ST MARGARET’S SCHOOL
ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

“St Margaret’s Primary School is a faith community based on the model of Jesus Christ. Gospel values are reflected in all areas of school life”.
Based on these values we:-
“Promote the growth of the whole person acknowledging and celebrating that we learn and develop at different rates” and “that we strive for educational excellence in an inspiring and motivating environment”

Rationale
St Margaret’s School is a no-bullying tolerance school. At St Margaret’s school we do not tolerate bullying in any form and to any degree.
All members of our school community are committed to providing for our children a safe and secure environment in which the children in our care can reach their potential.
All members of the school community have a right to feel safe, the right not to be intimidated, abused, threatened or physically hurt. This policy was reviewed in May 2012
With the Gospel values underpinning the ethos of our school we strive to live out those values and treat all members of our school community with dignity and respect.

WHAT IS BULLYING?
Bullying is an action that causes pain to another individual. It is usually deliberate.
Bullying can occur over a short or long time frame.
Bullying can take a number of forms: verbal, physical, extortion and exclusion.
As Valerie Besag says (1989) “Bullying is behaviour which can be defined as the repeated attack, physical, psychological, social or verb in nature, by those in a position of power which is formally or situationally defined, with the intention of causing distress for their own gain or satisfaction”.

FORMS OF BULLYING
Physical:
Includes fighting, pushing, invasion of personal space or any unwelcome contact.

Verbal:
Includes name-calling, teasing, offensive language, spreading rumours or intimidating behaviour. Verbal bullying can also include harassing the victim on the telephone.

Gesturing:
Includes offensive notes or material, graffiti or damaging others’ property by vandalising, hiding or destroying it.

Extortion:
Includes standover tactics, threats to “get” people, forcing others to act against their will.

Exclusion:
Includes deliberately leaving the victim out of activities or convincing the victim’s friends not to play with him/her.

Cyber:
Children using the internet can be cyberbullied or harassed through internet services like email, chat rooms, instant messaging, social networks or through websites. Cyberbullying includes teasing, spreading rumours, sending unwanted or threatening messages, defamatory material or photos via electronic devices

This policy was reviewed in May 2012
IMPLEMENTATION
At St Margaret’s we realise that the bully/victim problem is the responsibility of the whole community, staff, students and parents. This approach requires that each section of our community have their particular part to play in eliminating bullying from our school.

Staff will:
• Be a role model for assertive rather than aggressive approaches to interpersonal interactions.
• Be observant to signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying.
• Be punctual to their yard duty and supervise the playground vigilantly.
• Be punctual to class and to collect their classes from their lines.
• Take steps to help victims, listen to concerns and offer support and assistance
• Follow designated intervention procedures.
• Take heed of parental concerns.
• Follow up any reports of bullying.

Students will:
• Refuse to be involved in any bullying incidents.
• Not to stand and watch any bullying incidents but rather fetch help.
• Tell a staff member if they know of any bullying incidents.
• Show bullies that you disapprove of the bullying behaviour.
• Tell Parents and their class teacher if they believe that they are being bullied.

Parents are advised to:
• Watch for signs of distress in their children, for example, unwillingness to attend school, bedwetting, “clingy” behaviour, equipment or money disappearing, requests for money.
• Advise your child to report any bullying incidents to you, the parents and the teachers or Principal.
• If possible allow your child to report and deal with the problem him/herself.
• Inform the school if bullying is suspected.
• Do not encourage your child to retaliate.
• Attend interviews at school to help with the problem.
• Reassure your child that they will have the full support of parents and the school.
• The school will deal with the issues. Parents should not approach children on the playground nor shall they approach the parent of a child they believe to be a bully.
• Contact the school immediately they have concerns.

This policy was reviewed in May 2012
PROCEDURES TO COUNTERACT BULLYING BETWEEN STUDENTS
The following procedures will be incorporated into St Margaret's School to prevent bullying from occurring:

- St Margaret’s School will develop an anti-bullying component into its curriculum through the Bounce Back program and Cyberbullying units of work.
- A Buddy system whereby a younger child is teamed up with an older student will continue at St. Margaret’s School.
- The Peer Support System will be implemented.
- Provide advice to parents how to ascertain if their child is a bully or a victim and how to assist their child.

In the event the bullying does occur the following procedures will be carried out by the class teachers or other staff involved:

1. Give the victim a safe place to express their concerns
2. Talk to witnesses (away from perpetrator)
3. Interview the perpetrator
4. Consequences will be clearly defined and followed up
5. Classroom teacher will be informed to document form of bullying in anecdotal record book
6. All parents will be informed
7. Consequences for passive bystanders will be put in place

Procedure as defined in the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria “Pastoral Care in Catholic Schools” policy
1. The Student Wellbeing Group is notified of serious and persistent bullying.
2. It is the responsibility of the Student Welfare Group to:
   a. Convene a meeting as soon as possible following the decision that students has committed a serious offence.
   b. Consider all issues relevant to the behaviour of the student and the implications for others in the community.
   c. Identify strategies, which will enable the student to re-establish his/her place in the life of the school through the completion of the Behaviour Management Plan
   d. Determine the appropriate steps required to meet these objectives.
   e. Consider the support and resources available from both within and outside the school to assist in implementing the action.
   f. Ensure that accurate records of decisions are kept and that decisions are implemented.
3. Maintain confidentiality at all times

Possible Outcomes of the Student Wellbeing Group
The Student Wellbeing Group shall consist of the Principal, Well Being Leader and a staff member. In considering the student and the case at hand, the group has a number of options available to it including contractual arrangements, suspension and negotiated transfer. These options are outlines in the CECV Pastoral Care Policy.

In final decisions the group should aim for consensus. Where this is not achievable, the Principal takes responsibility for the final decision.

The above procedures for serious offences should occur only after a school has determined that all measures taken to have a student comply with agreed codes of conduct have failed to produce a satisfactory outcome.

Should this “serious” behaviour continue the Catholic Education Office Pastoral Care Offices will be requested to advise St Margaret’s School.

This policy was reviewed in May 2012
EVALUATION
This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis through consultation with Staff and a representative group of parents.

This policy was reviewed in May 2012