ANTI-BULLYING AND ANTI-HARRASSMENT POLICY

Rationale
At St. Benedict’s College we strive to create an environment free from bullying or harassment where everyone has the right to be respected, treated fairly, feel safe and happy. It is the responsibility of every member of our community – staff, parents and students to eradicate any forms of bullying from our School and encourage genuine praise. We share the responsibility to report any incident of bullying/harassment whether we are onlookers or victims.

Definition
Bullying is the conscious desire to hurt, frighten, intimidate or exclude someone by an individual or group of people through physical, verbal, social or psychological means.

- Bullying/harassment is a form of abuse. It includes any rumours, gossiping, notes, name-calling, staring, put-downs, teasing, intimidating, excluding, ignoring, swearing at or humiliations, using standover tactics, making threats of violence/harm, throwing objects, taking or using possessions without permission, stalking, pushing, hitting, punching, poking with objects, fighting, forcing someone to do something they do not want to do.
- Bullying/harassment involves a power imbalance, it maybe repetitive and it is deliberate. We are all capable of anti-social behaviour and a bully/victim may be the same person at different times.
- The most common consequences of peer abuse such as bullying/harassment are loss of self-esteem, social isolation, depression, feelings of helplessness or anger, failing physical health, absenteeism. In some cases, unremitting bullying has been shown to have serious long-term effects with children growing up insecure, suspicious of contact with others, relatively isolated and prone to bouts of depression.
- Acts of bullying may arise from thoughtlessness, insensitivity and the pleasure in identifying with a group who are having fun from acts of pure malice.

Guidelines

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES
I will strive to create and environment at St. Benedict’s College free from Bullying and Harassment.

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT
I will:

- develop positive, respectful interpersonal relationships.
- accept responsibility for my own words and actions.
- resolve any conflicts in an open and respectful manner.
- respond to victims of bullying and harassment in a supportive and caring manner.
- report any incident of bullying/harassment I experience, witness of become aware of.
- examine my own behaviour/attitude and make efforts to eliminate any bullying/harassment practices in which I may have been directly or indirectly involved.

APPROPRIATE ACTIONS/RESPONSES
A. If you are being bullied – strategies to employ if you are a victim of bullying/harassment:
I will
- choose to respond to the situation promptly to minimise the problem,
- choose to be less vulnerable by being assertive.
- look the person in the eye and control my fear.
- decide not to argue with them.
- ignore them if possible and walk away.
- tell them they are annoying me and ask them to stop.
- avoid potentially unsafe situations (places where no help is available) or retaliatory actions.
- examine my own behaviour to look for any possible contributing factors.
- continue to report any continuing bullying/harassment until it is safe.
• report and seek advice/support from: teachers, parents, counsellor, Pastoral/Homeroom teacher, Assistant Principal and Principal – a trusted adult.

REMEMBER A PROBLEM WILL NOT IMPROVE BY IGNORING IT.

B. If you are bullying/harassing another student.
• If you are bullying you will be removed from the bullying situation.
• You will be required to stop your actions and change your pattern of behaviour.
• Your parents/guardians will be notified.
• You will be monitored closely by staff and records will be kept.
• You will be given consequences that reflect a need and desire for reconciliation with the individual victim and the college community eg. an apology, a negotiated constructive solution, community service, sanctions, counselling, a program of reform, ie. you will face normal discipline consequences.

C. If you are bullying/harassing a member of staff.
This is a serious matter that will require intervention by parents and the Principal. A student who is guilty of any bullying or harassment of a staff member will face serious consequences for their behaviour eg. suspension.

TEACHER'S RESPONSIBILITIES
Any victim of bullying should presume the full support of the school. This support will involve thorough investigation and appropriate response.

Actions teachers can take to deal with bullying.

1. Provide positive role model in interpersonal relationships.
2. Respond supportively when an incident is repeated to you. “You are important. I believe that this is serious for you”.
3. Change bully to alternate position in classroom. Give clear instructions to the bully to stop their actions and to keep away from their victim/s.
4. Provide time to listen empathically to the student being bullied.
5. Take steps to ensure the recipient of bullying/harassment is not placed at further risk. Do not discuss widely with other students thereby further isolating the victim from their peers as a “dobber”.
6. Report any incident to the Assistant Principal and keep on-going records.
7. Remove opportunities for bullying to occur eg.
   • arriving to class on time.
   • actively supervising high risk areas.
8. Negotiate contracts with bullies based on a commitment to change behaviour and consequences for on-going bullying. Document these contracts.

Basis of Discretion
It is always at the discretion of the Principal to take other actions as deemed appropriate in any given situation.

Supporting Documents
• This policy is supported by the school’s Hands Off Policy, Sexual Harassment Policy, Child Protection Policy
• Student Diary: Discipline and Code of Behaviour

Evaluation
This policy will be reviewed in November 2013 by the policy group.

Date of Implementation

Principal …………………