the Crossroads , p14)

The modelling of positive behaviours and anti bullying strategies in schools has become an important aspect of student learning and parent reporting. There have been recent court precedents that have brought to light the dangers to students and schools in relation to bullying. What is clear for schools, as an outcome of the research and recent court judgements, is the critical issue for careful and well documented implementation of school policy. It is also necessary for students to be involved in the evaluation of processes, for regular policy review and dialogue at staff level and for easy policy access for parents and the community.

*"We now know that students' social and emotional learning facilitates their academic learning (Zins, Weissberg, Wang & Walberg, 2004) and that a student's level of social competence and their friendship networks are predictive of academic achievement (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Pastorelli, Bandura & Zimbardo, 2000). The goals of anti bullying initiatives also align with the teaching in schools of socio-moral values such as respect, support/care, cooperation, acceptance or difference and inclusion (McGrath & Noble, 2003). In summary, there are significant moral, social, emotional and educational advantages to addressing bullying problems in schools."* (McGrath and Noble 2006 -from Bullying Solutions- Evidence-based approaches to bullying in Australian schools p.xvii)

## 2. DEFINITIONS

Whilst there is no definitive and universally accepted definition of bullying, the most influential research in the area of what constitutes bullying has been proposed by Olweus (1993):

*"...bullying may be defined as a student being exposed, repeatedly and over time, to intentional injury or discomfort inflicted by one or more other students. This may include physical contact, verbal assault, making obscene gestures or facial expressions, and intentionally excluding the student."*

The *National Safe Schools Framework* (2011) defines bullying as repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons.

*"...Bullying is thus conceived largely in behavioural terms, that is, it involves negative actions on the part of the perpetrator."* [Rigby (2006) from Bullying Solutions p.4]

It is important to note that cyber bullying has become a significant area of concern and action in recent years. Cyberbullying may be defined as:

*"..... any form of bullying that utilises technology such as instant messaging, online chat rooms, online bulletin boards and email. In many ways this is a more insidious form of bullying since it may reach into a victim's home." In other words, technology now allows the bully to inflict psychological harm on his or her victim anywhere and any time without respite. (Schools and the Law - Des Butler and Ben Matthews p.46)*

The Commonwealth Code sets as an offence the use of a carriage service (such as a mobile or internet) in a way that is menacing, harassing or offensive. The maximum penalty for committing the offence is 3 years imprisonment.

'Sexting' is an occurrence that may be considered bullying. Under present legislation perpetrators place themselves in the serious position of making, viewing and or sending inappropriate and unlawful material.

Conflict or fights between students or single incidents are not usually defined as bullying.

### 3. RATIONALE

The role of the Catholic school, in partnership with parents and caregivers, is to nurture young people by providing optimum levels of support in learning, positive interpersonal relationship experiences and social support networks. The culture and atmosphere of the school plays a significant role in students developing a balanced approach to life and learning. With this in mind Bullying behaviour is in conflict with the core values and purpose of a Catholic school. Bullying needs to be recognised, named and addressed to ensure all schools work towards an authentic Christian school culture.

*".....the school must be concerned with constant and careful attention to cultivating in students the intellectual, creative, and aesthetic faculties of the human person; to develop in them the ability to make correct use of their judgement, will, and effectivity; to promote in them a set of values; to encourage just attitudes and prudent behaviour; to introduce them to the cultural patrimony handed down from previous generations; to prepare them for professional life, and to encourage the friendly interchange among students of diverse cultures and backgrounds that will lead to mutual understanding. For all these reasons, the school enters into the specific mission of the Church." (Lay Catholics in Schools: Witness to Faith p.110)*

### 4. AIMS

This policy aims to:

- 4.1. Provide clear directions for schools to formulate an Anti bullying school policy
- 4.2. Assist schools in the prevention, reduction and response to bullying behaviour (including cyber bullying)
- 4.3. Promote a proactive attitude to and clear understanding of school processes when addressing allegations of bullying
- 4.4. Facilitate a consistent approach to the management of school record keeping processes in relation to bullying investigations
- 4.5. Ensure the right of students and staff to expect a school that is actively promoting a school environment free from the fear of bullying, harassment, intimidation and victimisation.

