

Saint Mary MacKillop College Albury

Anti Bullying Policy

Updated February 2025



Overview

At SMMC, we believe that all members of our community have the right to a learning and working environment free from intimidation, harassment, humiliation and hurt. We all share a responsibility to foster, promote and restore positive relationships. We believe that bullying is unacceptable and we - staff, parents and students - all share a responsibility to be aware of it, prevent it and respond to it, if and when it occurs.

All students and staff have the right:

- To feel safe, cared for and respected at SMMC.
- To be free from threat and intimidation.
- To have a pleasant, healthy and safe environment.

All students have the responsibility:

- To consider the impact of their actions on others.
- To respect the property and rights of staff and students.
- Not to accept bullying, but to report it.
- To follow the school policies and rules.

All staff members have the responsibility to:

- Provide a safe learning environment that is free of bullying, harassment, intimidation and abuse.
- Engender a culture where bullying is discouraged and opposed.
- Consider the impact of their actions on others.
- To be positive role models.

Prevention of bullying

The whole College community shares a responsibility to prevent bullying. Consequently we adopt the following strategies:

- Teaching of positive behaviours aimed at addressing positive relationships, conflict resolution, resilience and bystander action. This is done in Religion classes, PDHPE classes, and instruction on the virtue of the month.
- Vigilance while in the classroom and on playground supervision.
- Regular recognition and acknowledgement of students who demonstrate appropriate behaviours that promote and restore positive relationships.
- Provision of safe and structured playground spaces and activities at break times.
- Ongoing child protection-related professional development of staff.

What is bullying?

Bullying behaviour:

- Is deliberate, repeated, persistent and aggressive behaviour directed at an individual or individuals.
- Intends to cause fear, distress, hurt or harm to another's body, feelings, self-esteem or reputation.

- Is repeated intimidation/action by a more powerful individual or group over a less powerful individual or group.
- Can happen in the playground, in the toilets, going to and from school, online or in the classroom.

Bullying takes many forms, all of which will cause distress. Examples of bullying include, but are not restricted to:

- Physical – hitting, pushing, tripping, kicking, spitting on others.
- Verbal – nasty comments, teasing, using offensive names, ridiculing, spreading rumours, telling someone to do silly or dangerous things.
- In writing and gestures – writing offensive notes or graffiti about others, using e-mail or text messaging to hurt others, rude gestures.
- Exclusion – deliberately excluding others from the group, refusing to sit next to someone.
- Extortion – threatening to take someone's possessions, food or money, or spreading lies about them.
- Property – stealing, hiding, damaging or destroying property
- Cyber – any form of bullying which is carried out through electronic means such as mobile phones, email, chat rooms, social media and SMS.

What should you do if you are being bullied?

If you are being bullied, it is important that you talk to an adult who is in a position to help you. At SMMC, students are encouraged to tell a parent or teacher if they feel they are being bullied. Students may also inform another student if they are experiencing behaviour that is upsetting them. Students may tell a student who is the subject of the allegation to stop it and to convey that they don't like that behaviour. If a student is engaged in offensive behaviour they are expected to stop when this is requested. Students are encouraged to take positive steps to stop bullying if they observe or hear about an incident by making it clear to their peers that bullying is not accepted and letting a teacher know about what they observe.

Telling someone isn't dobbing or weak. It shares the problem and helps you feel supported. At SMMC, students are encouraged to:

- Talk to their parents, teacher or another staff member: tell them what's been happening.
- Talk to their friends: they can help you tell a teacher or your parents or just to feel better.

At SMMC, staff members are expected to:

- Take action to stop bullying if they observe an incident and provide support for the students involved.
- Promptly pass on information about any reported or observed bullying behaviours to a member of the leadership team for further action.

Parents are encouraged to:

- Listen to their child.
- Contact their child's class teacher if they have a concern.

How do we respond to bullying at SMMC?

- Bullying is against school rules and ethos.
- Any reports of bullying will be investigated.
- Appropriate action will be prompt.
- Ensure that all students involved are supported.

Procedures for investigating bullying and follow up

- Interviews will be conducted to ascertain the specific nature of the bullying.
- Initial interviews should focus on the safety of individuals.
- The principles of procedural fairness will be applied to any investigation of a bullying allegation.
- Decisions will be made as to the level of severity of the incident.
- Restorative reflection and practice to encourage reconciliation and long term resolution will be attempted in the first instance.
- Parents will be informed of any bullying incident.
- Counselling may be a preferred option in some cases, with referrals made to CentaCare and the School Police Liaison may be consulted.
- There will be monitoring and follow up of the students involved by the primary or high school coordinators.
- Recurrence of the bullying or bullying behaviour that is determined to be sufficiently serious in the first instance may result in a warning of suspension and, if required, the implementation of suspension.
- Unremitting bullying after the former steps have been exhausted will result in the student exhibiting the bullying behaviour having to leave SMMC.

RESOURCES RELATED TO BULLYING CAN BE FOUND AT:

- www.ncab.org.au
- www.bullyingnoway.com.au
- www.cybersmart.gov.au
- www.kidshelp.com.au