BULLYING PREVENTION PLAN

Marrara Christian College is a learning community where parents and staff partner together. Students are nurtured through a loving, biblically-based school curriculum and structure to build their faith, character and desire to serve.

At Marrara, we stand against bullying - it is harmful to the victim, the bully and the bystanders.

All people are worthy of respect because they are the Lord's image bearers. The Lord calls us to be selfless, to love one another and be active in the pursuit of justice for all.

Bullying is an activity that abuses the **physical**, **social** or **positional** power of the bully over others, reinforcing inappropriate feelings of self-importance at the cost of another's dignity, security and peace of mind. Power, popularity or size are all God's gifts to us and come with a responsibility to be used for the good of all. This gift is abused when used to elevate oneself at the cost of another.

Those who are an audience to bullying activities, and do nothing to challenge this injustice, learn to accept injustice as a natural part of life. It is their responsibility to speak out against activities that tear down rather than build up.

All community members should feel safe, be equipped to engage positively in the College and share the responsibility to support others around them.

It is the responsibility of staff, students, parents, caregivers and the wider community to work together to create a culture of appreciation and acceptance, free from any form of bullying, harassment or intimidation.

Bullying occurs when the less powerful are unjustifiably, deliberately and repeatedly (systematically) hurt.

- It can be physical, verbal, sexual or involve property.
- It can be direct (confrontational) or indirect (exclusion).
- It can take the forms of psychological, cyber, written and physical.
- Bullying is not a result of provocation or an isolated incident.

Bullying typically involves

a) Hurtful behaviour (physical, verbal or relational)

b) A desire and intention to hurt

c) An imbalance of power

d) An unwise and unjust use of power

e) Targeted and repetitive behaviour

The nature of bullying behaviour may be

a) Verbal: name calling, put downs, threats

b) Physical: hitting, tripping, punching, throwing objects, stealing

c) Social: ignoring, hiding, ostracising, exertion of peer pressure

d) Psychological: stalking, threatening looks, spreading rumours, damaging personal possessions

Most bullying consists of name calling and verbal abuse, and peaks in upper Primary. Bullying may also include the use of disparaging terms (put-downs) which are commonly seen as humorous by youth culture and the victim often does not know how to deal with this attention. Bullying can do significant psychological damage to the victim. With bullying receiving so much attention in the media and general conversation, the term is often used to describe situations where a person feels uncomfortable because of another's personality or manner. This may not be bullying, but is a situation that needs to be discussed and resolved.

This plan focuses on violations against people (damaging community relationships) rather than on rule-breaking (violating institutional trust).

Harassment can be seen as one type of bullying that involves any unwanted, unwelcome or uninvited behaviour which makes a person or a group of people feel humiliated, intimidated or offended. The roots of harassment generally lie in social prejudice.

PLAN

Our Bullying and Harassment Prevention Plan considers:

- the development of supportive environments and positive relationships

- promotion of tolerance

- acceptance of difference and a culture of cooperation, empathy and respect

- the proactive engagement of bystanders to discourage bullying and harassing behaviour

- a clear code of conduct for students with appropriate disciplinary consequences for bullying, harassing or intimidating behaviour

- skills in conflict resolution

- the resolution of problems and the restoration of relationship in whatever appropriate form

- the support and wellbeing of students who have been harmed by hurtful behaviour

- assisting students who bully to change their behaviours by recognising the consequence of their actions and their responsibility to behave in a way that builds others up

This Culture is created through many different aspects of our college:

a) Community Building

Marrara will seek to prevent bullying by building a sense of *community* through

- fostering strong and positive social bonds (**Co**mpassion [RiSe **Co**De] - Belonging)

- building positive peer group pressure (**Se**rvice [Ri**Se** CoDe] - Generosity)

- expecting students to take responsibility for their own actions (**Ri**ght choices [**Ri**Se CoDe] - Responsibility)

- pro-social training (**De**dication [RiSe Co**De**] - Mastery)

- modelling positive adult behaviour

b) Community Repairing

Marrara will respond to a possibility of bullying by

- Observing

- Intervening

- Investigating

- Promoting responsibility

- Enacting restoration processes and consequences

c) Experiencing Consequence

Marrara Christian College has a zero tolerance for bullying. This means that staff will always appropriately investigate reports or observation of potentially bullying behaviour.