### 5. IMPLEMENTATION

- 5.1. Each Diocesan school will develop its own Anti bullying policy.
- 5.2. The implementation section of the policy will include:

#### **5.2.1 Preventative programs:**

- a. programs and strategies to promote positive behaviours and prevent bullying within the school (including programs to be used)



- b. early intervention strategies when given notice of an enrolment of a student who has been identified as having been bullied or having engaged in bullying behaviour in a previous school
- c. a list of resources available in the school to support the process of restoring justice

#### **5.2.2 Reporting and record keeping:**

- a. procedures for the reporting of incidents by students, parents and staff (including documentation and how these procedures will be communicated within the school community) – see Support Document 5 (Alleged Bullying: Initial Action tool, exemplars of possible letters to parents of victims/perpetrators)
- b. school based record keeping and record sharing procedures (what and where records are kept, who signs off)

#### **5.2.3 Investigations:**

- a. specify the expected timeline for an investigation process and those who would normally be interviewed
- b. procedural steps that set out the process to be followed as a consequence of bullying allegations (including those to be involved in the investigation, investigator proformas to be completed, see support document 3.)
- c. the victim – it is important that appropriate support measures are documented and put into place for an alleged victim especially where heightened fear and concern is evident
- d. the perpetrator – it is important an alleged perpetrator has a complete understanding regarding what behaviours and communications must not occur

#### **5.2.4 Possible Disciplinary measures:**

- a. A statement identifying the possible disciplinary steps that may be taken as an outcome of bullying

#### **5.2.5 Police intervention**

- a. situations when police intervention is required in cases of bullying (e.g.possession of weapon, extreme assault) and cyberbullying (e.g.sexting) – see Support Document 4. Advice for Principals
- b. the school based processes to be used in relation to police interviews at school
- c. Contact information for the School Liaison Police and other support services available (future BOS School Registration requirement)

#### **5.2.6 Post investigation support services:**

- a. those programs, counselling services/external agency to be used to support any student affected
- b. provide easy access of the school's complaints and appeals procedures (brochure) that apply to bullying matters
- c. Outline any follow-up /monitoring process of students

#### **5.2.7 Communication of Policy/procedures:**

- a. Explain the process for ongoing teacher awareness training in relation to school anti bullying procedures (e.g. annually at initial staff, faculty meeting)

#### **5.2.8 Links to School Policy:**

- a. Strategies for dealing with bullying behaviour must be linked with school policy(s) that pertain to discipline and pastoral care of students. These should encompass a range of options available to deal with unacceptable behaviours, including exclusion, suspension and expulsion.

## 5.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

### 5.3.1 The Principal will:

- a. Develop a shared understanding with staff and community members of bullying behaviour that involves all forms of bullying including cyberbullying
- b. Ensure the development, implementation and evaluation of preventative strategies and programs to promote student safety and wellbeing
- c. Provide support to any student who has been affected by, engaged in or witnessed bullying behaviour
- d. Be responsible for the implementation of the school's anti bullying policy and procedures
- e. Initiate police support (Police liaison officers) and or intervention when required
- f. Provide regular updates to parents or caregivers regarding the management of specific incidents
- g. Ensure that an annual communication of the contents of the policy be made to the school community
- h. Maintain an ongoing and annual evaluation process of the policy with students, staff and caregivers
- i. Monitor student understanding and satisfaction of school processes
- j. Identify patterns of bullying behaviour and initiate school action to address them
- k. Engage students in the evaluation of anti bullying processes within the school

### 5.3.2 School staff will:

- a. Respond to a student's call for assistance, after his/her reporting of inappropriate behaviours in relation to all forms of bullying. This includes the use of technology (e.g. text messaging or social networking site usage). Failure to take action may indicate a breach in the duty of care owed to the student (see Support Document 3)
- b. Seek advice from their supervisor(s) if they require confirmation or clarification regarding an incident of alleged bullying behaviour
- c. Maintain an up to date knowledge of school policies relating to bullying behaviour

### 5.3.3 Students will:

- a. Promote positive relationships that respect and accept individual difference and diversity
- b. Follow the school procedures in reporting and responding to bullying behaviour
- c. Work collaboratively with staff and peers to resolve incidents of bullying
- d. Have an awareness and understanding of what constitutes bullying while being charged with the responsibility of being respectful of one another
- e. Participate in the annual evaluation of school anti bullying processes and procedures

## 6. BUDGET

- 6.1 The Catholic Schools Office will make provision each year in its annual budget for professional development opportunities for schools in this area
- 6.2 The school will budget for anti bullying resources that develop ongoing understanding and ownership of programs

## 7. EVALUATION

- 7.1 The school will annually revisit the procedures explicit within the Anti bullying policy and evaluate their currency
- 7.2 As part of the school Policy review and development cycle, the Anti bullying Policy will be reviewed by staff/committee at regular interval

