BULLYING & CYBERBULLYING POLICY

1.0 Rationale

Our Lady of the Way School is a welcoming and inclusive Catholic Community. The school is committed to developing an educational and organisational culture based on mutual trust and respect that assists people to recognise and develop their personal capabilities.

Any type of bullying/cyberbullying is contrary to Gospel values and our Vision Statement. To be inviting, inclusive and just is to ensure that we work to promote the common good in our school.

All children have a right to an education that is free from discrimination, harassment and bullying. Students who are the targets of persistent bullying can suffer long-term psychological, social and developmental damage that can continue into their adult years.

Violence, bullying and harassment affect everyone, not just the targets of bullies and the perpetrators themselves. It also affects those who witness the violence and aggression that is often associated with bullying and the distress and powerlessness of the victim or victims.

Staff at *Our Lady of the Way School* are committed to developing and implementing policies, procedures and practices that protect students from bullying and cyberbullying behaviours and creating an educational community that is proactive in the promotion of positive behaviours by all students.

This Bullying & Cyberbullying Policy is linked to the *Our Lady of the Way* Quality Behaviour and Well-being Policy.

2.0 Definition

Bullying refers to the repeated verbal, psychological, physical or social behaviour that is harmful, and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group toward one or more persons. This also includes people who use the internet, email, intranets, phones or other ICT mediums such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc. to bully others. This is called cyberbullying.

Bullying may manifest itself in the form of emotional, social, verbal and/or physical incidents, all of which will cause distress, humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and all forms of harassment including that based on sex, race, disability, sexual orientation or

practice of religion. Bullying can happen anywhere and can include:

- 🔸 Physical: hitting; pushing; tripping; kicking; spitting on others;

- 🔸 Verbal: teasing; using offensive names; yelling or screaming abuse; constant criticism of a person; inappropriate comments about a person's appearance;

- 🔸 Non-verbal: writing offensive notes, in any medium; graffiti about others; rude gestures;

- 🔸 Psychological: spreading rumours; hiding or damaging possessions; inappropriate use of information technologies, such as using email, websites or text messaging to hurt others; using the internet or mobile phones to spread rumours or misinformation; unauthorised use of camera phones to cause harm to others;

- 🔸 Social Emotional: deliberately excluding others from a group; refusing to sit next to someone; overtly encouraging other people to actively ignore or avoid a person;

- 🔸 Social Extortion: threatening to take someone's possession, food or money;

- 🔸 Social Property: stealing, hiding, damaging or destroying property.

3.0   The Impact of Bullying

Bullying behaviour stops an individual from feeling comfortable in a school's shared environment. Bullying behaviour can also adversely affect the long-term emotional and social development of the bully. Bullying impacts on the school community as a whole.

Individual students who are bullied may:
- ➢ begin to feel worthless and develop poor self-esteem and self-worth;
- ➢ experience feelings of isolation and distress in the school environment;
- ➢ feel scared and anxious about their personal safety;
- ➢ develop emotional and/or psychological problems;
- ➢ develop long-term problems in establishing friendships and connections with their peers;
- ➢ develop learning and academic delay or difficulties become angry and resentful as a result of their ongoing distress and social isolation.

 A bullying culture in a school may result in:
- ➢ the development of a school atmosphere of distrust and fear;
- ➢ an increase in the number and severity of violent and aggressive acts by students;
- ➢ the development of a frustrated and resentful parent community;
- ➢ an increase in feelings of powerlessness by significant numbers of students, teachers and parents.

