Our school is committed to providing a safe and caring environment that fosters respect for others and does not tolerate bullying. The children are made to feel that they belong to a caring, welcoming community where each child is respected, valued and welcomed.

Bullying is a clear form of harassment. A person is bullied when one or more other people intentionally expose them regularly and over time to negative or harmful actions. Bullies are people who deliberately set out to intimidate, exclude, threaten and, or, hurt others repeatedly.

“Bullying and harassment are often thought of separately; however both involve a more powerful person or group oppressing a less powerful person or group, often on the grounds of 'difference '. These differences can be related to culture, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability or disability, religion, body size and physical appearance, personality, age, marital status, parenting status or economic status”.

From 'National Safe Schools Framework' (2004)

**Our school community will**-
- Openly talk about bullying -what it is, how it affects us and what we can do.
- Teach students the skills, which will build self esteem and empower them to take responsibility for themselves.
- Students will be provided with opportunities to practise these skills.
- Consistently enforce the Anti -Bullying policy, taking appropriate action when bullying behaviour occurs.
- Promote peer support through 'circle of friends' and 'buddies' for all students. Refer to Appendix 2: Responsibilities of Staff, Students and Parents
IMPLEMENTATION
Steps to be followed when an act of bullying has been reported or observed.

1. Class teacher speaks with relevant parties to ascertain whether an act of bullying has occurred.
2. Student or group sent to time out area.
3. Class teacher fills out proforma. Refer to Appendix 1: Incidents of Bullying Proforma
4. Student or group remains in time out area until relevant section on the proforma is completed.
5. Completed proforma is given to the Principal.
6. Principal signs proforma and places it in an envelope addressed to the parents.
7. Proforma is taken home to the parents to read and sign.
8. Proforma brought back to the Principal on the next school day.
9. Principal files proforma, which includes the offender's name, victim's name and entry date in the Office Bullying Register.
10. Principal to follow up non returned proofreads with a phone call to the parents.
11. When three entries have been filed for a particular child, a meeting is called with the Principal, parents, child and class teacher.
12. Restorative approaches and model will be implemented for the resolution of conflict. Refer to Appendix 3: Restorative Approaches and Practices/Model
13. Student may be referred to the Student Welfare Support Group. Refer to Appendix 4: Student Wellbeing Policy

For additional information refer to O.L.A School Information Folder, School Organisation:
Student Behaviour & Management and Discipline Policy.

RESOURCES
• You Can Do It! Social and Emotional Curriculum
• Friendly Kids, Friendly Classroom Program
• Protective Behaviours Program
• Religious Education
• O.L.A. School Information Folder: Student Behaviour & Management and Discipline Policy
• Parish based Psychologists available
• Student Welfare Support Group

APPENDICES
Appendix 1: Incidents of Bullying Proforma
Appendix 2: Responsibilities of Staff, Students and Parents
Appendix 3: Restorative Approaches and Practices/ Model Information
Appendix 4: Student Wellbeing Policy
Appendix 5: C.E.C.V. Pastoral Care Policy
APPENDIX 1
INCIDENTS OF BULLYING PROFORMA
1. Class teacher speaks with all relevant parties to ascertain whether an act of bullying has occurred.
2. Student or group sent to a time out area.
3. Class teacher fills out Proforma.
4. Completed Proforma is given to the Principal.
5. Principal reads and signs Proforma.
6. Proforma is sent home addressed to parents.
7. Parents to read and sign Proforma.
8. Proforma is returned to the Principal on the next school day.
9. Principal files Proforma in the Office Bullying Register
10. The Principal will follow up Proformas not returned with a phone call to the parents.

STUDENT'S NAME:          GRADE:          DATE:
LOCATION:                WITNESSES:
CLASS TEACHER:

CIRCLE TYPE OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

Physical:    Hitting, kicking, punching, spitting, taking or damaging belongings,
             Forcing others to hand over food, money etc, and intimidation.
Verbal:      Name calling, teasing, threatening comments.
Indirect:    Exclusion from a group / activity, spreading false stories about others

RECORD IN DETAIL THE INCIDENT

Class Teacher's Signature:
Principal's Signature:    Parent's Signature:
APPENDIX 2
RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF, STUDENTS AND PARENTS

RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF
- To model appropriate behaviour at all times.
- To watch for signs of distress ie. Pattern of headaches, mood changes, damaged clothing, bruises etc.
- To deal with all reported and observed incidents of bullying.
- To ensure that students are supervised at all times.
- To report incidents of bullying according to the policy set out.
- To articulate that bullying is not acceptable.
- To communicate to other relevant staff any incidents of bullying.
- To take steps to help victims and address the problem without placing the victim at further risk.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS
- To talk to a teacher / parents if they are being bullied or if they see someone else being bullied.
- To help someone who is being bullied.
- To not bully others and say, "Bullying is not acceptable".
- To never condone or encourage, or be a spectator to bullying.