# Checklist for your School's Anti-Bullying Policy

| Does your anti-bullying policy include?  | YES/NO |
|--|--------|
| <p>1. An overarching statement (preamble) regarding the nature and purpose of your school and the priority given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the dignity of all human persons</li> <li>the care and safety of each member of the school community</li> <li>the need for a whole school and consistent approach to anti-bullying strategies that are owned by the school community</li> <li>a collaborative approach to formulation and ongoing review of anti-bullying policy</li> <li>a strategic commitment from the school community, guided by school leaders, to address anti-bullying <i>(some of these may also be incorporated into the aims of the policy)</i></li> </ul>  |        |
| <p>2. Definitions of bullying and cyberbullying</p>  |        |
| <p>3. Identification of what bullying is and what it is not (giving examples where appropriate)</p>  |        |
| <p>4. The Lucas Model for policy development has been used</p>   |        |
| <p>5. The Implementation section provides the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>preventative programs to be used (including strategies that will be taken by the school when notified of a new student identified as having engaged in bullying behaviour by his/her previous school)</li> <li>procedures for how the school will deal with (investigate) bullying incidents (e.g. flowchart of bullying assessment and teacher action procedure)</li> <li>a description of how the school will collate reliable data of incidences of bullying (process of record-keeping)</li> <li>a system where anti-bullying procedures and timelines are widely disseminated to appropriate stakeholders of the school community</li> <li>procedures for keeping safe members of the school community who report bullying incidents</li> <li>a statement referring to the consequences for students who ignore school rules</li> <li>an outline of how the school will support all students involved in the incident e.g. counselling, restorative practices, social skills development</li> <li>contact information for the School Liaison Police and other support services available to the school community</li> <li>outline of any ongoing follow-up and/or monitoring of students</li> <li>a strategy for the support of staff professional learning</li> <li>a statement of how the community including parents and students are involved in the development, implementation and regular review of the school's anti-bullying policy e.g. surveys, parents and friends meetings, student council initiatives</li> </ul> |        |
| <p>6. Responsibilities of school leaders, teachers, students</p>   |        |

# Flowcharts and Procedures

## Bullying Assessment and Action Flowchart

### Interview all students involved in the incident.

- What happened? How did it start? Did you tell him/her to stop? Is there anything you did that might have contributed to this happening?
- Where clarification is required by the school the CSO/Police Liaison Officer should be contacted.

#### Was this possibly a crime?

Was there physical contact or injury, use of a weapon, serious threat of injury, stalking, sexting, loss of property or damage to property?

Yes

#### Contact the police

Let them investigate and decide whether a crime has occurred.

#### Notify parents

Generally speaking, let parents of the targeted student know that you have contacted the police. Where appropriate make contact with the parents of the perpetrator.

#### Was there aggression?

Physical aggression such as hitting, shoving or threatening injury; verbal aggression such as teasing or name-calling; social aggression such as spreading rumours and shunning; psychological aggression such as inappropriate texting, sexting.

No

#### Not bullying

Consider disciplinary/RJ action from school student welfare/pastoral care/discipline procedures.

Yes

#### Was there dominance?

Was the aggressor stronger or dominant over the other? Was one side out numbered?

No

#### Not bullying

Consider disciplinary/RJ action from school student welfare/pastoral care/discipline procedures.

Yes

#### Was there persistence?

Was there more than one incident or did the aggressor fail to stop when asked?