4.0   Strategies

To prevent bullying at *Our Lady of the Way*, a holistic school based pastoral care approach is used including the following strategies:
- ➤ the development and monitoring of the school culture to ensure it is based on mutual trust and respect;
- ➤ the development and implementation of specific procedures that are appropriate to the developmental stages of students;
- ➤ the provision of specific educational programs and resources;
- ➤ training programs and professional development for members of the school community;
- ➤ regular monitoring and evaluation of the school's anti-bullying & cyberbullying policies and procedures;
- ➤ school-based activities where the value of the individual is affirmed and personal qualities such as compassion, kindness, respect and tolerance are fostered and modelled by staff and students;
- ➤ opportunities for cross-school student leadership and involvement, such as the student representative processes;
- ➤ the promotion and implementation of values-based curriculum options;
- ➤ the provision of PDHPE syllabus coverage to ensure the teaching of all essential 'learn about' and 'learn to' units of work that may relate to bullying behaviours;
- ➤ school-based programs and activities that promote the skills of communicating, decision-making, interacting, planning and problem-solving for students.

5.0   Addressing Specific Instances of Bullying or Cyberbullying

Our Lady of the Way will use established policies and procedures to manage bullying and cyberbullying incidents to maintain a safe and supportive school environment. All specific bullying incidents will be dealt with in a timely manner. Documentation gathered by the school will indicate:
- ➤ Received notification from child, teacher, parent, carer that bullying has occurred
- ➤ Nominate a staff member to document the notification
- ➤ Nominate a staff member to investigate/assesses the situation, severity and frequency of the bullying. This assessment will determine the response.
- ➤ The nominated staff member puts in place consequences and response for the student/s involved.
- ➤ The nominated staff member assesses who else needs to be notified of the bullying. This notification should be documented.
- ➤ The nominated staff member provides appropriate and ongoing support to the students involved. This may include counselling or ongoing engagement with a particular teacher. The scope of this support will be dependent on the situation.
- ➤ The nominated staff member monitors the situation and follows up with all parties including witnesses. This monitoring and follow up must be documented.

6.0   Parents are responsible for:

- ➤ Notifying the school if they think their child or another child is experiencing bullying
- ➤ Modelling positive social behaviour and relationships in interactions with the school community, including interactions with teachers, other parents and students

- Working collaboratively with the school to promote positive relationships and appropriate behaviour
- Familiarising themselves with the school's behaviour management plan and Bullying & Cyberbullying Policies and assisting their child in understanding bullying behaviour
- Working with the school to resolve bullying when it occurs.

7.0   Teachers are responsible for:

- Notifying the Principal of bullying and ensuring that bullying behaviour is addressed according to the school policy and procedures
- Familiarising themselves with the CEDP and school based policies and procedures for preventing and responding to bullying and cyberbullying
- Promoting positive behaviours with students
- Ensuring that students have the opportunity to learn appropriate social skills and responsible behaviours through explicit teaching of these behaviours.

8.0   The Principal is responsible for:
- Ensuring the school has appropriate polices, training and procedures in place to create and maintain a safe and supportive school environment
- Maintaining partnership with parents and carers in the prevention and appropriate response to bullying behaviours
- Ensuring parents and carers receive regular advice about CEDP and school based anti-bullying, cyberbullying and pastoral are policies.
- Responding in a timely fashion to allegations of bullying.
- Ensuring the consequences of bullying and cyberbullying include opportunities for students to learn more appropriate social skills.

9.0   Documentation
- The Principal and nominated staff member must ensure that the appropriate documentation of notifications and response to bullying is maintained in a central register
- This should include:

Name of student/s involved, witnesses and staff originally notified

Dates; Locations; times; specific bullying incidents

Number and frequency of bullying

If and when parents were notified

Summary of the response to the bullying, including details of an intervention plan for all students involved and how this is to be monitored.

10.0   Procedural Fairness
The school will ensure that procedural fairness applies in dealing with any incidents of bullying. Appropriate and timely support, management and resolution of reported incidents of bullying will be offered to all persons involved in these incidents.