What should I do if I need to stand up for myself?
- take a deep breath
- stand up straight
- look the person in the face
- speak firmly and politely
- possible responses. are: "Stop that I don't like it"
- "Stop it now"
- "You're being unkind/mean/a bully"
- "I'm going to tell someone who can help"
- move away

If I see or hear of any bullying, what should I do?
- refuse to be involved in bullying
- do not encourage others to be a bully
- do not be a spectator to bullying
- speak out or go and get help

Tell someone who can help
- your class teacher
- another teacher
- a school leader
- a friend
- your parents

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS
- To model appropriate behaviours at all times.
- To watch for signs of distress ie. Unwillingness to attend school, pattern of headaches, mood swings, damaged clothing, bruises etc.
- To speak to someone on staff if they suspect that their child is being bullied.
- To instruct their children to talk to a teacher if they are being bullied.
- To attend meetings at the school if required.
APPENDIX 3:
RESTORATIVE APPROACHES & PRACTICES

Restorative Approaches
Restorative practices in school are inspired by the philosophy and practices of restorative justice, which puts repairing harm done to relationships and people over and above the need for assigning blame and dispensing punishment.

Key values create an ethos of respect, inclusion, accountability and taking responsibility, commitment to relationships, fairness, collaboration, empowerment and emotional awareness.

Key skills include active listening, facilitating conversation and problem solving, listening to and expressing emotion and empowering others to take ownership of problems.

A restorative approach to conflict or wrongdoing consists in asking 4 KEY QUESTIONS:
1. What has happened?
2. Who has been affected?
3. How can we involve everyone who has been affected in finding a way forward?
4. How can everyone do things differently in the future?

The restorative approach is based on the belief that the people best placed to resolve a conflict or problems are the people directly involved.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OLD PARADIGM RETRIBUTIVE JUSTICE</th>
<th>NEW PARADIGM RESTORATIVE JUSTICE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Misdemeanour defined as breaking the school rules</td>
<td>1 Misdemeanour defined as adversely affecting others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on establishing blame or guilt, on the past (did he/she do it?)</td>
<td>2 Focus on problem-solving by expressing feelings and needs and how to meet them in the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adversarial relationship and process</td>
<td>3 Dialogue and negotiation – everyone involved in communicating and cooperating with each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imposition of pain or unpleasantness to punish and deter/prevent</td>
<td>4 Restitution as a means of restoring both/all parties, the goal being reconciliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attention to right rules, and adherence to due process</td>
<td>5 Attention to right relationships and achievement of the desired outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict represented as impersonal and abstract: individual versus school</td>
<td>6 Misdemeanours recognized as inter-personal conflicts with some value to learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One social injury replaced by another</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>School community as spectators, represented by member of staff dealing with the situation</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People affected by misdemeanor not necessarily involved</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscreant accountability defined in terms of receiving punishment</td>
<td>10</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Our Lady of the Assumption
Student Wellbeing Policy

RATIONALE:
At Our Lady of the Assumption we believe the emotional and physical wellbeing of our students is pivotal to their success at school, as adolescents and in their future lives. Physically and emotionally healthy students are happy, able to deal positively with life’s challenges, experience connectedness with the school and community, and are well placed to develop into well-balanced and successful young adults.

AIMS:
We aim to:
- To develop students who are emotionally and physically healthy
- To provide educational environment which recognises, values and builds student wellbeing
- Support colleagues in the management of students’ needs
- Assist teachers by providing strategies, information and resources
- Support students who are encountering difficulties at school
- Promote open communication between parents and staff
- Advocate and aid the referral process where appropriate to outside services
- Follow Catholic Education Office Guidelines for external referral processes
- Utilise the expertise available within the school community
- Monitor and evaluate the student’s progress
- Establish and maintain a Student Register
- Offer reviews on a regular basis throughout Prep to Grade Six when required
- Sustain consistent approaches to the management of students’ needs

IMPLEMENTATION:
- The maintenance of the Student Welfare Support Group
- Monitor formal processes of referral to the Student Welfare Support Group
- Support mainstream integration of students and programs
- Scheduled weekly meetings
- Scheduled reviews of student’s progress
- Recording of detailed minutes from Parent-Teacher, Program Support Group and Student Welfare meetings
- Liaise with support personnel including external agencies and the Catholic Education Office
- Ongoing communication between school and home via regular meetings and feedback
- Annual review of the Student Welfare Support Group register
- Regular professional development of staff regarding student wellbeing
- Programs dealing with issues such as drug education, bullying and the development of our students social and emotional capabilities will form part of the school’s Student Wellbeing program
- Provision of the curriculum that meets the individual needs of students. (ILP)
- Develop the well being of our students is central to our role as a school, and is reflected in our whole school philosophy.
- A culture of positive reinforcement will permeate all facets of our school.
• Students work and achievements will be regularly showcased and publicly recognised.
• Our school will value and encourage students’ individuality, differences and diversity.
• The curriculum will be broad and provide needs of individual students and will be developed to cater for multiple intelligences.
• Restorative Justice will be implemented across the school.
• Support for the wellbeing of parents and families will be available through external agencies and programs offered by the school.
APPENDIX 5:

