

SAINT MAROUN'S COLLEGE



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

(NESA MANUAL 3.6.2)

Legal Framework

Enhancing Online Safety for Children Act 2015 Office of the eSafety Commissioner

POLICY

Saint Maroun's College (the College) has in place and implements procedures to provide all learners with a safe, secure and supportive environment which fosters respect for others and does not tolerate bullying. All students have the right to feel valued and secure. The Anti-Bullying Policy is an essential aspect of student welfare and pastoral care within the College. In the light of the College Mission Statement we want to build a College community in which the Gospel values of faith, justice and love are reflected in all aspects of the College's daily life.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with Saint Maroun's College:

- Student Behaviour Management Policy.
- Student Welfare Policy
- Serious Incidents and Emergencies Policy

INTRODUCTION

What is Bullying?

Bullying is not the same as conflict. Bullying is about people using their power to hurt or humiliate others. "Bullying is the conscious desire to hurt, frighten or exclude someone by physical or verbal means." Bullying incidents can be isolated or repeated.

Bullying can take many forms:

- Physical – repeated physical harm of a person or group (punching, tripping, pushing or kicking) or physical intimidation by threatening harm, destroying or stealing belongings.
- Verbal – repeated verbal abuse of a person or group by calling them unpleasant names, writing nasty notes or messages or by using foul gestures.
- Social – repeatedly encourage friends to verbally or physically threaten a person or group, harass, embarrass, ignore or exclude that person or group from activities.
- Psychological – often less obvious than other forms of bullying, includes being intimidated or made to feel manipulated, and giving dirty looks.
- Cyber – when a student/s are tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another student/s using the Internet, interactive and digital technologies or mobile phones. The College recognises that despite the educational and social benefits of information and communication technologies there are risks associated with their use particularly for school-aged students. Verbal, Social and Psychological bullying can take place through the incorrect use of these technologies.

Bullying behaviours impact the lives of the person/people being bullied, those who are bullying and the bystanders who watch on. Those who bully others are more likely to under-achieve in later life and continue to use power inappropriately. Students suffering from prolonged bullying are more likely to end up with depression and low self-esteem as young adults. (See Appendix 1).

PROCEDURES

A whole school approach recognises that bullying is the responsibility of the students, parents/carers, College staff and community members in a consistent and systematic manner. The College policies, procedures and practices provide the tools for dealing with incidents of bullying, and longer- term preventative strategies.

Bullying in any form is not tolerated, condoned or trivialized and is viewed as a major breach of the College rules and behavioural expectation. All follow up action will align with the Saint Maroun's College *Student Behaviour Management Policy*.

The Principal may contact School Liaison Police (SLP) and/or Youth Liaison Officer (YLO) at Newington Police Station at email or by phone on (02) 9550 8118. If considered appropriate by the Principal, arrangements could be made for the School Liaison Police (SLP) and/or Youth Liaison Police (YLO) to talk with students on a variety of suitable topics. Parents/carers will be informed of the SLP/YLP contact information which is available from the College Reception

The procedures set out below outline the steps taken by all parties involved in relation to a bullying incident being reported to the College.

Primary School

There are two ways to students can report bullying:

- the student reports the incident to their class teacher who then directs the student to the Stage Coordinator.
- the student reports the incident to the Stage Coordinator.

The Stage Coordinator:

- completes an Incident Report on Millennium based on allegations made by the student.
- investigates the allegation of bullying by speaking to all parties involved, including bystanders. (Refer to Saint Maroun's College *Complaints or Grievances Policy*)

If the incident does not warrant further action a copy of the complaint will be kept on Millennium and the class teacher will monitor the situation in class.

If the incident is found to warrant further action, the following steps will be taken:

The Stage Coordinator will interview the students involved with their parents/carers present. The parents /carers of the victim and bully will be informed verbally and/or in writing of the outcome of the investigation, the plan to prevent this from happening again, and where appropriate counselling support and possible mentoring are available.

It is made clear to student/s and parents/carers that any form of retaliation or discussion of the incident directly with the students in any negative manner outside the process of resolution will be treated as harassment and possible suspension or termination of enrolment will be considered;

Students involved will be given opportunities for reconciliation. Victims will be supported at school throughout and after the process. Possible sources of support are College staff, chaplain and College Psychologist.

When informing all parties of the decision they will also be advised of the appeals process provided in the Saint Maroun's College *Complaints or Grievance Policy* which can be accessed from the College website.