No

#### Not bullying

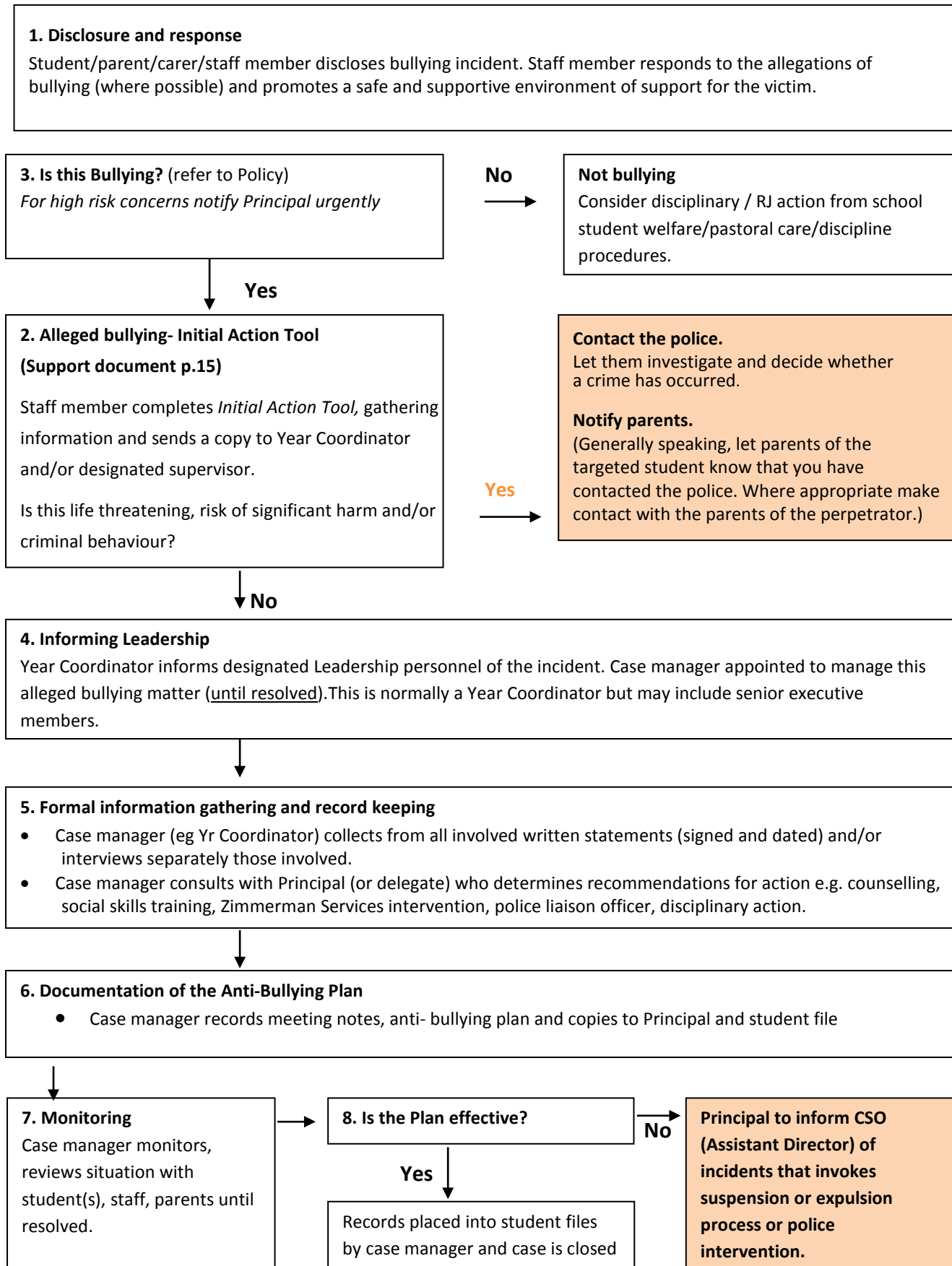
Would be bullying if behaviour continues. At this point, consider disciplinary/RJ action from school student welfare/pastoral care/discipline procedures.

Yes

### Respond to bullying

1. Provide appropriate support structures for alleged victim.
2. Discipline aggressor for bullying, based on the seriousness and persistence of the behaviour using procedures from school policy.
3. Educate and counsel all students, including bystanders, about bullying.
4. Encourage the aggressor to apologise and state their intention to desist from the unwanted behaviour.
5. Ask all students, 'What could you do that would keep this from happening again?'
6. Ask all students, 'Would you let me know if anything like this happens again?'
7. Monitor and follow up to make sure that bullying does not recur.
8. Liaise regularly with Police Liaison Officer.

# Anti-Bullying procedures for Staff- flowchart



## Procedures for Students

These procedures are to be reinforced by the school (school leaders, teachers, classroom/playground posters).

*If you feel you are a victim of bullying:*

1. Tell a teacher or another adult at school that you trust.

2. Tell your family.

3. Take a friend with you if you are worried to tell someone by yourself.

4. Keep telling people until someone listens.

5. Don't blame yourself for what has happened.



# Alleged Bullying – Initial Action Tool

Bullying is a serious offence and is not acceptable in our school. All school employees are required to report alleged violations and every act of bullying will be duly investigated, and parents/carers informed.

**School:** .....

**Teacher investigating incident:** .....

**Name/homeroom of student:** .....

**Date/time of incident:** .....

**Where did the incident occur?** .....

**Please circle:**

|                  |               |              |                |       |
|------------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|-------|
| On bus transport | In playground | In classroom | Outside school | Other |
|------------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|-------|

**Who reported the alleged incident?**

**Please circle:**

|                   |                  |              |                 |                               |       |
|-------------------|------------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|-------|
| Alleged victim(s) | Other student(s) | Parent/Carer | Member of staff | Wider school community member | Other |
|-------------------|------------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|-------|