Responding to serious offences
A school’s response to a serious offence represents a critical test of its pastoral identity. A serious offence by a student challenges the school to be responsive to the rights, welfare and special needs of the perpetrator of an offence, and at the same time demonstrate a commitment to the welfare, rights and well-being of all of its members. In such a context, a school is subject to a myriad of pressures and conflicts.

The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria offers the following support material and policy statements, organised under the following headings:

Definition of a serious offence;
Civil and diocesan requirements; and
Dealing with serious offences: a suggested process.

Definition of a serious offence
Conforming to the Education Act 1958 (Education Regulations 1988), the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria proposes that a serious offence should be defined as activities or behaviour of a student which:

i) seriously undermines the ethos of the Catholic school; or
ii) consistently and deliberately fails to comply with any lawful order of a principal or teacher; or
iii) is offensive, or dangerous, to the physical or emotional health of any staff member or any student; or
iv) consistently and deliberately interferes with the educational opportunities of other students.

Civil and diocesan requirements
Serious Offences (CECV Policy, 1993)
The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria requires that each school prepare its own written policy on the nature of serious offences. This policy is to be available to all members of the school community after it has been developed by them and it is to be reviewed by them annually.

NOTE
Some serious offences are by their nature criminal offences, and schools are obliged to observe certain legal requirements. For further information and guidance, refer to:

2) Legal Issues in Schools, a statement of CECV, pars 34–39.

Expulsion (Bishops’ Statement)
We, the Archbishop of Melbourne and Bishops of Ballarat, Sale and Sandhurst, consider expulsion of students in Catholic schools and colleges to be a severe form of sanction, to be used only in most serious
circumstances. If, after appropriate processes, a school authority deems a student be transferred for his/her good, such a transfer should be negotiated according to the processes laid down by the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria.

If however, in most serious circumstances, such processes fail, the prior approval of the Director of Catholic Education of the diocese must be sought before a student is dismissed.

**Suspension (CECV Policy 1993)**
The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria declares that suspension of a student from the school is a serious disciplinary measure and should only be used when other disciplinary measures have not produced a satisfactory outcome. A student shall not be suspended for a period of time greater than nine school days in any one school year.

**Corporal Punishment (CECV Policy)**
The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria declares that corporal punishment is inappropriate within the Catholic school and must not be used.

This declaration is in total accord with the *Education Act 1958* (Education Regulations 1988 section 5.5).

**Dealing with serious offences: a suggested process**

The process being suggested here, for dealing with serious offences in Victorian Catholic schools, is the **Discipline and Welfare Conference Group**.

This process, informed by the values of the school system, has a structure which is supportive of the student, parents and school. When a student commits a serious offence, the consequences of such action necessitate decisions be made. This Discipline and Welfare Conference Group provides a forum for collaborative decision-making, in the light of civil, diocesan, school and, most importantly, pastoral accountability.

The process described here acknowledges that in some instances, where the behaviour of a student is deemed to cause immediate or ongoing harm, distress or danger to others, it may be necessary to withdraw or suspend him/her from the student community, pending the deliberations of the Discipline and Welfare Conference Group.

**Suggested role and responsibility of the discipline and welfare conference group**

It is the responsibility of the Discipline and Welfare Conference Group to address the following objectives:

- convene the meeting of the conference group as soon as possible, following the decision that a student has committed a serious offence;
• consider all issues relevant to the behaviour of the student and the implications for others in the community;
• identify the educational and social needs of the student;
• identify strategies which will enable the student to re-establish his/her place in the life of the school, parish and local community;
• determine the appropriate steps required to meet these objectives;
• consider the support and resources which may be available, from both within the school and outside, to assist in implementing the action;
• ensure that accurate records of decisions are kept and that decisions are implemented; and
• maintain confidentiality at all times.

Suggested composition of the discipline and welfare conference group
The composition of the Discipline and Welfare Conference Group might include:

• parent(s) or guardian(s) of the student;
• if requested, a parent support person nominated by the parent/guardian;
• the principal or, in exceptional circumstances, his/her nominee as the chairperson;
• the class teacher (primary) or the teacher nominated as having responsibility for the student (e.g. level co-ordinator, secondary);
• the student; and
• specialist personnel who may assist, for example, the careers’ adviser or student counsellor.

