



# **HOLY SPIRIT SCHOOL**

## **ANTI-BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY AND ACTION PLAN**

### **VISION STATEMENT**

Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School is committed to the pursuit of Christian Truth and Excellence.

All members of the school community are encouraged to develop their potential and special qualities in an environment centred on Christ.

### **RATIONALE**

Holy Spirit School has a responsibility to provide an educational environment that promotes the dignity and respect of the person and therefore aims to eliminate bullying and harassment in all forms. Each member of the school community deserves the respect and consideration of all other members. Each student has a right to feel safe at school.

### **DEFINITIONS**

#### **Bullying is;**

- A repeated, unjustifiable behaviour
- May be physical, verbal, and/or psychological
- Intended to cause fear, distress or harm to another
- Conducted by a more powerful individual or group against a less powerful individual who is unable to effectively resist
- Includes gestures, extortion (handing over possessions), exclusion, slander, setting individuals up, racial or sexual harassment and passive bullying

## Types of bullying;

	Direct	Indirect
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hitting, slapping, punching</li><li>• Kicking</li><li>• Pushing, strangling</li><li>• Spitting, biting</li><li>• Pinching, scratching</li><li>• Throwing things</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Getting another person to harm someone</li></ul>
Non-Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mean and hurtful name calling</li><li>• Hurtful teasing</li><li>• Demanding money or possessions</li><li>• Forcing another to do homework or commit offences such as stealing</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Spreading nasty rumours</li><li>• Trying to get other students to not like someone</li></ul>
Non-Verbal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Threatening and / or obscene gestures</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Deliberate exclusion from a group or activity</li><li>• Removing and hiding and / or damaging others' belongings</li></ul>
Cyber / Electronic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Using the Internet, email, mobile phones or any other IT equipment to be mean, rude or unkind about other people</li></ul>	

## Bullying versus Conflict;

Bullying is different from other forms of aggression as it has the following unique characteristics;

- A power imbalance must be present
- The aggressive act is unprovoked by the victim or perceived as unjustified by others.
- The action is repeated between the same individuals.

## Is fighting bullying?

While fighting between two students of equal power is of a concern, it is not bullying. It is the presence of a power imbalance that distinguishes bullying from fighting, conflict, violence and disagreement. It is this imbalance that makes mistreatment of the victim possible.

## Is teasing bullying?

Teasing, done in mutual fun and jest, where all individuals are involved and feel capable of responding, is not bullying. However, teasing that is done in a mean and hurtful way, that involves a power imbalance whereby one individual feels powerless to respond or to stop what is happening is bullying.

## **How bystanders encourage bullying?**

- Standing around looking on
- Agreeing with mean comments
- Not supporting someone who is bullied
- Passing on mean, nasty notes, messages
- Passing on rumours
- Laughing at the bullying behaviour.
- Helping to hide the behaviour from adults

## **PRINCIPLES**

- Through our shared vision and whole school policy we are committed to addressing all incidents of bullying. At Holy Spirit School we aim to ensure that all students are valued and that engaging in “bullying behaviour” is unacceptable. Disregarding bullying behaviours or participating as a “bystander” is unacceptable. It is the responsibility of all community members to ensure the safety, security and respect for all individuals.
- The process (action plan) will target individuals engaging in bullying and any bystanders.
- At the classroom and playground level, teachers will endeavour to educate students about appropriate and acceptable behaviour.
- At the school community level, issues of bullying will be addressed with relevant students and staff and where necessary, the School Leadership Team.
- Resistance to behaviour change and repeated offending will require the school’s discipline procedures to be enforced. (See Behaviour Management Policy)

## **SCHOOL STRATEGIES TO REDUCE AND PREVENT BULLYING**

Our strategy has two aspects: prevention and management. Prevention strategies assist students to become resilient. The management strategy we apply is the Student Support and “Shared Concern” approach.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF MAJOR PARTIES**

### **STAFF**

#### **Prevention programs**

Whole school approach;

- School policy for “anti-bullying” which is clearly articulated to staff, students and parents
- Make “anti-bullying” policy available to parents
- All staff are to be made aware of supervision requirements, bullying issues, student attitudes, the need to take action and their role in implementing the policy
- Issues of bullying discussed regularly at staff meeting and training provided as required.
- Anti-bullying material included in Religion and Health Learning Area. (Appendix 1)
- Where appropriate class meetings to be held to discuss problem-solving measures. The focus of these meetings will be on behaviour change not punishment along with social skill training such as playing games well, giving and receiving compliments, taking risks and joining in, cooperating and respecting other people’s decisions.