**Identify the nature of the alleged bullying incident:**

**Please circle:**

|  |
|--|
| <b>Written</b><br>e.g. graffiti, notes, letters, writing on books, written threats, ridicule through drawings, etc.  |
| <b>Social</b><br>e.g. lying, spreading rumours, playing a nasty joke, mimicking and deliberate exclusion, etc.   |
| <b>Verbal</b><br>e.g. name-calling, insults, threats, severe sarcasm, abusive comments, racist remarks, etc.   |
| <b>Physical</b><br>e.g. pushing, shoving, fighting, tripping, hitting, poking, spitting, etc.  |
| <b>Cyber</b><br>e.g. using technology such as email, mobile phones, chat rooms, social networking sites, etc. to verbally, socially or psychologically bully |
| <b>Psychological bullying</b><br>e.g. intimidation, manipulation and stalking  |
| <b>Damage to property</b><br>e.g. theft of bags, clothes, money, property, tearing clothes, ripping books, etc.  |
| <b>Bystander</b><br>Encouraging others to bully or witnessing bullying without taking affirmative action.  |
| <b>Briefly outline what occurred in the alleged incident:</b>  |

**Is there concern the alleged incident may have been influenced by any of the following?**

**Please circle:**

|              |            |        |                       |       |
|--------------|------------|--------|-----------------------|-------|
| Race/culture | Disability | Gender | Socio-economic status | Other |
|--------------|------------|--------|-----------------------|-------|

**Is there evidence of an imbalance of power in this incident through either:**

**Please circle:**

|                  |     |               |          |      |       |
|------------------|-----|---------------|----------|------|-------|
| Academic ability | Age | Social status | Strength | Size | Other |
|------------------|-----|---------------|----------|------|-------|

**Is there evidence that this behaviour is deliberate or planned?**

**According to the alleged victim has he/she experienced other or repeated incidences of bullying from the alleged perpetrator? (If yes, please give dates, who was involved, outcomes.)**

**Is there any relevant background/history to this alleged incident?**

**Were there any witnesses? (Identify student names and homerooms)**

**What do the witnesses to the alleged incident perceive happened?**

**What effect is the situation having on the alleged victim's wellbeing including self-esteem, feelings about school, motivation, relationships with peers, physical health, etc?**

**What is required to resolve this situation now and in the future?**

**Indicate the investigative procedures carried out.**

**Please circle:**

|                                 |                                  |   |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Interviewed student(s) involved | Interviewed parents of victim(s) | Interviewed parents of alleged perpetrator(s) |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|

**After investigation, was the allegation of bullying substantiated?**

Yes      /      No

If **'No'**, please sign below and place a copy of this bullying Situation Analysis Tool into student(s) file and refer to school's Behaviour Management Policy.

If **'Yes'**, please sign below, place copy of this Bullying Situation Analysis Tool into student(s) file and refer incident to the Year Co-ordinator or Principal.

**Signed** ..... **Date:** .....

# Sample Parent Notification Templates

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## Exemplar letter to parents of perpetrator(s) of a bullying incident

Dear (Name)

On *(insert date)* a disclosure was made to the school alleging that *(insert name)* has taken part in a bullying incident.

Careful investigation of this disclosure has confirmed that unfortunately, *(insert name)* has been involved in a bullying incident.

I would like to inform you of the following action taken, according to the school's Anti-Bullying Plan:

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I am hopeful that *(insert name)* will not take part in any further incidents of this nature.

Please do not hesitate to call me if you wish to discuss this matter further.

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely,

Principal

✂ ----- *(return this section)*

I acknowledge receipt of this letter and support the school in its actions to address bullying.

Name ..... Signature .....

Date .....

**Please return to .....** **by .....**

## Exemplar letter to parents of victim(s) of a bullying incident

Dear (Name)

On *(insert date)* a disclosure was made to the school that *(insert name)* has been involved in a bullying incident.

Careful investigation of this disclosure has confirmed that unfortunately, *(insert name)* has been involved in a bullying incident.

I would like to inform you of the following action taken, according to the school's Anti-Bullying Plan:

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If at a later date you become aware of any incidents of this nature occurring again, I would ask you to alert the school so that further action can be taken.

Please do not hesitate to call me if you wish to discuss this matter further.

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely,

Principal

✂ ----- *(return this section)*

I acknowledge receipt of this letter and support the school in its actions to address bullying.

Name ..... Signature .....

Date .....

**Please return to .....** **by .....**

# Evidence-Based Strategies and Programs

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There is consistent evidence from evaluations conducted in many countries that bullying behaviour between children in schools can be reduced significantly by well-planned intervention programs that are evidence-based. The following evidence-based programs are examples of leading practice in anti-bullying and cybersafety.

