



Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy

Understanding bullying

Bullying is the repeated and intentional behaviour of causing fear, distress or harm towards another person that involves an imbalance of power. It can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and harassment. In any bullying incident there are likely to be three parties involved: the bully, the person being bullied, and bystanders.

Bullying can take many forms including:

- **Physical bullying** which involves physical actions such as hitting, pushing, obstructing or being used to hurt or intimidate someone. Damaging, stealing or hiding personal belongings is also a form of physical bullying.
- **Psychological bullying** which is when words or actions are used to cause psychological harm. Examples of psychological bullying include name calling, teasing or making fun of someone because of their actions, appearance, physical characteristics or cultural background.
- **Indirect bullying** which is when deliberate acts of exclusion or spreading of untrue stories are used to hurt or intimidate someone.
- **Cyber bullying** which is the ongoing abuse of power to threaten or harm another person using technology. Cyber bullying can occur in chat rooms, on social networking sites, through emails or on mobile phones.

Any reference to Saint Ignatius College, its uniform, its students or its staff is not authorised without the prior permission of the school. The publishing of any unauthorised school material on electronic sites is not permitted.

It is against School Procedure and the Privacy Rights of teachers and fellow students, to disclose or discuss any personal information about them, or to identify them without their knowledge or consent, or to bully them in any way via the use of technology, whether using technology provided by the school; or through the use of personal technology at school. Misuse of mobile phones, cameras or other technology at school is prohibited.

Examples of misuse include:

- Photographing anyone without their permission.
- Photographing any school events, classroom or playground activities without permission.
- Bullying in any form.
- Sharing the personal information of anyone else.
- Using a mobile phones or other electronic device (iPods, MP3 players, electronic pens and next generation devices) at any time during the school day without the express permission of a supervising teacher or Head/Assistant Head of School.

Students are reminded that the school procedure demands that they are responsible for any material they send or publish. They must not:

- Make or post indecent remarks, proposals or materials.
- Send or publish any material that is obscene or defamatory or which is intended to annoy, harass or intimidate another person.

It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, if action as sanctioned by the Principal is deemed ineffective, as with all such incidents, the College may consider it appropriate to involve the police. Hence, students with mobile phones must not engage in personal attacks, harass another person, or post private information about another person using SMS messages, taking/sending photos or objectionable images, and phone calls.

What isn't bullying

There are many negative situations which, whilst being potentially distressing for students, are not bullying. These include:

- **Mutual Conflict Situations** which arise where there is disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Mutual conflict situations need to be closely monitored as they may evolve into a bullying situation
- **One-Off Acts** (of aggression or meanness) including single incidents of loss of temper, shouting or swearing do not normally constitute bullying.

Signs of bullying

Major behavioural changes in a student may be indicative of bullying. Such behavioural changes may include:

- crying at night and having nightmares
- refusing to talk when asked "What's wrong?"
- having unexplained bruises, cuts or scratches
- an unwillingness or refusal to go to school
- feeling ill in the mornings
- a decline in quality of school work
- becoming withdrawn and lacking confidence
- beginning to bully siblings
- acting unreasonably.

Bullying is viewed by Saint Ignatius College as unacceptable behaviour. All members of the school community have the right to feel safe and comfortable.

It is our policy that:

- bullying be managed through a 'whole-of-College community' approach involving students, staff and parents/guardians
- bullying prevention strategies be implemented within the College on a continuous basis with a focus on teaching age-appropriate skills and strategies to empower staff, students and parents/guardians to recognise bullying and respond appropriately
- bullying response strategies be tailored to the circumstances of each incident
- staff establish positive role models emphasising our no-bullying culture
- bullying prevention and intervention strategies are reviewed on an annual basis against best practice.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to recognise signs of bullying and notify the College through a trusted staff member immediately (such as a teacher or College Student Wellbeing Officers), if they suspect their child is a victim of bullying.

Our policy

Saint Ignatius College Geelong recognises its duty to students to provide a safe and positive learning environment where individual differences and diversity within the College is respected and accepted.

Bullying is not tolerated at Saint Ignatius College Geelong. It is our policy that:

- bullying be managed through a 'whole-of-College community' approach involving students, staff and parents/guardians
- bullying prevention strategies be implemented within the College on a continuous basis with a focus on teaching age-appropriate skills and strategies to empower staff, students and parents/guardians to recognise bullying and respond appropriately
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Bullying prevention strategies

Saint Ignatius College Geelong recognises that the implementation of whole-College prevention strategies is the most effective way of eliminating, or at least minimising incidents of bullying within our community.