The Saint Maroun's College *Student Behaviour Management Policy* will be referenced and, depending on the severity of the incidents and prior behaviour of those perpetrating bullying behaviours, a consequence/sanction will be imposed. This will involve being placed on a level which can include internal/external suspension or termination of the enrolment contract.

Copies of all investigation notes, complaint forms and levels received will be retained by the Stage Coordinator on Millennium.

The Stage Coordinator will:

- monitor the situation to ensure that the outcomes and resolutions reached will be carried out by all parties.
- if required, separate the students involved in their classes the following year
- provide regular updates verbally and/or in writing to the Assistant Principal and parents/carers.

Secondary School

There are two ways the student can report bullying:

- the student reports the incident to a member of staff who then directs the student to the Year Coordinator
- the student reports the incident to the Year Coordinator

The Year Coordinator will investigate and collect information in regards to the alleged bullying incident (Refer to Saint Maroun's College *Complaints or Grievances Policy*).

If the incident does not warrant action, then the Year Advisor will keep a record of the incident on Millennium and will monitor the situation over the coming weeks.

If the incident is found to warrant further action, the following steps will be taken:

The Year Advisor presents investigation details including background of the incident and necessary evidence to the Assistant Principal.

This is followed with both the Year Advisor and the Assistant Principal interviewing the students and parents/carers of students involved in the bullying incident. The parents/carers of the victim and bully will be informed verbally and/or in writing of the outcome of the investigation, the plan to prevent this from happening again, and where appropriate counselling support and possible mentoring are available.

It is made clear to student/s and parents/carers that any form of retaliation or discussion of the incident directly with the students in any negative manner outside the process of resolution will

be treated as harassment and possible suspension or termination of enrolment will be considered;

Students involved will be given opportunities for reconciliation. Victims will be supported at school throughout and after the process. Possible sources of support are College staff, chaplain, and College Psychologist.

When informing all parties of the decision they will also be advised of the appeals process provided in the Saint Maroun's College *Complaints or Grievance Policy* and can be accessed from the College website.

Depending on the evidence and the outcome of the interviews, action will be taken against the alleged bully and any other student who supported the bullying. Students will be disciplined at a Stage 3 level of the Saint Maroun's College *Student Behaviour Management Policy*.

The Year Advisor/Assistant Principal will:

- monitor the situation to ensure that the outcomes and resolutions reached will be carried out by all parties.
- provide regular updates verbally and/or in writing to the parents/carers.

In extremely serious cases of a proven allegation, whether related to excessive violence, long-term verbal or emotional abuse, sexual misconduct or serious cyber bullying, the police will be contacted and will lead the investigation. In these cases, the Principal will inform the relevant authorities and seek advice from AISNSW. In the event of a police investigation, the school will provide all records pertaining to the investigation

The eSafety Commissioner is responsible for promoting online safety for all Australians.

If the Office of the eSafety Commissioner notifies the Principal of a complaint concerning students in our College, we will undertake to do the following to the extent that we are capable of doing:

- acknowledge receipt of the notification within 24 hours to the email address provided
- inform the Commissioner of the types of actions the College proposes to take and the time period for that action
- meet any conditions that has been placed on information that has been disclosed
- inform the Commissioner of the outcomes of the action we have taken
- The Principal will talk to the Commissioner if we feel we are unable to resolve the complaint and/or that we have a serious concern that the bullying will continue Office of the eSafety Commissioner <https://www.esafety.gov.au/>
- meet the Disclosure of Information conditions to:
 - o only discuss the information with the students involved and-with the students consent-their parents/carers
 - o only disclose the information to third parties with the consent of the affected students as required by law
 - o comply with applicable privacy laws and policies in relation to the personal information disclosed

The Principal/Assistant Principal will monitor and regularly review the policy. To conduct this review, the Principal/Assistant Principal will distribute and collate surveys to all staff, students

and parents to collect appropriate data to assess the effectiveness of the strategies, programs, and procedures we have in place to address bullying.

Policy	Anti-Bullying Policy
Last reviewed	13 January 2021
Next review	Term 1, 2022

Appendix 1

The Impact of Bullying

Bullying behaviour stops an individual from feeling comfortable in a school's shared environment. Bullying behaviour can also affect the long term emotional and social development of the student who is bullying. Bullying impacts the College community as a whole.