## e-Smart

The initiative was developed by the Alannah and Madeline Foundation, and is a cybersafety and wellbeing framework for primary and secondary schools promoting the smart, safe and responsible use of information and communication technologies. It provides links to relevant resources through an online portal, support for schools in implementing the framework, and an online system for tracking and reporting on progress through the framework. Schools that satisfy the requirements are acknowledged as eSmart schools.

The Commonwealth Government provided \$3 million to pilot with 159 schools and evaluate nationally a comprehensive whole-school and community approach to the issue. The pilot clearly demonstrated the ability of the eSmart system to achieve its objectives as well as receiving enthusiastic support from participating schools. It also recommended eSmart schools as an effective and sustainable mechanism for implementing and satisfying most of the requirements of the National Safe Schools Framework.

eSmart is available to Australian schools for \$3,500 (+GST) per school (per campus) over four years. This can be paid in four annual instalments of \$875 (+GST).

## Friendly Schools Plus and Strong Schools Plus

This is a new, evidence-based resource for primary and secondary schools designed by the Australian Child Health Promotion Research Centre (CHPRC) and STEPS Professional Development. The program aims to build social skills and significantly reduce bullying in school communities.

Available from May 2012, Friendly Schools Plus and Strong Schools Plus draws on 12 years of extensive and rigorous research into best practice, and includes evidence from four more major research studies, including ways to address cyberbullying, conducted by the CHPRC. The resources comprise over 75% new material, presented in a blended online and print environment. Friendly Schools Plus and Strong Schools Plus provide schools with the strategies and resources to achieve the vision and all nine elements of the newly revised National Safe Schools Framework.

The resources include:

1. **'Map the Gap'**: a quick online screening tool to help schools identify what they are doing well and what they need to build on to enhance their current social skills and bullying prevention initiatives.
2. **'Get Informed'**: a comprehensive book titled *Evidence for Action* that describes 'research-based practice' approaches which schools can implement to maximise and sustain effective social skill building and bullying prevention strategies.
3. **'Plan to Act'**: an in-depth planning tool with targeted strategies to address areas of need identified in the Map the Gap screening tool.
4. **'Walk the Talk'**: K–9 classroom resources and a range of online toolkits to assist schools implement whole-school strategies.
5. **'Review the News'**: evaluation and reflection tools to monitor the effectiveness of your school's social skills and bullying prevention activities and to inform planning for the following years.

A professional development model will be available to help schools build their capacity to provide high

quality learning and support for teachers across the whole school to implement this resource.

## KidsMatter and Mindmatters

Kids Matter and Mindmatters have been informed by current evidence and expert opinion about the factors that influence children's mental health and wellbeing, with a particular focus on factors schools can influence, such as social and emotional learning for students.

## School-wide Positive Behaviours for Learning (SPB4L)

This is a framework that assists schools to develop a broad range of systemic and individualised strategies for achieving important social and learning outcomes while preventing a problem behaviour with students. SPB4L is a whole-school approach that uses data to decide on the development of strategies and practices to build a 'positive behaviour culture'.

A representative from each section of the staff body is a part of a planning team that develops preventative strategies such as school-wide procedures and routines that foster appropriate behaviour. The planning team also focuses on corrective strategies, putting systems and procedures in place to effectively manage inappropriate/disruptive behaviours. SPB4L focuses on the redesign of environments, not the redesign of individuals.

## Restorative Practices

Restorative practices can resolve bullying issues and restore the sense of wellbeing for all involved, especially if the Method of Shared Concern, the No Blame Approach and social problem-solving methods are used.

Restorative practices use the incident of misbehaviour as an educative opportunity for repairing the harm and fostering more socially responsible relationships and behaviours that take others' perspectives into account. This is achieved through carefully structured opportunities for individuals to understand the impact of their actions, recognise their social responsibilities and make amends to those who have been affected by their actions. The young person is also assisted to reintegrate successfully into the school community.

The most common form of restorative practice is **Community Conferencing**. Following are the key principles of these methods:

- Bullying and harassment occur in the context of group behaviour.
- The aim is to develop empathy and concern for others.
- The dynamics that sustain bullying and harassment can be shifted by working with the perpetrators, and often their family and/or peer group.
- A shift in behaviour can be achieved by developing a sense of shared concern for the bullied or harassed persons.
- Punitive measures model and reinforce the abuse of power to meet individual needs, place the target at greater risk of revenge and may send the bullying underground.

Restorative practices require these factors to be in place first:

- The support of the victimised person, who needs to have identified that he/she is being bullied and is confident that the approach advocated will work.
- Preliminary investigation to clearly understand the issues before the process is implemented.
- Staff guidelines and professional development to build understanding, skills and confidence in using the strategies.



