



MacKillop Catholic Primary

School Mackay

MacKillop's Response to Bullying

Approved: [June 2022] For Review [June 2025]

Life is about making choices and there are consequences for the choices that we make (good and bad). Children must learn this from an early age, therefore our process for managing bullying at MacKillop involves education, prevention, intervention, support, consequences and a change of behaviour. Incidents of bullying undermine respectful relationships.

The national definition of bullying for Australian schools states: *Bullying is an ongoing 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 can happen in person or online, and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.* (<https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/understanding/Documents/research-snapshot-what-is-bullying.pdf>)

At MacKillop we define bullying as: A systematic and repeated abuse of power. Any episode of bullying has three defining characteristics:

- Imbalance of power
- Intent to hurt, embarrass or humiliate
- Repeated behavior

Bullying occurs in many ways:

- Physical bullying – when an individual or group uses physical actions to bully eg hitting, poking, tripping, pushing or repeatedly and intentionally damaging someone's belongings.
- Verbal bullying – repeated or systematic name-calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks and verbal abuse.
- Covert/Social bullying – may include lying about someone, spreading rumours, playing a nasty joke, mimicking or deliberately excluding someone.

- Psychological bullying – may include threatening, manipulating or stalking someone.
- Cyber bullying – is using technology such as email, mobile phones, chat rooms, gaming platforms, social networking sites to bully verbally, socially or psychologically.

Due to current social media focus the term bullying is often ‘overused’. The following behaviours are not defined as bullying:

The National Centre against Bullying (2010) acknowledges that while the following behaviours are often upsetting to those involved, they do not constitute bullying.

- Arguments and disagreements
- Disliking someone
- Single acts of social rejection
- One-off acts of meanness or spite
- Isolated incidents of aggression, intimidation or violence.
- Rough play
- Taking someone’s belongings without asking

Whilst these behaviours would not be considered as bullying (because they do not involved deliberate and repeated harm and/or a power imbalance) they will be addressed in the same way as other inappropriate student behaviours as defined by our schools behavior management policies and procedures.

Educational Programs

It is important that students, staff and parents/carers understand what bullying is, how it impacts on people and how bullying is responded to at MacKillop. At MacKillop we use the following educational strategies:

- Behaviour Management Policy and Procedures eg Responsible Thinking Sheets and Time out
- Student Guidelines
- Police Officer/Adopt-a-cop presentations on bullying
- Access to our School Counsellor
- Formal and informal lessons in classes
- Displaying of anti-bullying posters around the school
- Five Trusted Adults
- Safety Circus Presentation to Year 3 students
- Daniel Morcombe Child Safety Curriculum in Term 3
- The Resilience Project

Prevention Programs

Effective social skills and positive relationships act to prevent bullying. At MacKillop we promote effective social skills and positive relationships by:

- Good Manners Awards
- Promoting positive behaviour with green cards and Students of the Week
- Buddy groups
- Implementation of playground guidelines where students are encouraged to play with children of their own age or the grade either side
- Learning support provides programs such as Pragmatic Language groups and the use of social stories etc

- Formal and informal activities in classrooms to build positive relationships and enhance social skills
- Making Jesus Real Family Groupings and Awards
- ICT Code of Conduct
- Inviting a Police Officer/School Adopt-a-Cop to speak to students about Bullying including Cyberbullying
- Providing Parent Education around Bullying, in particular Cyberbullying
- Implementation of the Resilience Project
- Promoting opportunities for learning with regards to Anti-Bullying including National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence, School Assemblies and Leadership talks with classes.

Responses to Bullying

Reports of bullying will be investigated and acted upon. Responses to bullying might include support for targets of bullying and perpetrators and/or disciplinary measures.

At MacKillop we support targets and perpetrators of bullying by:

- Informing and involving parents in the process
- Access to the school counsellor
- Encouraging and supporting the reporting of bullying behaviours
- Educating students about acceptable and non-acceptable behaviours
- Play contracts, options of where to play and support friendships

At MacKillop the consequences for bullying might include but are not limited to:

- removal from class or play
- restricted or modified play conditions
- exclusion from school for a period of time
- formal apology to victim and family (in some cases)
- informal involvement of police eg Adopt-a-cop
- in severe cases formal reporting to police and child protection agencies
- in some cases, it may be a school requirement that the bully undergo an approved form of counselling before returning to school (at parent's expense)
- parents may be required to replace items that have been stolen or damaged by their child

Students must understand that it is not ok to be a 'bystander'. Bystanders watch while others are bullied or treated badly by others. In many cases there will be consequences for bystanders as they are enabling, encouraging or making fun of the bullying.

Following an incident of bullying, the students involved (victim and bully) need to undergo a process of healing and each case is unique. As a Catholic school we believe in forgiveness and that every child deserves a chance to learn from their mistakes and change their behaviour.

Bullying does not mean that the perpetrator is a bad person, but rather that they are making some very bad choices which come with a series of consequences for themselves and the person they have bullied.

Reporting and Monitoring Bullying

At MacKillop all reports of bullying are taken seriously. Students and parents/carers should report bullying in the following ways:

- If a student believes they are being bullied or mistreated by another student, they should report this to either the teacher on duty if in the playground, their class teacher or the Student Protection Contact.
- If you believe that your child is being bullied or mistreated by another student or adult, your first point of contact should be your child's teacher. If you then feel that the issue has not been resolved, or in more severe cases, please contact the Principal or another member of the leadership team immediately.
- We strongly discourage parents from contacting the parents of another student to "sort the issue out themselves" as this rarely ends constructively for either party.
- Parents need to trust that when the school says that a reported incident of bullying is "undergoing the process" that the procedures and consequences outlined in these guidelines and the Diocesan Anti-Bullying Policy are being followed and that the problem is in the process of resolution, with the best interests of all parties in consideration.
- Confidentiality is important and it is for this reason that details of how the school is managing the case of a particular student will not be discussed with parents or friends of another student.
- Investigations of Bullying will be documented on either Riskman as a Record of Concern or Student Protection Report depending on the nature of the incident or on Teacher Kiosk under Pastoral Care Tab.

Supporting Documents: The following support documents can be made available from the school by request.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

- Diocesan Anti-Bullying Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- ICT Code of Practice
- Student Protection Policy
- *Student Protection Processes and Student Protection Guidelines*
- *Student Counselling in Catholic Schools and Colleges Policy*
- Right Relationships Parent and Student *Grievance Policy and Procedures*
- *Information, Communication and Technologies Policy*
- Pastoral Care Policy
- *Prevention and Elimination of Abuse, Bullying and Harassment Policy*
- Student Protection Brochure
- Integrity in Relationships Brochure
- Daniel Morcombe Child Safety Curriculum

WEBSITES

[Queensland Anti-cyberbullying Taskforce](#)
[Office of eSafety Commissioner](#)
[National Centre Against Bullying](#)
[Bullying No Way](#)

