ANTI-BULLYING PROCEDURES 2012

Rationale:
St Matthew’s will provide a positive culture where bullying is not accepted, and in so doing, all will have the right of respect from others, the right to learn or to teach, and a right to feel safe and secure in their school environment.

The anti bullying procedures form an integral part of our student behaviour protocol and is based in the following principles:

- Every student in this school has the right to enjoy learning, free from intimidation both in school and the surrounding community.
- Our school community will not tolerate any unkind actions or comments, even if these are not intended to hurt or offend.
- Any repeated unkind action or comment will be considered to be bullying.
- Students should support each other by reporting all instances of bullying.
- Bullying will be dealt with seriously.
- We are an 'open-listening' school. Bullying is too important not to report.

Definition:
What is bullying?
Bullying is the misuse of power, position and privilege. It is done to intimidate, coerce, to engender fear and to control. It is a repeated behaviour that can take a number of forms:

- Physical: Pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching, threats
- Verbal: Name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing
- Emotional: Excluding, tormenting, ridicule, humiliation
- Racist: Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual: Unwanted physical contact or abusive comments
- Cyber bullying: the use of information and communication technologies that is intended to intimidate, control, manipulate, put down, falsely discredit, or humiliate the recipient and harm another or others.

Goals:

- To reinforce within the school community what bullying is, and the fact that it is unacceptable.
- Provide a safe, happy and positive learning environment for our students and staff.
- Everyone within the school community to be alert to signs and evidence of bullying and to have a responsibility to report it to staff whether as observer or victim.
- To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up appropriately and that support is given to both the bully and the victim.
- To seek parental and peer-group support and co-operation at all times providing a physical environment which engenders good behavioural patterns.

Implementation and Procedures:

- Parents, teachers, students and the community will be aware of the school’s position on bullying.
- The school will adopt a four-phase approach to bullying.
A. **Primary Prevention:**
- Professional development for staff relating to bullying, harassment and proven counter measures.
- Programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving such as MJR Values program are used across the school, The Friendly Schools Friendly Classrooms’ the ‘You Can Do It Education’ program implemented in Kindergarten and the AFP Cyber-bullying program for Years 5 and 6.
- Each classroom teacher to clarify and follow strategies at the start of each year the school and follow steps outlined in the Student Behaviour Protocol including the school’s stance on bullying.
- Lunch time clubs and structured activities available to students at and lunch breaks.
- Student Representative Council, peer buddies, staff and students to promote the philosophy of ‘No Put Downs’

B. **Early Intervention:**
- All staff follow the steps outlined in the Student Behaviour protocol and use Restorative justice questions to sort out issues.
- Promote students and staff reporting bullying incidents involving themselves or others.
- Classroom teachers and principal on a regular basis reminding students and staff of the anti-bullying policy. Victims of bullying often feel vulnerable and powerless. Their self-esteem is low and the aim is to build their self-confidence and teach them strategies to deal with bullying. Victims of bullying are more likely to speak out if they know a secure and safe environment exists for them to talk with teachers. They also need to be assured that no retaliation will be tolerated against them.
- Parents are encouraged to contact school if they become aware of a problem.
- Public recognition and reward for positive behaviour and resolution of problems.

C. **Intervention:**
- Once identified each bully, victim and witnesses will be spoken with, and all incidents or allegations of bullying will be fully investigated and documented using the Restorative Justice process.
- A Restorative Circle may occur with students only or with both parents and children present.
- Students and staff identified by others as bullies will be informed of allegations and parents contacted through the Communication note system.
- Both bullies and victims will be offered counselling and support.
- Consequences will be implemented consistent with the school’s Student Behaviour Protocol.
- If staff bullying persists the principal will commence formal disciplinary action.

D. **Support:**
- Consequences for students will be individually based and may involve:-
  - exclusion from class, exclusion from playground, school suspension, withdrawal of privileges.
  - Ongoing counselling from appropriate agency for both victim and bully.

**Evaluation:**
This policy will be reviewed with whole staff, student, parent and community input as part of the school’s five-year review cycle.