BEHAVIOUR POLICY

Rationale:

At St Mary’s, we believe that each person’s wellbeing is nurtured through experiences of belonging, building relationships with others, being accepted and valued, and by being positively engaged in the community. We acknowledge the importance of providing opportunities for all members of the school community to develop an awareness of their wellbeing and responsibilities and a commitment to becoming valuable members of the global community. We believe in the importance of implementing prevention and intervention strategies which promote positive behaviour within the school.

Focus:

We are a Restorative Practice* school which aims to develop positive behaviour through critical thinking, active involvement in making choices and taking responsibility for our choices and actions. Restorative measures help each person to learn from their mistakes, grow in self discipline, take responsibility for their actions, recognise the impact of their actions and reconcile and resolve conflict with others.

At St. Mary’s we also work with the School Wide Positive Behaviour Support Program (SWPBS). SWPBS is a broad range of systemic and individualised strategies for achieving important social and learning outcomes while preventing problem behaviour with all students. (Sugai & Horner, 2001;2002)

Goals:

We actively promote the Social and Emotional Learning of each student so that they will:

- Respect themselves and each other
- Build positive relationships
- Positively contribute to maintaining a safe, happy and secure environment
- Make good choices
- Accept responsibility for their choices and actions
- Reflect and learn from their choices and actions
- Positively engage in conflict resolution and treat all people with respect
Student Wellbeing

Wellbeing refers to students’ physical, social and emotional wellbeing and development. Evidence suggests that these elements are integral rather than incidental to learning. The Learner will find it difficult to engage with learning programs if they are distracted by significant physical, social and emotional issues. (Reference: STUDENT WELLBEING RESEARCH Document 1 – Revised Edition, CEOM, 2008)

Implementation:

- Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is a major teaching and learning focus across the school
- Behaviour expectations are explicitly taught
- Common language about behaviour and discipline is used throughout the school
- Positive behaviour expectations are displayed within school community
- The Restorative Practices approach is used for student behaviour management and conflict resolution
- Circle Time is implemented in all grades to develop positive relationships and to model problem solving strategies and reflection
- Each year the Term One Inquiry is based on SEL, establishing positive learning environments and expectations, Personal and Interpersonal Learning
- Positive behaviours within class and school setting are expected. Students are rewarded when they demonstrate the correct behaviour. Rewards include verbal praise, classroom rewards, School Community Awards, etc.
- The 4Bs (school behaviour norms) are used to direct student behaviour and choices: Be Friendly – Be Safe – Be Respectful – Be a Listener
- The explicit teaching of social skills and values is implemented
- The Behaviour Matrix* and Behaviour Management Continuum* are implemented across the school
- Student Behaviour Contracts are developed with students to modify and monitor their specific behaviour
Bullying

St Mary's school fully supports and promotes - across its community and through curriculum - an anti-bullying approach that both seeks to educate children and parents and is based on restorative principles. This approach also aligns anti-bullying measures and good practice principles as promoted through e-Smart and the National Safe Schools Framework.

Definition:

Bullying is when someone or a group of people repeatedly and intentionally cause hurt or harm to another person or group of people who feel helpless to respond. Bullying can continue over time, is often hidden from adults and will probably continue if no action is taken.

Bullying:

- Is a repeated pattern of behaviour
- Misuses power in a relationship
- Causes harm

Bullying is not:

- Single episodes of social rejection or dislike
- Single episode of acts of nastiness or spite
- Random acts of aggression or intimidation
- Mutual arguments, disagreements or fights.

These actions can cause great distress; however they are not examples of bullying.

