

## St Mary's Laidley Bullying Policy

### **Procedures for Preventing and Responding to Incidents of Bullying (including Cyberbullying)**

#### **Definition**

Bullying is the deliberate hurting of another person by a more powerful person or group of persons. It can be physical, verbal or psychological and is repeated and ongoing in nature.

#### **Purpose**

1. St Mary's School, Laidley strives to create positive, predictable environments for all students at all times of the day. The disciplined teaching environment that we are creating is essential to:
  - Achieving overall school improvement, including the effectiveness and efficiency of our student support procedures
  - Raising achievement and attendance
  - Promoting equality and diversity and
  - Ensuring the safety and well-being of all members of the school community.
2. There is no place for bullying in St Mary's School, Laidley. Research indicates that both those being bullied and those who bully are at risk for behavioural, emotional and academic problems. These outcomes are in direct contradiction to our school community's goals and efforts for supporting all students.
3. Bullying behaviours that will not be tolerated at St Mary's School, Laidley include name-calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments, kicking, hitting, pushing, taking belongings, inappropriate text messaging, sending offensive or degrading images by phone or internet, producing offensive graffiti, gossiping, excluding people from groups, and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours.
4. Bullying may be related to:
  - race, religion or culture
  - disability
  - appearance or health conditions
  - sexual orientation
  - sexist or sexual language
  - young carers or children in care.
5. At St Mary's School, Laidley there is broad agreement among students, staff and parents that bullying is observable and measurable behaviour. When considering whether or not bullying has occurred, we will therefore avoid speculation on the intent of the behaviour, the power of individuals involved, or the frequency of its occurrence. Whether bullying behaviour is observed between students of equal or unequal power, and whether or not the persons involved cite intimidation, revenge, or self-defence as a motive, the behaviour will be responded to in similar fashion, that is as categorically unacceptable in the school community.

## **Rationale**

6. Research indicates that many problem behaviours are peer-maintained. That is, peers react to bullying in ways that may increase the likelihood of it occurring again in the future. Reactions include joining in, laughing, or simply standing and watching, rather than intervening to help the person being bullied. Whilst our school would never encourage students to place themselves at risk, our anti-bullying procedures involve teaching the entire school a set of safe and effective response to all problem behaviour, including bullying, in such a way that those who bully are not socially reinforced for demonstrating it.
7. The anti-bullying procedures at St Mary's School, Laidley are an addition to our already research-validated schoolwide positive behaviour support processes. This means that all students are being explicitly taught the expected school behaviours and receiving high levels of social acknowledgment for doing so. Adding lessons on bullying and how to prevent and respond to it is a subset of procedures that our students are already accustomed to.

## **Prevention**

8. Attempting to address specific problem behaviours will not be successful if the general level of disruptive behaviour in all areas of our school is not kept to a low level. Therefore, our school wide universal behaviour support practices will be maintained at all times. This will ensure that:
  - Our universal behaviour support processes will always remain the primary strategy for preventing problem behaviour, including preventing the subset of bullying behaviour
  - All students know the 3 school rules and have been taught the expected behaviours attached to each rule in all areas of the school
  - All students have been or are being taught the specific routines in the non-classroom areas, from exiting the classroom, conducting themselves in accordance with the school expectations in the playground and other areas, to re-entering their classrooms
  - All students are receiving high levels of positive reinforcement for demonstrating expected behaviours, including those associated with following our routines, from all staff in the non-classroom areas of the school
  - A high level of quality active supervision is a permanent staff routine in the non-classroom areas. This means that duty staff members are easily identifiable and are constantly moving, scanning and positively interacting as they move through the designated supervision sectors of the non-classroom areas.
9. Cyberbullying often does not occur at school. Students are explicitly taught Cybersafety for example how to safely conduct an internet search, what cyberbullying is and what they should do if they receive unwanted messages including for example:
  - Not to respond to messages but keep them to report to parents and/or teachers immediately
  - Report any instances they see as a bystander of cyberbullying to parents and/or teachers immediately.

St Mary's School, Laidley will then investigate and respond to any incident of cyberbullying.

10. The student curriculum modules of the anti-bullying process consist of lessons taught by all teachers in all classrooms to a schoolwide schedule of instruction. At all times simultaneous instruction is our goal, in order to maintain consistency of skill acquisition across the school.
11. An initial introductory lesson is delivered, which teaches the 3-step process (STOP or TELL THE PERSON TO STOP – WALK AWAY – REPORT) to be used by all students when experiencing bullying behaviour either as a person being bullied, the person bullying or bystander.
12. The introductory lesson is followed by several shorter lessons, each of which focuses on one of the bullying behaviours that the school has identified and defined. These lessons include instruction on how to approach adults and also on what reactions and systemic responses they should expect from adults.
13. St Mary's School, Laidley will take part in the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence on the third Friday of March each year. This is to highlight the importance of bullying issues within our school community and what our school is doing to prevent this.
14. Research indicates that a common outcome of anti-bullying programming is an improvement in understanding of bullying but little change in the frequency or nature of actual bullying behaviour. One of the reasons cited for this outcome is the lack of behavioural rehearsal in the programming. The anti-bullying process at St Mary's School, Laidley takes care to combine knowledge with practice in a process of active learning, so that students understand by 'doing' as much as 'knowing'.
15. St Mary's School, Laidley uses behavioural data for decision-making. This data is entered into our database on a daily basis and can be recalled as summary reports at any time. This facility allows that school to track the effectiveness of its anti-bullying process, to make any necessary adjustments, and to identify specific bullying behaviours that may need to be revisited or revised in the instructional process.