- Support within the school community for the approach.
- Agreement that the goal is to solve the problem rather than to interrogate, punish, blame or label individuals.
- Respectful facilitation of the process by trained people.
- Follow-up monitoring of the agreement.

## No Blame Approach

The No Blame Approach provides teachers with a way of encouraging empathy and dealing with individual bullying or harassment behaviours. The teacher acts both as facilitator and intermediary between the parties.

The No Blame Approach sequence:

1. Meet the victimised person to provide support, explain the proposed process and collect material on the impact of the bullying or harassment.
2. Consult with teachers who know the peer group well to establish a balanced group consisting of the main perpetrator and supporters, friends of the victimised person, and two assertive peers who have not attempted to prevent the bullying or harassment.
3. Convene a structured meeting of this group (without the targeted student present) to develop shared responsibility without blaming, to elicit suggestions for solving the problem, to encourage shared action and to establish a subsequent meeting (possibly in a week) to discuss progress.
4. Support the victimised person through daily meetings to check progress.

## Method of Shared Concern

This method (developed by Pikas, 1989) enables the trained teacher or counsellor to establish shared concerns and encourage shared solutions to the problem. The method includes initial individual meetings with perpetrators as well as a final meeting of all parties.

The Method of Shared Concern sequence:

1. Gather preliminary information to understand the problem.
2. Meet each of the perpetrators individually to encourage acknowledgment of the situation and to develop constructive responses and a plan to change the behaviour.
3. Meet the person being bullied or harassed.
4. Meet perpetrators individually to review progress of their agreement.
5. Following positive signs of change, hold a meeting of all perpetrators to reinforce the changes made and prepare for the next meeting.
6. Hold a final combined meeting of all involved as a public demonstration that the behaviours have ceased.

Instead of 'bullying the bullies', both of these strategies establish shared concerns and shared solutions to reconcile differences and encourage more equitable behaviour.

## Formal Apology

The Formal Apology is a symbolic social contract that can mend relationships and restore personal wellbeing. As a learned negotiation process, it can help to develop empathy and show that the harmony of the group is more important than an individual's victory.

A successfully given and received apology involves:

- teaming and acknowledging that an accepted norm has been violated
- working out the appropriate time to make the apology
- naming the specific offence to the offended person
- explaining to the offended person why the offence was committed, that the behaviour isn't characteristic of the offender, and that it won't happen again
- communicating that the behaviour wasn't intended as a personal affront (and therefore the other person can feel safe in future)
- showing genuine regret for the behaviour.

As part of any of these restorative processes, individuals are likely to require assistance to develop understanding, skills, confidence and courage in giving genuine apologies.

**Reference:** *A Meta-Evaluation of Methods and Approaches to Reducing Bullying in Pre-Schools and Early Primary Schools in Australia.* Ken Rigby, 2002

## The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program

This is a research/evidence-based school-wide program designed to prevent or reduce bullying throughout the school setting. The multi-component approach involves individuals, classrooms, entire schools, as well as parents and communities, to successfully address bullying in schools. *The Complete No Bullying Program Curriculum* costs \$799.00.

## Positive Behaviour Support (otherwise known as Positive Behaviour for Learning)

The program helps schools to create positive learning environments by developing proactive whole-school systems to define, teach and support appropriate student behaviours.  
(for implementation support contact CSO Education Officer)

## You Can Do It! Education

The program builds the social, emotional and motivational capacity of young people rather than focusing on their problems and deficits. It informs the prevention, promotion and intervention efforts of schools to build the social and emotional strengths of young people.

## Quality of School Life Survey

The ACER School Life Survey (primary school version) consists of 40 statements about school to which students are asked to indicate their level of agreement on a four-point scale from agree to disagree. The items encompass a number of different aspects of school life and form seven clusters of scales. Those clusters of scales are:

- General satisfaction: reflects favourable feelings about school as a whole
- Negative affect: refers to negative feelings about school
- Achievement: reflects a sense of confidence in ones ability to be successful at school
- Opportunity: a belief in the relevance of schooling for the future
- Teachers: adequacy of the interaction between teachers and students
- Social interaction: a sense of learning about getting along with other people
- Adventure: A sense of self-motivation in learning and that learning is enjoyable for its own sake

# Court Precedents

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## ☀ **Cox v State of New South Wales [2007]**

Cox v State of NSW [2007] is the leading case on school responsibility for bullying children by their peers, with educational institutions and authorities owing a duty of care to students.

## ☀ **Oyston v St Patrick's College [2011]**

In *Oyston v St Patrick's College* [2011] NSWSC 269, the Court accepted that the school had policies in place to protect against bullying - but it failed to implement them.