Individual students who are bullied may:

- Have unexplained bruises, scratches or cuts that the child may not be able to explain;
- Have torn or damaged clothing;
- Have a range of physical pain and aches including headaches and stomach aches;
- Begin to feel worthless and develop poor self-esteem and self-worth;
- Experience feelings of isolation and distress in the school environment;
- Feel scared and anxious about their personal safety;
- Develop emotional and/or physical problems;
- Develop long term problems in establishing friends and social connections with their peers;
- Develop learning and academic delay or difficulties;
- Become angry and resentful as a result of their ongoing distress and social isolation;
- Have their quality of their school work affected.

A bullying school culture may result in:

- The development of a school atmosphere of distrust and fear;
- An increase in the number and severity of violent and aggressive acts by students;
- An increased number of disciplinary incidents at the school;
- The development of a frustrated and resentful parent community;
- An increase in feelings of powerlessness by significant numbers of students, teachers and parents;
- Increased student absence.

As such bullying behaviour has no place at Saint Maroun's College.

APPENDIX 2

Responsibilities

At Saint Maroun's College all those responsible in the educational setting will work towards preventing bullying through a range of strategies.

College

- To affirm the right of all College community members to feel safe at the College through consistent monitoring of the College culture to ensure it is based on mutual trust and respect;
- To implement policies, programmes and processes to nurture a safe and supportive College environment;
- To promote and implement of values-based curriculum programs and activities (such as the Peer Support Program, Kindy Buddies program, the Transition Program, Anti-Bullying Awareness Week and the Pastoral Care Program) that promote the skills of communicating, leadership, decision-making, interacting, planning, conflict resolution and problem-solving for students;
- Respond to the Children's eSafety Commissioner to assist in resolving complaints involving cyber bullying.
- To provide training programs and professional development for members of the College community;
- To provide specific educational programs and resources for teachers to access;
- To Provide appropriate provision of counselling and/or other support services;
- To ensure that roles and responsibilities of all members of the College community in promoting a safe and supportive environment are explicit, clearly understood and disseminated;
- To provide opportunities for students to learn through the curriculum the knowledge, skills and dispositions needed for positive relationships;
- To publically acknowledge students who demonstrate correct behaviours through: weekly awards, Principal's wards and participation in leadership programs;
- To provide opportunities for students to take up various leadership roles throughout the College community;
- Provide College-based activities where the Maronite Catholic values of the individual and community are affirmed and personal qualities such as compassion, kindness, respect and tolerance are fostered and modelled by staff and students;
- To take action to protect children from all forms of abuse and neglect;
- Provide support for parent/guardians through information seminars and support networks
- To conduct constant reviews and analysis of current policies and assess their effectiveness and make relevant changes and update them where necessary.

Teacher

- Model appropriate behaviour and engage in College based activities where the value of the individual is affirmed and qualities such as kindness, respect and tolerance are fostered;
- Promote and foster the Maronite Catholic Ethos that advances the teachings and values of Christ which are grounded in Love of neighbour and compassion towards the other;

- Work cooperatively in the development and implementation of specific policies and procedures that are appropriate to the developmental stages of students;
- Regularly monitor and evaluate the College's Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures;
- Provide opportunities for cross College student leadership and involvement, such as peer support, pastoral care and student representative processes;
- Program PDHPE and Religion syllabus coverage to ensure the teaching of all essential 'learn about' and 'learn to' units of work that may relate to bullying behaviour;
- Provide 'Moral education' in the context of religious education, liturgies, reconciliation and assemblies where the value of the individual is affirmed and the importance of qualities such as love, reconciliation and social justice are encouraged;
- Develop College-based programs and activities that promote the skills of communicating, decision making, interacting, planning and problem solving;
- Ensure that the students are well supervised;
- Raising awareness of the importance of punctuality to class, active supervision and the need to challenge unacceptable behaviour;
- Encouraging reporting of bullying incidents.
- Watch for signs of distress and suspected incidents of bullying;
- Allow students to deal with conflicts openly, peacefully and respectfully;
- Deal with all reported and observed incidences of bullying as set out in this policy;
- Report continuing incidences of bullying to Wellbeing Stage Coordinators in Primary, the Year Advisors in Secondary, the Assistant Principal.
- Access Cybersmart's classroom resources: [Education resources > Classroom resources](#)

Student

- Be aware of what bullying is and how to prevent it;
- Contribute to a safe learning environment by respecting others and their differences
- Assist those who are the targets of bullies – offering to help the target of bullying and identify the student who is bullying. Also being vocal and showing your disapproval of bullying;
- If you suspect that your friends are bullying someone, bring it to their attention. If you know someone is being targeted get support for them;
- Report all incidents to a member of the College staff.

