

Rationale or Purpose

The McAuley High School Board seeks to take all reasonable steps to develop high standards of behaviour in order to fulfil the charter expectations, our Catholic Special Character expectations and the requirements of the Ministry of Education. The Board seeks to foster and develop a safe, positive physical and emotional school environment that creates a climate of trust. Students, staff, parents and whānau share the responsibility for making McAuley High School a respectful and inclusive environment. As a Mercy Catholic school, we show *Whakarangatira* to others, we treat all people with respect, and we honour the dignity of a person as they are created in God's image and likeness.

Policy Statement

We are committed to ensuring that our school provides an environment free from bullying behaviours. All members of our school community - Board, school leaders, teachers, staff, students and parents and whānau, should have an understanding of what bullying is; and know what to do when bullying does occur.

What is Bullying?

Our school community agrees that:

1. bullying is deliberate
2. bullying involves a power imbalance
3. bullying has an element of repetition
4. bullying is harmful.

Definitions

Deliberate: intentionally causing physical and / or emotional pain or discomfort to another person.

Power Imbalance: An unequal relationship between the target person and the person doing the bullying that may be based on physical size, age, gender, social status, digital capability, availability of online access or being anonymous.

Repetition: bullying behaviour is usually not one-off. It is repeated over time, with the threat of further incidents leading to fear and anxiety. Repeated acts of bullying may involve single acts with different targets, as well as multiple acts with the same target. In cases of cyberbullying, it may include a single post that has spread or been reposted by others.

Harmful: there is short or long-term physical, social or emotional harm to the target.

Characteristics of Bullying

Bullying behaviours are intimidating and can be physical, verbal, or social, and can take place in the physical world or digitally.

- Physical bullying involves hurting a person's body or possessions, such as hitting, kicking, tripping, shoving, taking or damaging belongings, rude hand gestures, or being made afraid of getting hurt.
- Verbal bullying is saying or writing mean things, such as threats, discriminatory remarks, name calling, making fun of someone, hurtful comments, emails, texts, anonymous comments or postings online.
- Social bullying involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships, such as spreading rumours or personal information, excluding from groups or activities, telling lies about someone, posting negative material online.

Bullying can involve up to three parties; initiators (those doing the bullying), targets (those being bullied) and bystanders (those who witness the bullying).

Bullying can be easy to see, such as punching or name calling. Or it can be hidden and hard for others to see, such as threatening looks, whispering, excluding, restricting where someone sits or who they can talk to, or spreading rumours about them behind their back. Bullying can happen in person or online. Most bullying is hidden from adults.

Bullying Prevention

We recognise that real change happens when students, staff, parents, whānau and other members of the community, share responsibility for making our school a respectful and inclusive environment. We will:

- Regularly survey our school community through Wellbeing@School and identify areas for improvement through the survey findings. Regularly promote our expectations and successes in preventing bullying (e.g. in assemblies, in the health programme, newsletters and social media)
- Hold yearly professional learning and development for teachers on their understanding of bullying prevention and response.
- Use a range of activities including curriculum-based programmes to develop the ability of students to relate to each other (e.g. peer mediation, social problem-solving solutions, role playing, revolution tour)
- Promote digital citizenship and the safe use of technology through all classes and our ICT Use Agreements.
- Support the student-led peer to peer initiative (Peer Mediation).

Responding to Bullying

We recognise the importance of consistently responding to all reported incidents of bullying in our school and ensuring that planned interventions are used to respond to these incidents and support all involved. We will support anyone who has been targeted by, engaged in, or witness to, the bullying behaviour.

- All reported incidents of bullying will be taken seriously and followed up as appropriate.
- An appropriate adult will support the students reporting the behaviour by reassuring that they have done the right thing.
- We will involve parents and whānau as appropriate and as early as possible.
- All more serious incidents will be escalated to Senior Leadership and we will seek advice and involvement from outside agencies when necessary (e.g. Netsafe and the Police).

How to Report Bullying

Step 1: Talk to a staff member.

Step 2: Not sorted? The issue is referred to your Dean.

Step 3: Still not sorted? The issue is referred to the Deputy Principal Pastoral.

Step 4: And still not sorted? The issue is referred to the Principal.

Bullying Outside of School Hours

Bullying, particularly cyberbullying, occurring outside of school hours that impacts on safety and learning within the school, may also be dealt with according to the policy. Families may also wish to report directly to the Police or Netsafe.

Raising Community Awareness

We recognise the importance of good communication between home and school to promote consistent messages and to ensure that any reported bullying can be recognised and responded to effectively. We will regularly raise the awareness of McAuley High School's approach to bullying and celebrate our positive school culture. This may be done through parent evenings, assemblies, newsletters and displays. The policy will be available on the school website.

Presented to the Board of Trustees:

Approved **2025**

To be Reviewed **2028**