

Rationale

Our Lady of Mercy College (OLMC) recognises the importance of demonstrating respect for the

Categories of Bullying

There are three broad categories of bullying:

1. Direct physical bullying – This form includes hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property .
2. Direct verbal bullying – This form includes name calling, insults , homophobic or racist remarks, or verbal abuse .
3. Indirect bullying – This form is harder to recognise and often carried out behind the bullied person's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Indirect bullying includes:
 - x lying and spreading rumours
 - x playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
 - x mimicking
 - x encouraging others to socially exclude someone
 - x damaging someone's social reputation and social acceptance
 - x cyber -bullying, which involves the use of email, text messages or chat rooms to humiliate and distress someone.

What Bullying Is Not

Many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying, even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management. There are three social ly unpleasant situations that are often confused with bullying , including:

- x Mutual conflict: In mutual conflict situations, there is an argument or disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the problem. However, unresolved mutual conflict sometimes develops into a bullying situation, with one person becoming targeted repeatedly for 'retaliation' in a one sided way.
- x Social rejection or dislike: Unless the social rejection is directed towards someone specifically and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others, it is not bullying.
- x Single-episode acts: Single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If a student is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion , they are not being bullied. Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different students is not the same as bullying.
- x Changes in peer group dynamics and composition: it is not unusual for a shift in friendship groups to occur as students move through adolescence and interests and personalities develop .

Responsibilities: Students

OLMC staff will encourage and support students to:

- x observe the anti-bullying and responsible use of technology policies and procedures ;
- x immediately seek help from a trusted adult if they are aware of or involved in a bullying or cyber-bullying incident ;
- x seek support if bullied and refrain from retaliating in any bullying incident ;
- x understand the implications of social networking practices that identify the College by name or image or implication ;
- x in age-appropriate circumstances , keep evidence of alleged bullying and produce it on request (for example phone text messages).

Responsibilities: Parents

College staff will work in partnership with parents in responding to incidents of bullying. They will encourage parents to:

- x reinforce the College's expectations of using technology and social media sites appropriately and respectfully;
- x report serious matters of out-of-school hours bullying and cyber bullying to the Police or other appropriate authority (such as the Internet Service Provider) or e-Safety Commission and, as relevant, to the College;
- x contact the College immediately through the Pastoral Leader or Year Level Coordinator/House Coordinator if they know of any bullying incident ;
- x act respectfully to all members of the school community at all times.

Prevention and Intervention Strategies

The Head of Student Wellbeing is responsible for ensuring that Year Level and House Coordinators and all Pastoral Leaders implement programs and strategies that build shared understandings amongst students and staff of prevention, intervention and resolution procedures to be followed if they suspect or experience bullying behaviour. The College's pastoral program and strategies will include education in:

- x Respectful relationships
- x What behaviours constitute bullying
- x The impact of bullying
- x Safe and supportive bystander responses
- x Positive social problem-solving skills
- x Reporting procedures
- x Restorative practices.

College Investigation and Resolution Processes

All reported incidents of bullying will be managed on an individual basis and will be investigated and followed up by the student(s)' Pastoral Leader or Year/House Coordinator .

The investigation and follow-up may include :

- x interviews with all parties – the victim, the alleged perpetrator and witnesses
- x notifying parents of the students involved
- x notifying relevant staff and student counsellors
- x reporting directly to the Head of Student Wellbeing

process. If the bullying behaviour continues beyond this process, disciplinary consequences will be

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Overview of OLMC Anti-Bullying Procedures

Incident Reports and Response

1. Disclosure and Initial Response

- x Student, bystander or parent reports incident(s) to a staff member.
- x Staff member provides initial support to the student affected.
- x If the reported behaviour constitutes suspected or actual bullying, staff member refers the matter to

Management of Bullying Behaviour

