



ASSUMPTION CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Mission Statement

Assumption Catholic Primary School is a community seeking to grow together in love. The development of each individual is nurtured through the integration of Faith, Life and Culture.

1. Rationale

We have a vision statement which challenges us to create a learning community based on values. Each person is recognised as a unique individual bringing special qualities and gifts to share and so we all have a right to be respected and a responsibility to respect each other.

Therefore, we do not tolerate bullying or harassment in any form. All members of our community are committed to ensuring a safe and supportive environment which promotes personal growth and fosters positive self-esteem for all. We aim to maintain a setting in which everyone feels valued and respected and where individual differences are appreciated, understood and accepted.

Definitions

Bullying is:

- A repeated and unjustifiable behaviour
- Intended to cause fear, distress and/or harm to another
- May be physical, verbal or indirect/relational
- Conducted by a more powerful individual or group
- Against a less powerful individual who is unable to effectively resist

Bullying may take place in a variety of locations, including in the classroom, while the children are at play and in cyber situations.

Types of Bullying:

	Direct	Indirect
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Hitting, slapping, punching ■ Kicking ■ Pushing, strangling ■ Spitting, biting ■ Pinching, scratching ■ Throwing things e.g. stones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Getting another person to harm someone
Non-Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mean and hurtful name-calling ■ Hurtful teasing ■ Demanding money or possessions ■ Forcing another to do homework or commit offences such as stealing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Spreading nasty rumours ■ Trying to get other students to not like someone
Non-Verbal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Threatening and/or obscene gestures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Deliberate exclusion from a group or activity ■ Removing and hiding and/or damaging others' belongings
Cyber/ Electronic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Using the Internet, email, mobile phones or any other IT equipment to be mean, rude or unkind about other people 	

Harassment

Harassment is any unwanted, unwelcome, or uninvited behaviour which makes a person feel humiliated or offended. Harassment can be seen as one form of bullying. The terms are often used interchangeably.

Objectives

The objectives of our whole-school bullying policy are:

- To raise awareness among staff, students and parents about bullying;
- To actively counter bullying at the school;
- To provide strategies to resolve conflict and respect differences;
- To create a school environment where all students, staff and parents feel safe and welcome;
- To create a climate where it is okay to talk about bullying and ask for help;
- To promote positive mental health;
- To build resiliency amongst our students; and
- To develop social skills with an expectation of socially acceptable behaviour.

2. Rights & Responsibilities

Rights

- Every person has the right to feel safe. Any person who bullies another is denying them that right. This means we have to think about others (not just ourselves) in the classroom and in the playground. The right to feel safe means we have a responsibility to consider how we speak and act towards others. Bullying takes away a person's sense of security. The right to safety means that any bullying of any kind is unacceptable.
- Every person has the right to be treated with respect and fairness. This means we show respect to other people, and their property, in the class and in the playground. The right to receive respect and fair treatment requires from us the responsibility to show manners and courtesy towards each other.
- Every person has the right to learn. This means we do not adversely affect the learning of another student. At school it is everyone's responsibility to take the necessary steps to stop bullying behaviour. The school will not tolerate any action that undermines a person's right to feel safe, respected and to learn.

Responsibilities

Staff, students and parents have the following responsibilities:

▪ **Leadership Team will:**

– Support, promote, enact, maintain and review the bullying policy and procedures. Information will be placed on school website and in newsletters.

▪ **All staff will:**

– Be familiar with the school's bullying policy and procedures.

▪ **Teachers will:**

– Be models of caring and tolerant behaviour;
– Listen to reports of bullying;
– Act upon these;
– Inform the Principal;
– Protect the person being bullied from further harm;
– Act to stop the behaviour recurring; and
– Record identified bullying incidents using electronic school database.

▪ **Parents will:**

– Upon enrolling their children at Assumption, read and sign the acceptance of offer form stating that they will support the schools Policies, including the Anti-Bullying Policy;
– Read and sign the school cyber safety use agreement with their children; and
– Complete with their children the family activity packs to help build skills to counteract bullying.

Students who are bullied need to communicate about it with:

– A teacher, a staff member or student of trust and/or their parents and give them full details of the event; and
– Write details about the event and place in it in the administration post box.

▪ **Student witnesses to bullying should:**

– Intervene if they are able;
– Seek teacher assistance; and
– Document the incident if requested.

▪ **Parents should:**

– Listen sympathetically to reports of bullying;
– Speak to relevant school personnel (not the alleged student/s concerned); and
– Work with the school in seeking a permanent solution.

▪ **Parent witnesses should:**

– Be limited to verbal intervention;
– Seek teacher assistance; and
– Document the incident if requested by school staff.

3. Management of Bullying Incidents

All parties are expected to treat each other with respect and dignity, and ensure the confidentiality of any issues that may arise.

Teachers' Responsibilities

- Teachers to be familiar with the school's bullying policy and procedures.
- Teachers to be models of caring and tolerant behaviour.
- In the first weeks of each school year and ongoing throughout the year, the non-acceptance of bullying is to be discussed in class.
- Teachers to make students aware of their responsibilities with regard to the bullying policy.
- Implement lessons to develop resilience to bullying. All children receive lessons from the 'Friendly Schools' and 'Bounce Back' programmes. Teach relevant strategies.
- Attend to reported instances of bullying behaviour.
- Treat information regarding bullying confidentially.