## **PARENTS**

### **What can parents do?**

- Take an active interest in your child's social / school life
- Build your child's self confidence – recognise and affirm their positive qualities
- Discuss with the child school expectations about behaviour
- Be alert for signs of distress
- **Act** – please share your concerns with the Class Teacher so the situation can be investigated

## **SCHOOL ACTION PLAN**

### **A. Respond**

Any staff member observing a bullying incident or approached by a child must respond.

**Nb:** At times intervention may be minor and involve simply talking with students involved and encouraging the development of more positive relationships.

### **B. Remove**

Remove the children from harm and attend to them if required.

### **C. Is this Bullying?**

A decision needs to be made about whether or not this is an incident of bullying by speaking to the student who appears or alleges to be bullied;

1. A desire to hurt and this desire is acted on
2. The action is hurtful
3. There is an imbalance of power
4. There is no justification for the action
5. It is (typically) repeated
6. The person engaged in the bullying behaviour gets satisfaction from it

If it is deemed as not bullying (eg conflict) the teacher can assist with conflict resolution, friendship strategies or refer to the Behaviour Management Policy for appropriate action.

### **D. If Bullying – Investigate**

If it is deemed bullying, the incident will be investigated through the following means by the relevant staff member:

1. Gathering reports from all parties as soon as possible after the event
2. Interviewing carried out using the "No Blame" approach
3. Checking "Incident Forms" for any history
4. Carry out enquires discretely
5. Class room teacher notified
6. If necessary, asking for assistance from the relevant Assistant Principal.

### **E. Serious Consequences**

In some cases when a serious bullying incident occurs, where a school rule has been broken or previous resolutions have been unsuccessful, more serious consequences may need to be applied. A decision to apply consequences will be at the discretion of the Class Teacher or Assistant Principal involved and the Principal will be informed. Consequences will be applied in accordance with the school's Behaviour Management Policy and will increase in severity in cases of repeat offending.

In the case of repeat offence, a copy of the Think Sheet (Red) will be sent home to parents for their input.

**F. Contact parents**

This can be done via phone or letter and a meeting may be organised.

**G. Resolution**

This may include the following;

1. Using a “No Blame” approach with all parties to develop strategies for the incident to not occur again
2. Obtaining a commitment for pro-social behaviour for children involved
3. Encourage children to ask for help if further issues occur.