Students who refuse to comply with the community expectations of the College will encounter escalating consequences for their choices and eventually may lose their place at the College.

Considerations met:

- *the development of supportive environments and positive relationships*
- *promotion of tolerance*
- *acceptance of difference and a culture of cooperation, empathy and respect*

SCOPE

The policy applies to the staff and students of the Marrara Christian College community.

PROCEDURES

Prevention and Early Intervention

Proactive engagement of bystanders to discourage bullying and harassing behaviour through

a) Community Building

Fostering strong and positive social bonds: (Compassion/Belonging)

A sense of belonging is developed within the College community through class structures, retreats, community building programs, our camping program, boarding houses, student leadership / peer support, the structure of the College, older classes mentoring younger classes.

Developing a cooperative community approach at Marrara will encourage students to look out for each other. Collaborative learning strategies are encouraged.

Students are strongly motivated to act against bullying when empathy for victims is openly shared. This will happen each time a bullying incident is 'unpacked' (How did John feel about that? How would you feel?)

Building positive peer group pressure: (Service/Generosity)

Most bullying has a peer audience. Action from bystanders can reduce bullying by over 50%. Students will be encouraged and equipped to be part of the solution by standing up for the less powerful members of our community. The very least a bystander should do is walk away and talk to a teacher.

The College will recognise appropriate actions by students through informal and formal means. Encouragement may take the form of a quiet word of thanks from a staff member through to recognition in front of the whole community and is an integral part of all leadership training.

Expect students to take responsibility for their own actions: (Right Choices/ Independence)

Students will be expected to act in a way that supports a positive community. Those feeling bullied need to communicate their feelings. Those involved in perpetrating bullying either directly or by being an audience need to own their community damaging actions.

After dealing with a public bullying incident, staff will discuss with the class/peer group how a greater sense of social responsibility would have changed the events that unfolded.

Pro-Social Training: (Dedication/Mastery)

- Curriculum will be designed to equip students to act responsibility and in a pro-community way.

- All students are to commit to refraining from the use of 'put-downs'. Staff are to encourage and train students to "*use helpful words. The kind that build up and provide what is needed, so that what is said may do good to those who hear*" (Ephesians 4:29)

- Social and emotional curriculum teaching & learning is a delegated responsibility:

Primary School	Class teachers
Middle School	Core teachers
Senior School	PCG teachers

- All staff share the responsibility of Pro-Social Training during the ad-hoc moments that arise with students each day.

- Teachers will discuss with students how to act to discourage bullying:

Victims	being able to respond confidently and with dignity
	being able to avoid threatening situations
	seeking (and receiving) effective help from others
Inciters/Bystanders	realise they encourage the bullying by actively or passively watching and seemingly condoning it
	actively help the victim by recognising bullying, speaking or acting against the bullying or seeking help
All	the dynamics of friendships

- Adult members of the community will model positive behaviours.

- As classes are studying units related to bullying, literature will be sent home and parents will be involved in related homework/assignment activities.

b) Community Repairing

Marrara will respond to bullying by

Observation: staff will be trained to recognise bullying behaviours.

Intervention: a community approach will be taken to modify identified behaviours. As staff are trained to deal with bullying behaviours, various techniques and strategies will be used depending on the situation, re-occurrence and severity of the situation.

Staff will plan in advance how to deal with a range of bullying behaviours. Approaches used at Marrara may include: an informal chat, support of the victim, enforcement of consequences, reconciliation meeting, referral to a counsellor, involvement of parents.