In the case of parish primary schools, the parish priest may attend meetings in an ex-officio capacity, mindful of the fact that the Discipline and Welfare Conference Group will be making recommendations to him for final decision.

Assistance for dealing with the process is readily available from diocesan Catholic Education Office personnel (Pastoral Care Unit).

Possible outcomes of the discipline and welfare conference group
In considering the student and the case at hand, the group has a number of options available to it, including contractual arrangements, suspension and negotiated transfer. All are outlined here.

In final decisions, the group should aim for consensus. Where this is not achievable, the principal takes responsibility for a final decision, in accordance with school policies and directives which have been ratified by the appropriate school authority.

Contractual arrangements
Contractual arrangements can be defined as an agreement that is reached between the school, the student and parent(s)/guardian regarding the student’s continued enrolment in the school.

If the Discipline and Welfare Conference Group considers a contract to be the most appropriate action, the following matters need to be considered and written into the contract:

• expectations regarding the student’s behaviour;
• class and timetable arrangements including any specific scheduling of sessions;
• duration of contract;
• means by which the student will be monitored during this arrangement; and
• consequences should the student fail to comply with the conditions outlined in the contract.

**Suspension**

If the Discipline and Welfare Conference Group considers suspension to be the most appropriate action, the following matters need to be discussed:

• the legal and pastoral responsibilities of the parent(s) during the time of the proposed suspension;
• the school’s responsibility for providing learning material;
• on the return of the student to school, arrangements for monitoring his/her subsequent progress;
• the process of settling back into the school environment, and how this is to be facilitated; and
• the school’s responsibility for reviewing and evaluating its own policies and procedures in the light of the experience.

**Negotiated transfer**

Negotiated transfer can be defined as an action which involves a change of school by a student either between Catholic schools or to a school within another sector.

In the case of students who are of post-compulsory school age, a wider range of options might be considered. For example, arrangements might be made for a transfer, either temporary or permanent, to the workforce, or to a higher education or training institute.

If the Discipline and Welfare Conference Group considers negotiated transfer to be the most appropriate action, the following matters need to be considered:

• the environment which would best provide for the student’s emotional, social and spiritual needs;
• the school which would provide an educational program suitable to the student’s interest, ability and aspirations;
• the process by which the transfer will be negotiated;
• the support required by the student and parent(s)/guardian in making the transition;
• the role of the school in maintaining support to the student once the transition has taken place; and
• the means by which the process will be evaluated and the decision made reviewed.

If the negotiated transfer cannot be resolved, the Director of the appropriate Catholic Education Office is to be informed in writing.

The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria emphasises that the implementation of any of the above procedures for serious offences should occur only after a school has determined that all measures taken to have a student comply with agreed codes of conduct have failed to produce a satisfactory outcome.

The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria also renews its recommendation that each school develop its own policy and set of procedures for responding to
serious offences, and that such procedures take into account relevant diocesan policies and civil legislation as outlined herein.

References

Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, Pastoral Care in Catholic Schools, Melbourne, 1985.

The Education Act 1958.

Education Regulations 1977.


Related policies and support material
Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Policies
Catholic Education Office Policies
Enrolment Policy, CEOM 2.4, 1990.
HIV/AIDS Education, CEOM 2.6, 1991
New Enrolments/Admissions of Students with Impairment, Disability or Handicap in Catholic Schools, CEOM 2.11, 1991.
Commonwealth Legislation
Sex Discrimination Act 1984
Victorian Legislation

*Note:* Recent amendments to this Act require mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse. Schools are advised to pay close attention to forthcoming information and guidelines which will accompany this legislative requirement.

The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria hopes that all schools will grow in their understanding of Pastoral Care as a distinctive feature of a Catholic school. Such an orientation places responsibilities on principals, teachers, students, parents and the wider community to nurturing and enriching the climate of
Pastoral Care within schools, in order that the ideals of Catholic Education might be realised.

The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria recommends that this document be studied and implemented in conjunction with related documents and policies listed herein. In addition, schools are encouraged to renew all policies, programs and procedures, with a view to achieving a coordinated, consistent and enriched pastoral identity and service.
# Report of Bullying Incident

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDENT’S NAME</th>
<th>GRADE</th>
<th>DATE</th>
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<tr>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>WITNESSES</th>
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<tr>
<th>CLASS TEACHER</th>
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## CIRCLE TYPE OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

<table>
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</table>

**RECORD IN DETAIL THE INCIDENT**

Class Teacher's Signature:

Principal's Signature:  
Parent's Signature: