



ST. THERESA'S ANTI-BULLYING POLICY



RATIONALE

We at St Theresa's acknowledge the richness and diversity of each other. We respect, accept, understand and encourage each other to live in a safe harmonious and just environment. At St Theresa's we promote self-esteem, self-confidence and self-discipline. Bullying behaviour is not tolerated.

We believe that the most effective approach in addressing bullying issues must involve a partnership between parents, teachers, students and relevant others.

DEFINITION

Bullying is "Repeated intimidation over time of a physical, verbal or psychological nature of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group of persons." (Rigby & Slee) Bullying results in either emotional or physical pain and/or distress to the victim.

Bullying can take many forms:

- **Physical Bullying**
including hitting, tripping and pushing, or invasion of personal space, making rude gestures
- **Verbal Bullying**
including name calling, offensive language, insults, homophobic, religious or racist remarks, or verbal abuse.
- **Visual Bullying**
including offensive notes or material, graffiti, or damaging property.
- **Victimisation**
including stand-over tactics, picking on others, lying and spreading rumours, playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate, mimicking, threats, repeated exclusion.
- **Sexual Bullying**
including touching anyone in a sexual manner, sexually oriented jokes, unwanted invitations of a sexual nature, inappropriate questions or remarks about someone's private life and inappropriate drawings or writing of a sexual nature.
- **Cyber Bullying**
including the use of email, text messages or chat rooms to humiliate and distress someone.

RIGHTS

Every member of St. Theresa's school community has shared rights and responsibilities. These include the right

- To be and feel safe and protected

- To be treated with respect, politeness, understanding and justice
- To obtain maximum benefit from all school activities

RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities of School Staff

- to be role models of appropriate behaviour and language at all times
- to endeavour to provide a safe school environment for all members of the school community
- to endeavour to provide a safe environment where children feel comfortable to report bullying
- to listen to and react promptly to a child's concerns
- to be observant for signs of suspected bullying
- to ensure that children are given opportunities to develop the skills required to prevent or deal with bullying
- to ensure that children are familiar with the school's policy of not tolerating bullying and the consequences should it occur
- to seek the cooperation of parents/guardians of both the victim and the bully to resolve conflict situations
- to follow the Restorative Practices model in dealing with conflict situations.

Responsibilities of Parents / Guardians

- to be an appropriate role model for their children at all times
- to listen to and observe their child for changes in behaviour that may indicate that bullying is occurring
- to instruct their child to "tell" if they are being bullied or if they see someone else being bullied
- to help their child develop appropriate strategies, in conjunction with the school, to prevent and/or deal with bullying
- to take ownership of their child's behaviour and acknowledge that their child may be involved in bullying behaviour either as a bully, a victim or an onlooker
- to inform the school if they suspect that bullying is occurring and be prepared to work with the school to resolve a bullying situation
- to be familiar with the school's anti-bullying policy and the approach used in dealing with bullying situations

Responsibilities of Students

- to respect other's emotional and physical well-being
- to understand that any form of bullying will not be tolerated and that both parents and teachers will be involved in resolving bullying behaviour with both the victim and the bully
- to recognise the different forms of bullying that can occur
- to report to an adult any behaviour that is considered threatening to themselves or others

- to refuse to participate in a bullying situation, either as the perpetrator or as a witness
- to be familiar with and use the school procedure in dealing with bullying
- to be able to discourage bullying behaviour
- To continue to seek assistance if bullying persists.

IMPLEMENTATION

We implement the following strategies within the school to prevent bullying.

- **Restorative Practices**

Restorative Practices framework is a process for forming workable and healthy relationships and to find ways restore them when they breakdown.

When working through an issue the teacher has a set of questions that she/he asks those involved. The focus is taken off 'blaming' and works on 'how to make things right'.

- **Circle Time**

Circle Time is a structured activity done on a regular basis. The teacher and students sit in a circle and discuss issues that have arisen through the week, learn about feelings, and play games. The purpose of Circle Time is to build a sense of trust within the group, allow each person an opportunity to speak, develop respect and build self-esteem.

- **Bounce Back**

Bounce Back is a program that teaches social skills.

- **Assertive Discipline**

The Assertive Discipline Policy is the school discipline policy.