Investigation: *What happened? Who was hurt? How can it be fixed?*

Focus is on why it has happened and how it can be fixed (restoration); and, the victim's need to feel safe again.

Staff will employ a Real Justice approach to 'unpacking' a bullying report:

- What happened?
- What did you think when you realised what had happened?
- Who has been affected? In what ways?
- What has been hardest for you?
- How can the harm be undone? How can things be put right?
- What can you do/think differently to prevent this from happening again?

- What can the College do to assist?

Responsibility: those involved will be assisted to acknowledge the harm done, accept responsibility for their actions and devise strategies to change the situation

- Victim   indicate they were uncomfortable with dignity
- Bully   use position of power for building community rather than damaging it
- Inciters/Audience   take responsibility for weaker members of the community

c) Consequences and Restoration

Bullying is damaging to relationship, to the well-being of the whole community and to the individual being bullied. Restoration is a process of acting in a way to repair such damage.

- ❖ public bullying should involve similar public restoration
- ❖ spectators/inciters need to be challenged about their bully-encouraging role
- ❖ spectators/inciters need to voice what they could have done to positively change the situation
- ❖ offenders and spectators/inciters take responsibility by experiencing consequences, demonstrating empathy and repairing harm

Appendix 1: Escalation Table

Breach Level	Delegation Level	Examples (*indicative*)	Options (including restoration)

Domination Behaviour	Class Teacher	✗ Infrequent verbal put-downs
		✗ Borrowing equipment without permission
		✗ Forcing place in lines
		✗ Loud unlistening domination of a group
		✗ Exclusion practices
			✓ Class reminded of their responsibilities
			  o Dominator - give others a go
			  o Dominated - clearly state that behaviour is not Marrara way, report
			  o Audience – support Dominated, report
			✓ One on one conversation with Dominator warning that behaviour is not acceptable and will not be tolerated
			✓ One on one conversation with Dominated offering support and reminding to quietly stand up for self
			✓ Assist with group dynamics
			✓ Individual apology by Dominator

Early Bullying Behaviour	Pod Leader	✗ On-going put-downs, stealing, exclusion or domination ✗ Other early bullying type activities that may include foolish potentially dangerous actions or physical threats ✗ Low level cyber harassment at school	✓ Explain responsibility to Bully, Victim and Audience ✓ Individual meeting with Bully, Victim and both sets of Parents ✓ Structuring context to reduce interaction ✓ Consequences up to internal suspension ✓ Counselling ✓ Apology to safe audience
Ongoing Bullying Behaviour	Head of School	✗ Unrepentant bullying ✗ No significant reduction of early bullying behaviour ✗ Bullying that goes beyond the school campus but impacts on campus	✓ Meet with parents ✓ Final warning that this behaviour will not be tolerated ✓ External suspension ✓ Withdrawal of privileges – bus travel, phone during school time, freedom of playground, restrict place in class etc.
Critical	Principal	✗ No significant evidence of progress	✓ Withdrawal of enrolment

Note: *The response of the school to the bullying behaviour will be proportionate with its level of severity and the specific circumstances surrounding the bullying behaviour. The response may range from being dealt with in the class or playground, through to initiating an investigation, which may have consequences for a student's enrolment.*

It is never appropriate to be dismissive when informed of a bullying incident*.*

Follow up

- Debrief with relevant Head of School or Line Manager
- NT Christian Schools Incident Report where applicable
- Offer of counselling to stakeholders

Considerations Met:

- Skills in conflict resolution
- The resolution of problems and the restoration of relationship in whatever appropriate form
- The support and wellbeing of students who have been harmed by hurtful behavior
- Assisting students who bully to change their behaviors by recognising the consequence of their actions and their responsibility to behave in a way that builds others up

Review

- Annual review of the Bullying and Prevention Plan as per NTCS review cycle.
- Last Review – September 2015