The following initiatives form part of our overall bullying prevention strategy and our strategy to create a 'no-bullying' culture within the College:

- a structured curriculum and peer group support system, that provides age-appropriate information and skills relating to bullying (including cyber bullying) and bullying prevention, to students over the course of the academic year (for example CyberCat cyber safety program for Year 9, bullying no way day Personal Learning activities in Years 7-9)
- education, training and professional development of staff in bullying prevention and response strategies (for examples restorative practices information workshop)
- regular provision of information to parents/guardians, to raise awareness of bullying as a College community issue to equip them to recognise signs of bullying, as well as to provide them with clear paths for raising any concerns they may have relating to bullying directly with the College (parents are directed to our Wellbeing Canvas page on regular occasions which includes information on bullying and coping strategies).
- promotion of a supportive environment that encourages the development of positive relationships and communication between staff, students and parents/guardians
- promotion of responsible bystander behaviour amongst students (Year 7 Personal Learning)
- reporting of incidents of alleged bullying by students, bystanders, parents/guardians and staff are encouraged, and made easy through the establishment of multiple reporting channels (as specified below)
- regular risk assessments of bullying within the College are undertaken by surveying students to identify bullying issues that may ordinarily go unnoticed by staff (CEMSIS survey and Wellbeing surveys and Wellbeing data collection).
- records of reported bullying incidents are maintained and analysed, in order to identify persistent bullies and/or victims and to implement targeted prevention strategies where appropriate (SWAG notes, Xuno infringements, Wellbeing data)
- statements supporting bullying prevention are included in students' College diaries
- education of staff, students and parents/guardians on health conditions to promote understanding and to reduce stigma and fear (students and parents sign student planner at beginning of year to acknowledge this)
- anti-bullying posters are displayed strategically within the College
- promotion of student awareness and a 'no-bullying' environment by participating in events such as the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence.

Reporting bullying

Students and their parents/guardians are sometimes reluctant to pursue bullying incidents, for fear that it will only make matters worse.

A key part of the College's bullying prevention and intervention strategy is to encourage reporting of bullying incidents as well as providing assurance to students who experience bullying (and parents/guardians) that:

- bullying is not tolerated within the College
- their concerns will be taken seriously
- the College has a clear strategy for dealing with bullying issues.

Bullying incidents can be advised to the College verbally (or in writing) through any of the following avenues:

- informing a trusted teacher
- informing the College Student Wellbeing Officers
- informing a student's year level co-ordinator
- informing the Deputy Principal – Students, or the Principal.

What to do if your child is bullied

1. Name bullying when you see it.
2. Before you contact the school, make sure the alleged incidents involving bullying are carefully detailed. As far as possible, set down:
 - a. what exactly happened;
 - b. who was involved;
 - c. where and when;
 - d. whether there was any provocation on the part of the victim
 - e. whether there were witnesses and if so who.
3. Don't attempt to "sort out" the bully yourself, this usually results in escalation.
4. Don't assume that the school teachers know – bullying usually occurs out of the sight of adults.
5. Contact the school and discuss your concerns.
6. Ensure as far as possible that your daughter or son knows what action you are proposing to take.
7. Encourage your daughter or son to talk openly about their feelings.
8. Teach them skills such as assertiveness, problem solving and self-protection to help them deal with the bully.
9. Communicate regularly with your children, listen carefully to what they are saying or not saying and be aware of any signs or symptoms.

Responding to bullying

Bullying behaviours vary enormously in their extent and intent and, as a consequence, each incident needs to be dealt with on its facts.

In all circumstances the College:

- takes bullying incidents seriously
- provides assurance to the victim that they are not at fault and their confidentiality will be respected

- takes time to properly investigate the facts including discussing the incident with the victim, the bully and any bystanders
- takes time to understand any concerns of individuals involved
- maintains records of reported bullying incidents (Xuno)
- will escalate its response when dealing with persistent bullies and/or severe incidents.

Actions that may be taken when responding to bullying include:

- ◇ **The “Method of Shared Concern” Approach (Pikas)**
- ◇ **The “No Blame” Approach (Maines & Robinson)**

These approaches may be used to intervene in group or relational bullying situations. They are only appropriate during the initial stages. They are not appropriate for persistent or severe bullying incidents.

- notification of/consultation with parents/guardians
- offering counselling to persistent bullies/victims
- implementing effective follow up strategies
- disciplinary action, at the Principal’s discretion, including suspension and expulsion of persistent bullies, or in cases of severe incidents.

Staff Responsibilities

All staff are responsible to:

- model appropriate behaviour at all times
- deal with all reported and observed incidents of bullying in accordance with this policy
- ensure that any incident of bullying that they observe or is reported to them, is recorded appropriately
- be vigilant in monitoring students that have been identified as either persistent bullies or victims
- acknowledge the right of parents/guardians to speak with the College if they believe their child is being bullied.

Signage

Anti-bullying posters may be posted in strategic locations in the College to promote appropriate behaviour and encourage students to respect individual differences and diversity.

Implementation

This policy is implemented through a combination of:

- staff training
- student and parent/guardian education and information effective incident reporting procedures
- effective management of bullying incidents when reported
- the creation of a ‘no-bullying’ culture within the College community effective record keeping procedures
- initiation of corrective actions where necessary.

Discipline for breach of policy

Where a staff member breaches this policy Saint Ignatius College Geelong will take disciplinary action, including in the case of serious breaches, summary dismissal.

Responsibilities

Position Responsible	Deputy Principal - Students
Approval Authority	SICG Board
Review Date	(3 years from date of approval/amendment)

Revision history

Revision Ref. No.	Approved/ Amended/ Rescinded	Date	Board/Executive

DRAFT