Parents/carers

- Support the College policies and processes in place by having a positive attitude;
- Actively support the creation of a safe environment;
- Advise your child to speak to a trusted member of staff or coordinator about the incident or any on-going issues;
- If necessary, inform the Stage Coordinator (Primary) or the Year Advisor (Secondary);
- Be aware that the resolution of a situation may take time; however, you will be constantly updated on the progress of the situation;
- Encourage your child to speak at home about the incident and to look for positive and character building strategies to deal with their feelings;
- Parents must not at any time take matters into their own hands, or contact the alleged victim or bully directly or communicate with them indirectly; other than via the school interviews. Failure to adhere to this and any subsequent breaches may lead to serious repercussions, reporting to the police and possible criminal charges.

Appendix 3

What can you do if you are bullied?

As the target of a bully, you are the one who should take action most strongly. The more you try to ignore it and leave it, the more likely the bullying will continue and become worse and potentially reach dangerous levels. Never feel like that nothing can be done or if you want to do something never think that you will continue to be targeted.

There are many members of staff at the College who are able to assist – your teachers, your Year Coordinators in Secondary, Stage Coordinators in Primary, the Counsellor, or the College Chaplain. They can help you decide how to handle the situation and they can take action.

- Tell the student who is bullying to stop, let them know that you are not going to put up with their bullying and that you will report it;
- Try and be strong and show that you are not affected, the student bullying you may stop;
- Leave the area and go directly to a member of staff or to the administration offices;
- Don't be afraid to talk about it with friends or family;
- Talk to other students at the College, i.e. College Leaders or SRC Representatives;
- Establish a friendship network;
- Be smart about avoiding high risk places and times.

Always remember that you are not alone. The College takes bullying seriously and will not tolerate any form of bullying occurring at the College.

What can you do if you are a witness to bullying?

There is a fear that if you report the bullying incident you can become the target of bullying, or be labelled a 'dobber', but to be effective the College needs to work together with members of staff, students and parents. To be able to assist, if you are a witness to bullying behaviour, you need to care enough to want to do something about it. You need to have the courage to act in the following possible ways:

- If possible, you can intervene as the bullying occurs by simply saying "cut it out", "leave him/her alone", or "Quit it", or "Stop". This is very useful if you have influence with the person that is bullying: e.g. If you are older, a friend, a member of the College SRC or Sporting House Captain;
- If you cannot act immediately, it is very important to report the incident to someone you trust (Teacher or Coordinator) as soon as you can. You may need to establish that you want privacy and confidentiality. Alternatively, you may wish to make an anonymous report that will advise of a potential bullying incident;
- Offer support and friendship to the victim. Encourage the victim to get help through staff, family or SRC members.

Appendix 4

Cyber bullying: definition and suggestions

Cyber bullying can occur in different forms such as text, video or image and can be conveyed using a range of modes, such as e-mail, social websites, mobile phones, instant messaging, chat rooms, web blogs and online personal polling sites.

People using bullying behaviour will often act more boldly online than if they were facing their victim in person. Sending taunts remotely and anonymously makes the person doing the bullying feel safer. The victim's physical or emotional response, which might change or soften the bullying behaviour, can't be seen.

Cyber bullying is often done by **Cyber Predators**. These are people who use the Internet to hunt for victims to take advantage of in ANY way, including sexually, emotionally, psychologically or financially. Cyber predators know how to manipulate children, creating trust and friendship where none should exist. They often create nicknames that do not reflect their own name or anything personal in order to deceive children.

Suggestions on handling cyber bullying for students

If a child is being bullied online, it's great for them to feel they have some power to resolve the problem on their own. These six steps are a good way for your child to **G.E.T. R.I.D.** of the bully:¹

1. **Go block or delete the person engaging in cyber bullying.** Blocking from friend lists helps stop the person engaging in cyber bullying from posting or uploading offensive content about your child. If it's a text message or call, you can call the service provider and have the calls/texts monitored. If necessary, the service provider can even contact the sender, since mobile phone holders breach their contract if they use their phone to bully. If necessary, you can change the phone number;
2. **Ensure you keep evidence of bullying.** Save and print out any bullying messages (Use the print screen key, at the top right of most keyboards);
3. **Tell someone about it; ignoring it may lead to it becoming worse.** Tell an adult you trust, your parents, your Year Coordinator Secondary, Heads of Secondary and Primary Departments or Stage Coordinator Primary.
4. **Report abuse.** Reporting bullying to web administrators is usually as easy as clicking on a 'report abuse' link on a website. The website will remove the offensive content. Do not respond to the abuse. There could also be consequences for the person engaging in bullying. If it occurs at school, it must be reported immediately to Year Coordinator; Head of Secondary, Head of Primary or Stage Coordinator Primary. Remember that If you have been threatened, this matter could be reported to the local police;
5. **Ignore bullying behaviour.** This means not responding aggressively to taunts. It's OK to tell the person engaging in bullying to stop, but you shouldn't try to retaliate aggressively;