The judgment of the Supreme Court on 14 April 2011 is the most recent pronouncement by a New South Wales Court that considers the duties upon a school to effectively respond to complaints about bullying.

\*This case raises two issues of particular interest to educational institutions. Firstly, the limits to which policies to address bullying can be relied upon and secondly the need to balance the duties and pastoral care obligations to those who are bullied, and those who bully.

## ☀ **Halkic v Gerada [2010] Cyberbullying (not school related)**

This landmark prosecution was in relation to cyberbullying in the Melbourne Magistrates Court. A 21yr old was charged and convicted under 'stalking laws' and placed on community service following events of cyberbullying a 17 year old who later committed suicide. Former Chief Justice Nicholson (present chair of the National Centre against Bullying) states: "There is a very strong argument that cyberbullying should be considered a specific offence."

# Useful Resources

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## Websites

### ☀ [cybersafetyforparents.mn.catholic.edu.au](http://cybersafetyforparents.mn.catholic.edu.au)

The purpose of the diocesan *Cybersafety for Parents* website is to bring together the huge variety of cybersafety resources into an easy to navigate, accessible site for parents. This site provides advice for parents to assist their children to stay safe on-line. It covers topics such as unwelcome websites, cyberbullying, strangers lurking on the internet and issues related to the use of mobile phones. Additional information around social networking, what to do when., and some important contact details are provided.

### ☀ [www.bullyingnoway.com.au](http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au)

The Bullying No Way website has been developed in collaboration with other government and non-government authorities from the Commonwealth, states and territories. It showcases strategies that have to be successful in increasing safety and reducing bullying and harassment in schools throughout Australia. NSW schools are featured on this site.

### ☀ [www.kidscape.org.uk/](http://www.kidscape.org.uk/)

Kidscape provides practical skills and resources to prevent bullying for children and young people under the age of 16.

### ☀ [www.cybersmart.gov.au/Schools.aspx](http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/Schools.aspx)

The Australian Communication and Media Authority (ACMA) site houses the Cybersmart School's Gateway, which provides a wide range of cybersafety information and teaching resources for primary and secondary schools. These accessible and engaging materials are designed to help schools develop and implement and an holistic approach to cybersafety.

### ☀ [www.bounceback.com.au](http://www.bounceback.com.au)

This website developed by Toni Noble and Helen McGrath supports children and adults to develop a stronger sense of wellbeing and to be more resilient, confident and successful. The site provides useful resources (books, projects, articles, workshops) for schools to include in their pastoral care pursuits.

### ☀ [www.deewr.gov.au/schoolingnationalsafeschools](http://www.deewr.gov.au/schoolingnationalsafeschools)

The National Safe Schools website gives links, within the program, to National Safe Schools Framework, Allannah and Madeline Foundation, What should I do if my child is being bullied?, state and territory anti-bullying policies, Keeping Safe and research in the area of bullying.

### ☀ [www.kenrigby.net](http://www.kenrigby.net)

Author/researcher Ken Rigby's site provides a plethora of information (books, articles, videos) in relation to 'bullying in schools and what to do about it'.

## Books

☀ ***Bullying Solutions: Evidence-based approaches to bullying in Australian schools.*** Edited by Helen McGrath and Toni Noble, Pearson Education Australia Pty Ltd, 2006.

☀ ***Schools, Courts and the Law: Managing student welfare.*** Douglas J. Stewart and Andrew E. Knott, Pearson Education Australia Pty Ltd, 2010.

☀ ***Schools and the Law.*** Des Butler and Ben Mathews, The Federation Press, 2007.

# Anti-Bullying Learning & Teaching Resource

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## The ALTER DVD

This DVD contains anti-bullying learning and teaching resources including video, video still images and supporting documents to be used in the primary and secondary schools. These include (section 6.) Syllabus Outcomes and suggested student learning experiences for stage 3 (Primary) and stages 4/5 (Secondary) students.

The Catholic Schools Office, Maitland-Newcastle Diocese thanks the Wollongong Diocese for permission to use this resource in M/N schools as part of our policy resource package.

# Appendices

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- *Education Law Today*, Issue 3, September 2011
- Cyberbullying – Where does a school's duty of care end?
- Alex Kohn – Makinson and d'Apice Lawyers
- Memorandum from Catholic Education Commission
- Advice for Principals on Exchanging Information Between NSW Schools and the NSW Police
- Anti-Bullying Policies: Action Requirements
- Resources for Cybersafety
- Advice for Principals – Police Notification

In future there may be a need for additional resources placed into this folder. The additional section will be used for these.