



BULLYING POLICY



St John's Lutheran School is committed to providing a safe and caring that fosters respect for others and does not tolerate bullying.



BULLYING

What is Bullying?

Bullying is any on-going behaviour that causes embarrassment, pain or discomfort to another.

It includes:

- Abusive name calling, rude gestures and sarcastic comments
- Degrading comments about someone's culture, religion, gender, appearance or ability
- Unwelcome touching or physical violence
- Threatening words or actions
- Hurtful exclusion of someone from a group or 'ganging up' on someone
- Saying or writing offensive comments about someone to others, or spreading rumors about others or their families
- Interfering with someone's property by stealing, hiding or damaging it
- Forcing others to act against their will
- Offensive behavior online

Social Consequences of Bullying

When students are victims of bullying, they can feel frightened, unsafe, alone, embarrassed and confused. It may negatively affect their learning, confidence or ability to sleep or concentrate. Relationships with friends and family may deteriorate. Students can stop feeling good about themselves or not want to come to school.

Victims of bullying can suffer serious long term effects which diminish their ongoing quality of life.

Caregivers

Bullying may be very hard to see, and students who are being bullied often don't like to tell anyone. If they tell anyone, research suggests that it is most likely they will tell their caregiver or their friends before they will tell a teacher.

If students do tell their caregivers they are being bullied it helps if caregivers:

- Involve the children in making decisions about what to do
- Listen to what their children say

Once caregivers have a clear picture of the situation, they should contact the school and make an appointment with the principal. The school will be as concerned as the caregiver to deal with the problem.

Students

If students are being bullied they can:

- Ignore it (bullying may continue)
- Ask the person to stop the bullying
- Talk to the person and explain to them why they don't like what they are doing
- Talk about it with a friend they can trust
- Tell mum or dad
- Tell a teacher



If students are bullying someone they should:

- Stop it immediately
- Apologise to the person they have offended
- Work together with their parents, classroom teacher and Principal to develop more positive behavior habits

Students who are bullying will have the logical consequence of working through the steps of the school's behavior management policy

All bystanders can help to stop bullying occurring by:

- Being friendly and respectful to everyone
- Looking for signs of bullying in the community
- Acting to protect people who are being bullied
- Refusing to join in if friends encourage bullying of others
- Helping friends to stop bullying others if they are doing so
- Reporting incidents of bullying
- Listening and helping when victims of bullying confide in them

Staff

Staff will help to **prevent** bullying by:

- Working with students to establish and maintain explicit behavior that will support a positive learning environment
- Holding regular class meetings
- Defining bullying and strategies for dealing with it should it occur

Shared Concern Intervention

One of the most effective methods used by schools to resolve bully/victim problems is the Shared Concern Intervention. Research tells us that in most if not all cases, the problem can be solved using this strategy.



Shared Concern is:

- A process that models empathy and persists with this modelling until the student who is bullying articulates a concern for the student being bullied
- A process supporting the student who is bullying to take responsibility for their behavior
- A process encouraging all students involved towards positive and constructive change.



Shared Concern involves a four step process:

1. Bullying is brought to the staff member's notice. It is essential that the staff member who intervenes is seen as impartial. Some strategies to deal with this could be:
 - A different staff member intervenes
 - More than one staff member joins any conference

This is to avoid any perception of collusion with the victim. The person to whom it was reported can continue to support the person who has been bullied.

2. Talk with students who have been involved in the bullying. Each student is seen **individually**. The purpose of the interview is to:
 - Reach a shared concern
 - Plan for a positive change
 - Set simple, realistic and safe goals

Talk with the student who has been bullied:

- Share your concern
- Plan for positive change
- Set simple, realistic and safe goals

3. Talk individually with the same students who were involved in the bullying asking:
 - How did it go?
 - How do you think....felt?
 - How do you feel?

If it didn't work:

- Be curious, maintain belief that things can change, and recognise effort, by saying things like 'thanks for giving it a go'
- Re-set goal by asking something like 'what else do you think we could try?'

If it did work:

- Affirm
- Set a new goal



Talk with the student who was being bullied:

- Explore feelings of safety
4. Follow up in a few days and focus on:
- The student who has been bullied feeling safe
 - Positive outcomes for everyone.



Should any incidences of bullying occur the first strategy to be employed by the school is Shared Concern. Staff members skilled in the use of this strategy will be responsible for the ongoing procedure in each instance.

However, if recalcitrant behavior occurs and Shared Concern is not achieving the desired outcome the consequences will be applied as specified in the school's Behavior Management Policy.

Reviewed February 2019 Tony Peters

