BULLYING POLICY

INTRODUCTION

St Joseph’s School is a place of learning. As such, students have the right to learn and teachers have the right to teach in an environment that is safe and supportive.

Bullying has always been an issue in schools, but it has only been in the last decade or so that there has been an increasing awareness of how detrimental it can be to the progress of students both academically and psychologically. This has gained particular relevance due to the evolution of bullying methods using new technologies, such as mobile phones and personal computers. There has been a shift away from the view that bullying is an inevitable part of the culture of schools, and that children need to learn to cope as a life skill. These changes in attitude have come about partly because of the amount of research that has gone into bullying in recent years. They have also occurred due to the increased awareness of issues of Child Protection, and the realization that bullying is a component of same.

In addition, St Joseph’s School operates under the directives from the Toowoomba Catholic Education Office as outlined in the Student Protection & Risk Management Kit for Schools.

With these pieces of legislation, guidelines and the volume of current research, it is essential to respond to the issue of Bullying in our school community and to address the issues in a proactive way.

RATIONALE

MISSION STATEMENT

“St. Joseph’s School offers an holistic education within a Catholic Christian environment whilst developing and valuing the uniqueness of the individual as we encourage each student to become a life long learner.”

Ensuring that the St Joseph’s learning environment is safe and free from all forms of bullying is therefore critical to the successful fulfillment of our mission.

MERCY VALUES

Respect, dignity, justice & mercy, compassion.

DEFINITIONS

Bullying – Bullying is behaviour which can be defined as the repeated attack, whether physical, psychological, social or verbal in nature, by a person/persons in a position of power which is formally
or situationally defined, with the intention of causing distress for their own gain or satisfaction. Bullying is an attitude as well as an act.

**POLICY STATEMENT**

St Joseph’s School, as part of the wider Christian community, embraces the belief that each person has the right to be safe at all times. The school 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.

Because the school believes in the dignity of the human person, every effort will be made to ensure that the issue of bullying is well understood by all, and that anyone who is being bullied is supported and helped. St Joseph’s will challenge cultures that support bullying and other forms of abuse in society, and will address situations of such with due recognition of the Catholic Church context and the pastoral care of individuals.

**CONSEQUENCES**

- St Joseph’s School will provide opportunities for all of our children to learn about what bullying is and how to develop protective behaviours. **This applies to traditional forms of bullying as well as the emerging reality of cyber bullying.**
- Opportunities will be presented to students that will allow them to identify bullying behaviour without compromising safety.
- Structures and processes will be developed and set in place for the St Joseph’s Community so that teachers, parents, students and other members of the community are aware of and understand the issues surrounding bullying. Staff will be in-serviced in the School Procedures for Addressing Bullying.
- St Joseph’s School will develop procedures clearly outlining the action to be taken and steps to follow in registering an allegation or concern. Similarly, procedures for assessment and responding to allegations of bullying will be developed. These developments will take into account the need to address those who are bullies, as well as the victims of bullying.

Michael McCarthy  
Principal

Chris Haynes  
Board Chairman