11.0   CEDP Policies
The following CEDP policies can be found on OSCAR in Policy Central:
- Anti-bullying Policy for Students
- Student Anti-Bullying Procedures
- Anti-Harassment Policy
- Child Protection – school sites and facilities risk management

- Complaints Handling Policy & Procedures
- Creating Safe & Supportive School Environments/Child Protection Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Managing a Safe School Environment – Legislative Changes
- Medication Policy
- Work Health & Safety Policy
- Pastoral Care of students in Catholic Systemic Schools
- Policy, Procedures and Resources for Matters Involving Students and Illegal Substances
- Privacy Policy
- Procedures to be followed in the Suspension and Expulsion of Students from Catholic Schools
- Protective Practices for School Staff in their Relationships with Students

As part of the CEDP, *Our Lady of the Way School* is bound by the guidelines for major disciplinary sanctions for the Diocese.

- Collaborating with school to resolve cyberbullying issue Fact Sheet – Office of Children's eSafety Commissioner (August 2016)

12.0 Budget

A budget is available for the ongoing professional development of staff and for the purchasing of resources.

13.0 Evaluation

The Principal, with delegated responsibility to the Leadership Team is responsible for the planning, implementation and review of this policy.

Cyberbullying: the new Children's eSafety Commissioner

The Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner (the Office) was established on 1 July 2015 to handle complaints about cyberbullying material targeted at Australian children.

The Office can investigate complaints about material considered likely to have a seriously threatening, intimidating, harassing or humiliating effect on the child. Where possible, the material should be reported to the social media service first, before it is complained about to the Office. To consider a complaint the Office will need evidence of the cyberbullying material.

Parents, along with schools and the government have a role in ensuring children are protected online. The Office will work with social media services, parents and schools to ensure serious cyberbullying material is removed.

What to do if your child is being cyberbullied

If your child is being cyberbullied advise them to:

- avoid retaliating or responding

- collect the evidence—keep mobile phone messages and print emails or social networking conversations

- block the bully and change their privacy settings

- report the abuse to the social media service

If your child continues to be cyberbullied and you believe it is having a seriously threatening, intimidating, harassing or humiliating effect, we encourage you to assist your child in making a complaint on the Commissioner's website.

More information on the role of the Office, how to deal with cyberbullying and how to lodge a complaint is available on the website.

The Kids Helpline provides a private and confidential, telephone and online counselling service for young people. Encourage your child to speak to them if they are in need of counselling support. The Kids Helpline also manages Parentline, a confidential telephone counselling service providing counselling and support for parents and care-givers.

If you believe your child is in **immediate danger**, call 000.

Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner—fact sheet for schools

What is the role of the Children's eSafety Commissioner?

The Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner (the Office) was established on 1 July 2015. The Office allows children suffering from serious cyberbullying to submit complaints about such content to have it removed if social media companies do not remove the offending content after it has been reported to them.

How are complaints handled?

The Office receives complaints through an online form. The form may be completed by the child making a cyberbullying complaint with the help of a trusted adult.

Upon receipt of a complaint, the Office may take one or more of the following actions:

- contact the social media platform or the alleged poster of the content to secure removal;
- refer the incident to the school for resolution;
- refer the matter to the police if it warrants attention from a law enforcement agency

When will a cyberbullying complaint be referred to a school?

In most cases, the Office anticipates working with social media services to take down material without the need to contact schools. The Office recognises that schools have long been the first point of contact for cyberbullying complaints so it is anticipated that the scheme will be of assistance to schools, staff, students and their families.

However there will still be times when a complaint will best be resolved by the Office working with schools directly. In such circumstances, the Office may make direct contact with a school and seek help to resolve the problem. Resolution of a cyberbullying complaint between students at a particular school may at times have advantages over resolution through the more formal regulatory channels.

What is the school's role and responsibilities in handling cyberbullying matters?

As part of their normal duty of care obligations, schools should already have robust cyberbullying policies and procedures in place to deal with such complaints. The Office encourages all schools to regularly review their policies and complaints handling procedures on cyberbullying.

What other resources are available to assist schools in handling cyberbullying matters?

The Office offers a range of resources to support school communities.

In some cases where a school may experience serious systemic cyberbullying issues and a high volume of valid complaints, the Office may offer tailored workshops to the school.