There are four types of Bullying:

- **Physical Bullying**: Examples include: hitting, kicking, punching and tripping
- **Non Physical Bullying**: Examples include: verbal abuse especially name calling, gossiping, cruel or continued teasing; removing or hiding belongings; threatening gestures and body language; deliberately excluding others
- **Covert bullying**: is often harder to recognise and can be carried out behind the bullied person's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Covert bullying includes: lying, spreading rumours and playing nasty jokes to embarrass or humiliate
- **Cyberbullying**: is overt or covert bullying behaviours using digital technologies. Examples include harassment via a mobile phone or via any electronic device, setting up a defamatory personal website or deliberately excluding someone from social networking spaces.

(Reference: eSmart framework/Alannah and Madeline Foundation)
Procedure for Reporting Bullying:

- Incidents of bullying and inappropriate behaviour detected by staff are reported and addressed immediately
- Parents with a concern about bullying are to report it directly to the school (refer to the Communication Policy)
- Students with a concern about bullying are encouraged to tell a trusted adult in the school community
- Incidents of bullying are referred to the Principal or Deputy Principal
- Behaviour is recorded/tracked to develop a clear picture of the nature and prevalence of the behaviour
- Parents are informed about incidents of bullying involving their child
- The process of Restorative Practices is followed by asking the ‘Affective Questions’

Implementation:

- St. Mary’s allows for flexibility in dealing with conflict and bullying, depending on the nature, severity and extent of the bullying; this includes follow up with the victims and perpetrators of the bullying incidents
- Victims of bullying may have a support group set up to assist them in dealing successfully with the situation – this group will consist of staff, parents, experts from outside agencies where necessary and the student where appropriate
- A variety of resources are used by teachers to develop and support students’ social skills, what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate behaviour and an awareness of bullying using concepts suitable to their age groups – these resources are also used to assist those who have been, or are at risk of being bullied, to develop effective strategies to deal with the bullying and be resilient in their reactions to such incidents so as to ensure their continuing wellbeing
- Refer to the 4Bs and the Behaviour Matrix to focus discussion with students
- Within the Restorative process, appropriate consequences are implemented in-order to facilitate ownership of behaviour and an apology of action with the intention that the relationship is mended
- A Student Support Plan may be implemented to address the bullying behaviour and assist the student/s to display positive actions
- Staff and parents receive regular development updates and information related to positive behaviours, wellbeing and, where appropriate, awareness of bullying – E.g. cyber safety sessions
- Confidentiality is to be maintained in all dealings with any students involved and all members of any support groups established including staff, parents, students and other advisors
- Incidents of bullying will be recorded on the students’ N-forma* wellbeing record and future teachers will be made aware of the actions and consequences of the bullying in relation to the perpetrator and the victim of such incidents
- Unresolved incidents of bullying will be dealt with as ‘Behaviour of a Serious Nature’.

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Behaviour of a Serious Nature

When it is judged by the school that a student has engaged in wrongful behaviour of a serious nature within the school community, a Behaviour Management Support Group (BMSG) is to be set up. The BMSG group will consist of relevant staff, parents and other appropriate stakeholders. The BMSG is set up to:

- consider the behaviour of the student and the implications for the student and the school community
- consider the personal and social needs of the student, and how they may best be responded to
- determine what behaviour management action within the school’s stated processes is most appropriate
- identify strategies to assist the student, following successful behaviour management, to re-establish his/her place satisfactorily in the school community
- ensure that decisions of the Behaviour Management Support Group are implemented
- access any relevant agencies to provide support.

Following the BMSG Process, any behaviour still of concern will be addressed in accordance with Policy and advice from the Catholic Education office Melbourne (CEOM).

- There is no corporal punishment at St. Mary’s

Ratified by the School Advisory Board
August 21, 2014

*Footnotes:

- Restorative Practices – system of addressing inappropriate behaviour where behaviour is explored and a restoration of the relationship is the goal
- Behaviour Matrix – Matrix which defines areas in the school and appropriate behaviour expectations in those areas
- Behaviour Continuum – a classifying of inappropriate behaviours, who and how they are dealt with and the consequences of those actions
- N-Forma – a comprehensive student assessment and reporting package for Primary and Secondary schools.