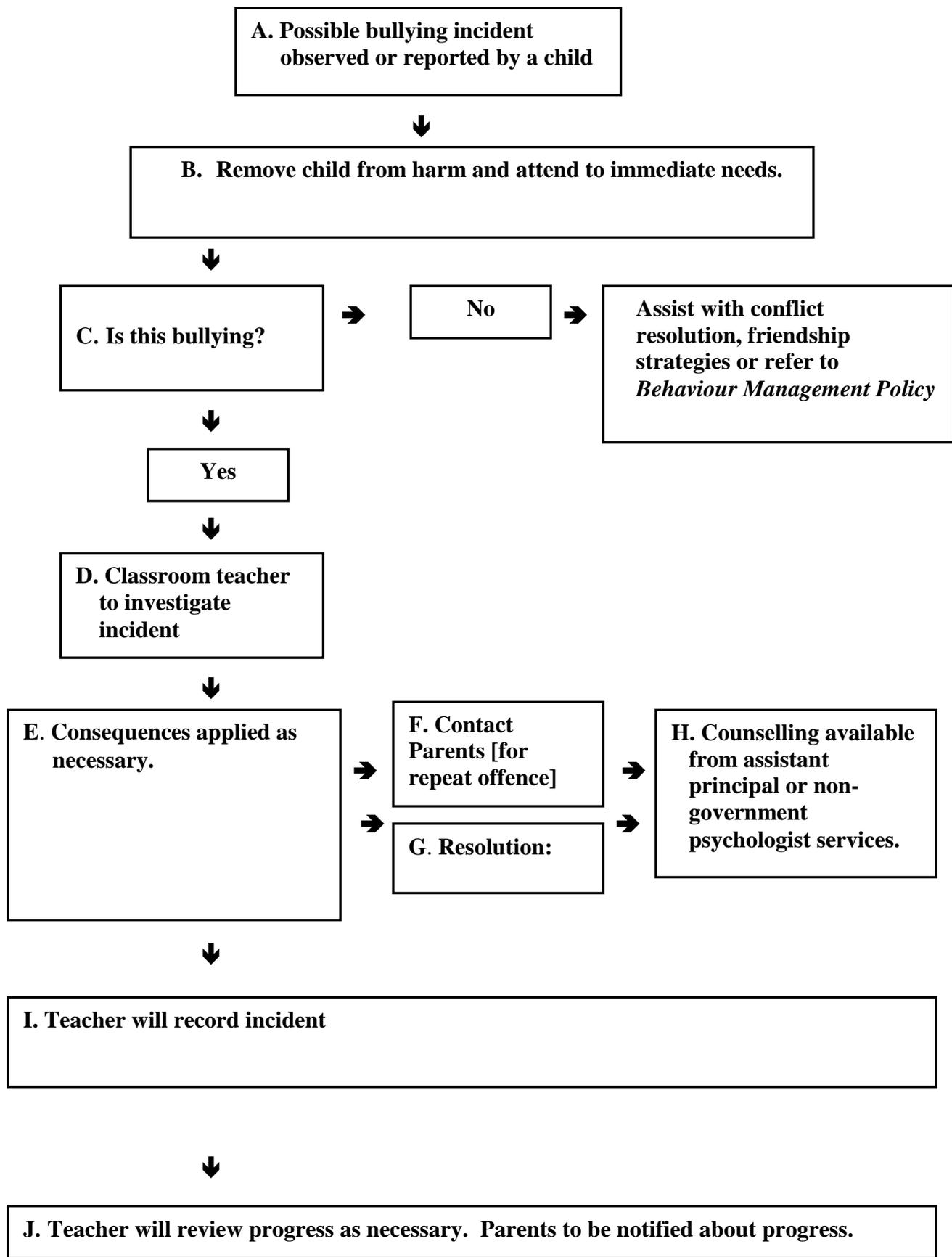
**H. Counselling**

Counselling and consultation is available from the Assistant Principal, Principal and/or School Psychologist (with parental consent) in cases where bullying is not resolved.

**I. Record**

Each “Bullying” incident will be recorded by the school.

**SCHOOL ACTION PLAN FLOW CHART**



## CONSEQUENCES

Upon the first instance of bullying being established;

- Verbal clarification of inappropriateness of behaviour and reasons for inappropriateness established by the class/duty teacher.
- Yellow Think Sheet issued and “time out” in office. Student is sent to Assistant Principal for think sheet and check of previously recorded incidents.
- Resolution (detailed below)

Upon the second instance of bullying being established;

- As for first instance with increased amount of “time out”
- Penalty as appropriate – dependent on the severity of case / age of student
- Resolution
- A copy of Think Sheet sent home to parents
- Interview with student, parent and teacher if required, (at school discretion). Student made aware of future consequences including detentions and suspensions if behaviour continues. Prevention strategies to be discussed with parents. Record of meeting and incident filed.

Further instances

- Meeting with Assistant Principal and/or Principal – student, parent and teacher which may lead to one of the following;
  - In school detention
  - Loss of class privileges for up to two weeks
  - Out-of-School Suspension up to two full days. A letter of apology to be written to the student/s who were bullied and forwarded to the Principal upon return to school.

## RESOLUTION

The resolution process aims to change the attitude and behaviour of the bully by;

1. Supporting the bully to take responsibility for his/her behaviour
2. Developing his/her ability to make more appropriate choices
3. Assisting bullies to develop appropriate non-violent ways to meet their needs
4. Reasoning with the bully and help him/her to empathise with those bullied (target)
5. Assisting the bully to understand the consequences of his/her actions on others
6. Healing the relationship between the bully and target
7. Provide the target with strategies and empowerment to deal with future incidents should they occur.

The targets will be

- Supported throughout the process
- Educated in reporting procedures
- Encouraged to use appropriate assertive and help seeking strategies to avert future incidents

## **STUDENTS' ACTION PLAN – BOBCAT PROGRAM**

If you think you are being bullied ask yourself was it deliberate? Yes or No

If **Yes** follow these steps;

- Ignore the behaviour and show it doesn't upset you

**If the behaviour continues;**

- Tell the individual/s engaging in bullying behaviour to stop it.  
*If the behaviour continues.....*
- Move to a safe area.  
*If the behaviour continues.....*
- Tell another student around you that you are being bullied.  
*If the behaviour continues.....*
- Tell a staff member.

## **BYSTANDERS' ACTION PLAN**

Ask yourself does this look or sound like a bullying situation? Yes or No

If **Yes** follow these steps;

- Tell the person who is bullying to "Please Stop it."
- Offer friendly help to make the individual/s feel safe.

**If the behaviour continues;**

- Take the individual/s to a staff member and report what you saw or heard.

## **PARENTS' ACTION PLAN**

Talk with your child;

- Encourage constructive responses – physical bullying or name teasing should be reported.
- Remind your child that hitting back or retaliating with name calling won't solve the problem.
- Encourage your child to talk to a member of staff
- Encourage your child to become more resilient.
- Discuss the issue with your child's teacher.

## **CLOSING STATEMENT**

At Holy Spirit School we try to make everyone feel safe, happy and valued. We can stop bullying if we all work together.

## APPENDIX 1 SCHOOL PROGRAM

### KEY POINTS IN ANY LESSONS ON ANTI-BULLYING

#### **The effects of bullying**

People who are bullied feel very hurt, upset or angry. The effects of bullying can last a long time.

