McAuley College
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Response to Bullying

Policy and Procedures

McAuley College Community Spirit - Response to Bullying
McAuley College community engenders a spirit that affirms the dignity and worth of each of its members.

Our students are entitled to enjoy their education free from bullying. McAuley College has a school-wide response to bullying that is predicated on our priority for developing positive relationships and our College values of love, respect and dignity. The College is committed to the prevention of bullying by and of students in our College, and the implementation of appropriate response strategies which address school bullying.

Bullying affects everyone - not just the bullies and their victims. It also affects those other students who may witness bullying and the distress of the victim. It can damage the atmosphere of a class and even the climate of a school. All members of our community accept responsibility to promote a school environment that is safe for everyone, and to take direct initiatives to prevent the incidence of bullying behaviour within the College.

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Definitions

Bullying can be defined as an <u>ongoing</u> misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more persons. Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Single incidents and conflicts or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.

Types of bullying

1. Physical Bullying
• When a person (or group of people) uses actions to bully, such as hitting, poking, tripping or pushing.
• Repeatedly and intentionally damaging someone's belongings is also physical bullying.

2. Verbal Bullying
• Repeated or systematic name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks and verbal abuse.

3. Covert Bullying
• Such as lying about someone, spreading rumours, playing a nasty joke that makes the person feel humiliated or powerless, mimicking or deliberately excluding someone.

4. Psychological Bullying
• Examples include threatening, manipulating or stalking someone.

5. Cyber Bullying
• Using technology, such as email, mobile phones, chat rooms, social networking sites

to bully verbally, socially or psychologically.

What is NOT Bullying?

Although it's neither respectful nor acceptable if someone behaves in a mean or aggressive way on one occasion, it isn't considered bullying. Conflict or fights between equals and single incidents are not defined as bullying. A fight or disagreement between students of equal power or status isn't considered bullying. There are also some behaviours, which, although they might be unpleasant or distressing, are not bullying:

Mutual conflict which involves a disagreement. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.

Single-episode acts of nastiness or physical aggression, or aggression directed towards many different people, is not bullying unless it becomes a pattern of behaviours.

Social rejection or dislike is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

Again, while these actions may not be labelled as bullying they are still not acceptable.

Procedures to address bullying

Help your child to identify the bullying behaviour and ask them:
• What has been happening?
• Who has been involved?
• Where have the incidents occurred?
• Has anyone else seen the behaviour?

Discuss with your child some immediate strategies. Make a plan to deal with the bullying. Encourage them to:
• talk with the teacher
• stay calm
• move away from the situation
• firmly say "No!" and tell the bully to stop

What should a student do if they see someone being bullied?

If a student sees someone being bullied (or witness it online), keep safe and choose your response to match the situation:

•   speak up and let the person doing the bullying know that what they are doing is bullying

•   refuse to join in with the bullying and walk away

•   help the student who is being bullied to ask for help

•   ask a teacher or support person for help and report what happened

The first priority in any response to incidents of bullying behaviour is always the wellbeing and on-going protection of those who have or may have been affected by the behaviour.

Students and parents are advised to report suspected cases of bullying to the Pastoral Care Teacher or Year Coordinator.

Cyber Safety

McAuley College teaches and expects Cybersafe behaviours including safe, respectful and responsible use of the internet and mobile phone technology. Behaviours which are not cyber safe include:

Cyber Bullying:

Repeated unsafe, disrespectful and irresponsible technological practices may be considered cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is the use of technology to bully a person or group with the intent to hurt them socially, psychologically or even physically.

What does cyberbullying look like?

Cyberbullying can occur in many ways, including:

- abusive texts and emails
- hurtful messages, images or videos
- imitating others online
- publishing another person's private information
- creating harmful sites targeted at others
- circulating harmful or humiliating information, videos, images or sites
- excluding others online
- humiliating others online
- nasty online gossip and chat.

Sexting

Sexting includes the sending of sexually explicit messages or photographs of oneself or others, using mobile phone technology either by request or spontaneously. It can also include posting of this material online. **It is important that students and parents understand that the production or distribution (including texting and posting) of lewd images of themselves or others may constitute child exploitation material with a potential criminal penalty.**

How should a student handle cyberbullying?

- Talk to someone you trust straight away—like a parent, sibling, uncle/aunt, teacher or friend, or contact Kids Helpline
- Save, store, screenshot emails, chat logs, posts or SMS's, collect the evidence—keep mobile phone messages, take screen shots and print emails or social networking conversations and inform your parents or teacher immediately. Do NOT repost or circulate.
- Block and delete the bully from all contact lists, change privacy settings
- Do not respond to nasty emails, chats, SMS or comments – this is what the bully wants so ignore them.
- Have some 'down time' without computer or mobile. Give yourself some time away from technology just for a break
- If the bullying continues – delete your current email or social media account and start a new account. Only give your new details to a small list of trusted friends.
- Do something you enjoy—catch-up with friends, listen to good music, watch a good show or chat online to people you can trust
- Get a new phone number if being harassed on your phone. Report the problem to your phone company and insist on a new number for free.
- Remember you didn't ask for this—nobody deserves to be bullied and you will get through this.

What if a friend is being cyberbullied?

If you have a friend or know someone at school who is being cyberbullied:

- DO NOT JOIN IN - don't comment on posts, images or videos that will hurt others
- Don't forward or share posts, images or videos that will hurt others
- Leave negative groups and conversations
- Report bullying to someone that can help—this can be a report to your parents or teacher
- If you are confident, call others on their bullying and ask them to stop—'Enough. This isn't funny'

McAuley College - Response to Bullying

In situations where bullying occurs, the response of the College may include:

- Actions as laid out by the school-wide positive behaviour support plan
- Incidents are recorded and tracked by the College through the BCE Student Behaviour Support Database
- Give the students who are bullying the opportunity to change behaviour
- Contact parents of all parties involved
- Assist students to develop more appropriate social skills
- Implement a behaviour management plan for the individual student/s
- Explicitly teach about conflict and bullying
- Implement resilience and anti- bullying programs
- Conduct mediation sessions
- Apply disciplinary consequences
- Provide ongoing support for students

The school will not give you any of the personal details of other students involved. They will not give you any details of consequences given to other students involved because of privacy requirements.

External agencies

Parents and students can obtain information and assistance from the following external agencies:

- Kids Helpline: a free, private and confidential, 24-hour telephone and online counselling service for young people aged between 5 - 25 years. http://www.kidshelp.com.au/
- Act Smart Be Safe: a gateway for parents/carers, students, teachers and the community to access information to help improve youth safety. http://education.qld.gov.au/actsmartbesafe/
- Bullying. No way!: an online resource providing information for parents/carers, students and educators. http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au/who/default.shtml
- KidsMatter: a school based framework that aims to improve the mental health and wellbeing of children. http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/

Further information

Further information can be obtained from the Brisbane Catholic Education Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying in Schools Policy