Action

- 1 Protect the bullied child from further harm.
- 2 Write down name/s of the bullied child, who reported the incident and the bystander/s.
- 3 Interview the bullied child to find out what happened.
- 4 Suggest strategies that the bullied student might use to avoid being bullied in the future.
- 5 Individually interview bystander/s using the Shared Concern Approach. Discuss strategies these students might use to avoid bullying in the future.
- 6 Record what happened on the bullying incident form.
- 7 Send a copy of the form to the Principal.
- 8 Monitor the situation over the following few days.
- 9 **Where necessary**, speak to class without using any names, circle time, small group meetings, class meeting box.
- 10 **Where appropriate and using discretion**, work with parents of the bullied child to assist their child to avoid being bullied in the future. Keep them informed about progress and the measures taken.
- 11 **If necessary, where appropriate and using discretion**, inform the parents of the child bullying and work with them to establish joint strategies for behaviour modification.

Responses to bullying incidents

The Pikas Method of Shared Concern

- A Assure the student bullied that the incident will be dealt with.
- B When the time becomes available teachers or administrators talk individually to bullying students first (7 minutes max).
- C Students who are bullied are talked to last (7 minutes max).
- D **Okay, I'll see you next week to find out how you are getting on.**
- E Follow up meeting with students who have been bullying.
- F Student who was bullied receives support and there may be a follow up with assertiveness training.

Challenging incidents

- Physical violence or intimidation

- Immediate notification of assistance from an administrator or colleague – red card messenger.
- Move student onlookers away.
- Separate students with minimal physical contact.
- Apply Behaviour Management Plan (BMP) guidelines.
- Apply shared concern – students involved in the incident are questioned separately.
- Report of incident to be written up.

Challenging students

- Collaborative case management of students with persistent aggression or continued victimisation. Develop a collaborative action plan with specified outcomes (school psych and case manager/teacher).
- Problem-solving strategies for dealing with disclosures.
- Use of sanctions in BMP policy for violent incidents.

4. School strategies to reduce and prevent bullying

Our strategy has two aspects: prevention and management. Prevention strategies assist students to become resilient. The management strategy we apply is the Student Support and 'Shared Concern' approach. Although this approach is not based on sanctions or punishments, the school has a range of such measures available, up to and including suspension or exclusion which are in accord with our Behaviour Management Plan, and which may be used in response to bullying.

Prevention programs

Whole-school approach:

- Implement a school policy for 'bullying'.
- All staff made aware of bullying issues, student attitudes, the need to take action and of their role in implementing the policy.
- The bullying policy clearly articulated to staff, students and parents.
- All staff to provide careful supervision.
- Discuss the issue of bullying regularly at staff meetings and provide training to all staff.
- Anti-bullying material included in Health learning area (Strand: Self management skills and interpersonal skills).
- Teachers to run the Friendly Schools and Families program in the classroom as a prevention model. Cross-curriculum content is utilised to provide practice in conflict resolution and protective behaviours.
- Class meetings to discuss problem-solving measures. Focus on behaviour changes not punishment. *Preventative social skills training* – playing games well, giving and receiving compliments, taking risks and joining in, cooperating and respecting other people's decisions.
- Self-protective behaviours – ignoring verbal put downs, enlisting adult or peer support, learn assertive responses, saying "no" and walking away, helping others being bullied. Change the "don't do" culture. Model and teach students to value and respect others.
- Preventative support systems – peer support (school councillors, faction captains and vice-captains to assist in making the school safer by reporting incidents and assisting students who may be targets of bullying. Teach bystander students to challenge bullying. Provide safe places, mentors and group problem-solving.
- Whole class / parent workshops / group workshops for ongoing problems.
- Intensive small group work for students who bully (conflict resolution, anger management) and students who are bullied (assertiveness training and self-protective behaviours).
- Teachers to be assisted in difficult cases by administrator and school psychologist.
- **Rewarding positive action and appropriate behaviour:**
 - Champ cards – for good sportsmanship, fair play and appropriate behaviour in the playground. Results announced at assemblies. Class with most Champ cards receives a certificate at Monday's assembly. House with the most champ cards at the end of each term receive a trophy. Once children receive Five Champ cards, they receive a Virtues Champ certificate at Monday's assembly.
 - Letter of Commendation given to child and their parents recognising that the child has not received a behaviour slip during the semester.
 - Extended recess at the end of each term for any children who have not received a behaviour slip during the term.
 - Merit certificates – teachers' awards presented at assemblies.

– Uniform award – an ice-cream voucher given to a student from each Monday for wearing their uniform correctly.

- Inform the students about opportunities for incidents to be reported confidentially in a verbal or written form to staff, the Principal, parents and student leaders.
- New students arriving later in the school year to be advised of the policy.

■ **Schoolyard strategies:**

– Segregate the schoolyard into group areas (junior, middle and upper).

– More play direction – ideas given for games.

– Teachers reinforce positives with champ cards and verbal praise. Listen to grievances and take appropriate action.

– Teachers to return to class promptly after the siren goes to counter bullying in class lines.

– Lunchtime activities – chess club, lunchtime oval games, art club, Assumption Greenies, Library board games.

– Children are informed about ‘Safe Areas’ i.e. library, the tree near the staffroom and computer room.

– Follow the school’s Behaviour Management Policy – more serious offences result in a detention, followed by in school and out of school suspension. Any child who receives a suspension will not be eligible for interschool competitions or out of classroom activities such as excursions and camps.

Minor offences – children receive a slip, two or more slips result in yard clean up.

Induction of new students and new staff

- Class teachers to introduce new students to the desired outcomes and the prevention programs.
- Line managers/administrators to discuss program with new staff.