#### **Types of bullying behaviours, with examples:**

##### *Physical:*

Hitting, punching, shoving, pinching, tripping, spitting, scratching, damaging, hiding or stealing belongings, throwing objects at someone, locking someone in or out.

##### *Verbal:*

Name-calling, making offensive remarks, taunting, teasing, put downs.

##### *Social/emotional*

Spreading rumours, gossiping about or embarrassing someone, making fun of someone, using threatening looks or gestures, excluding or threatening to exclude from groups, ignoring, ostracising or alienating.

Bullying is not limited to hurting someone physically.

#### **How bystanders may encourage bullying;**

- Standing around looking on
- Agreeing with mean comments
- Not supporting someone who is bullied
- Passing on mean notes/messages
- Passing on rumours
- Laughing at the bullying behaviour
- Helping to hide the behaviour from adults

#### **Action students can take if they are bullied.**

The extent to which students can try self-help strategies first, before asking an adult for support will vary according to the student's age, development stage and the seriousness of the bullying behaviour. All students are to be made aware that in all cases of serious injury or upset they must go to a teacher straight away.

##### *Lower Primary*

- Tell the person who is bullying you that you don't like it.
- Look strong and walk away.
- Don't tease or hit back.
- Go to a safe place.
- Stay around other people.
- Go to a teacher and tell them what is happening; try and be as honest as you can.

### *Middle/Upper Primary*

- Pretend not to hear what is being said.
- Tell yourself that the nasty things being said about you are not true.
- Believe in yourself.
- Consider your own behaviour.
- Choose somewhere else to play, eat etc
- Look strong and walk away
- Control your anger.
- Be assertive.
- Explain how you feel.
- Don't be mean back.
- Ask your friend for ideas, but don't "badmouth"
- Leave/avoid situations that could lead to bullying.
- Talk to a teacher
- Talk to your parents.

### **Actions students can take if they see bullying going on.**

- Refuse to watch bullying.
- Don't join in with the bullying.
- Tell the person bullying to stop.
- Ask the person being bullied to walk away with you.
- Allow the person being bullied to play with you and your friends.
- Tell a teacher what is going on.
- Don't take on the person bullying; it's not safe and could lead you into bullying behaviour too.

Students will be informed that asking for help when someone is hurt or upset is not dobbing. Dobbing happens when a student tells an adult something about another student only to get someone else in trouble.

### **What students can do if they feel tempted to bully someone else.**

- Think about what is making you angry or upset.
- Think of some other ways to deal with someone who has annoyed/hurt you.
- Talk to someone about what is happening to you, how you are feeling.
- Think of doing something else instead of bullying eg play with other children, suggest a new game, go somewhere quiet to calm down.

### **What students can expect teachers to do.**

If teachers see or hear about someone being bullied they will try and help. They will also ask questions like;

- What happened?
- How do you feel?
- What did you do to try and solve the problem?
- What happened then?
- What can you do now?
- Do you need more help?

If teachers are told about or see someone bullying they will remind them of the school's rule against bullying. They will also ask questions about what happened, how the other person may have felt and what the person doing the bullying can do to make things better. Teachers will take all complaints seriously and will check up on how the children are coping.

**OUTLINE OF SCHOOL/CLASS PROGRAM TO BE COVERED DURING EACH YEAR**

1. **Respecting Other People's Opinions** – Everyone has the right to say what they want to say without being put-down. No Put-down Zone
2. **Telling Someone to Stop Annoying You** – Stay cool. Stand tall. Tell them to stop.
3. **Ignoring Someone who is giving you a hard time** – Stay cool. Smart people know when to walk away
4. **Suggesting and Persuading (Instead of Bossing)** – Don't be a bossy boots. Use good ideas and good reasons instead.
5. **Dealing with Fights and Arguments** – Don't let fights create enemies. Co-operating.
6. **Including Others** – including others makes everyone feel good.
7. **Saying "No"** – Cool people can say "no" if they don't want to do it.
8. **Asking An Adult for Support** – Stay cool. When all else fails you can ask for help.
9. **Standing up for yourself** – An Assertive Response = the cool way, An Aggressive Response = the agro way and a Passive Response = the weak way.
10. **Playing Fairly** – Fair players get to play more games.
11. **Being a Good Winner** – Winning feels good, but remember to win in a way which keeps friends.
12. **Being a Good Loser** – Losing can make you feel bad, but staying friends is more important than giving in to your grumpy feelings.
13. **Negotiating** – You are more likely to get what you want and keep friends if the other person gets something too.
14. **Sharing** – its fair to share.
15. **Never be a bystander to bullying** – ways you can help – how to support your friends.