¹ Source: Strategies edited from Raising Children Network - http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/cyberbullying_teenagers.html/

6. Delete the bullying message (after saving a copy), and don't forward via text or send chat logs to others. Never give anyone access to your accounts or give your usernames and passwords.

Suggestions on handling cyber bullying for parents/carers

- Place and keep home computers, including use of portable devices in an open, common area;
- Inform Internet Service Providers (ISP) or mobile phone service provider of any abuse;
- Keep records for evidence by saving or printing out messages or keeping a screenshot and note the time and date;
- Install parental control programs on home computers that provide filters for social websites, instant messaging, chat rooms etc.;
- Report all bullying incidences to the College – especially if the bully is another student from the College;
- Report serious incidences to the Police;
- Do not take matters into your own hand;
- Provide loving support for your child throughout the resolution process and encourage them to talk about their feelings.

Screenshot Evidence

A screenshot is a photograph of the computer screen and is useful for recording details you may want to report

- Firstly, have the information you wish to record open on the screen and press PRTSCN (Print Screen) button on your keyboard. The image will be saved in a temporary memory;
- Secondly, open a Microsoft Word document and right click and paste the screenshot;
- Thirdly, make a note of the date, time, location, e-mail address, nickname or any other information that you think might be useful and then save the file or print it.
- For Apple products you can take a screen shot by pressing the on/off button and the home button at the same time. This will capture an image of the screen and send it to your gallery as a picture. The Apple product can then be brought to the College to verify the bullying incident.

APPENDIX 5

Resources

The Office of the eSafety Commissioner <https://www.esafety.gov.au/>

The Office of the eSafety Commissioner:

- will deal with complaints about prohibited online content
- leads online safety education for the Australian Government and protects Australian children when they experience cyberbullying by administering a complaints scheme.

Bullying No Way 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 proven to be successful in increasing safety and reducing bullying and harassment in schools throughout Australia. NSW schools are featured on this site. The purpose is to create learning environments where every student and school community member is safe, supported, respected, valued and free from bullying, violence, harassment and discrimination.

Kids Help Line www.kidshelp.com.au

Kids Help Line is Australia's only free, confidential and anonymous, 24 hour telephone and online counselling service specifically for young people aged between five and eighteen. The 24 hour, toll free telephone number is 1800 55 1800.

Mindmatters <http://www.mindmatters.edu.au/>

Mindmatters is a program to support Australian secondary schools in promoting and protecting the social and emotional wellbeing of members of school communities.

National Coalition Against Bullying (NCAB) www.ncab.org.au

National Coalition Against Bullying (NCAB) brings together a group of individuals from key organisations to draw national attention to the issue of bullying and to bring about a social change in our community. NCAB wants to empower individuals to realise that the issue of bullying is everyone's problem and each individual can make a difference.

Racism. No Way! www.racismnoway.com.au

Racism. No Way! is designed to assist school communities develop an understanding of the nature of racism. It provides practical information and strategies to help address racism in the learning environment.

Reach Out! <http://au.reachout.com/>

Reach Out! is a web-based service that assists young people to help themselves through tough times. The aim of the service is to create opportunities for young people to help themselves and to help others.

Student Well Being Hub

<https://studentwellbeinghub.edu.au/?origin-host=www.safeschoolshub.edu.au>

Supported by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

Australian Government's National Crime Prevention Program 2003

A guide for teachers, parents and carers regarding bullying among children

The NSW Department of Education Anti Bullying Website <https://antibullying.nsw.gov.au/>
Was released on 21 July 2017 as one part of the NSW Government's \$6.1 million anti-bullying strategy to support schools to identify student bullying, prevent it and respond effectively when it does occur.

NSW Department of Education anti-bullying websites

<http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentssupport/behaviourpgrms/antibullying/>

This site has information on anti-bullying programs and schools. It provides a proforma to use when reporting effective strategies your school has to prevent bullying.