

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

Rationale

La Salle College is committed to providing quality education for students within a Catholic context. La Salle College teachers lead their students to God through the way they themselves live and behave and through what others see of the quality of relationship. St John Baptist de La Salle calls this the ‘pedagogy (*teaching*) of relationship.’

It is from this premise that La Salle College initiates its mission and seeks to develop an empowering pastoral care system. In fostering a school community based on respectful relationships it is hoped that incidences of bullying and harassment will be minimised. It is an expectation that all members of the College Community seek to treat each other with respect and dignity. All members of La Salle College are committed to ensuring a safe and supportive environment which promotes the personal growth of each student in the community. The College a school community based on respectful relationships that seek to minimise incidences of bullying.

At La Salle College, we believe:

Every person has the right to feel safe.

Every person has the right to learn.

Every person has the right to tell others they trust if they feel their safety or wellbeing, or that of another, is being compromised or put at risk because of bullying behaviours.

Every person has the right to be treated with fairness.

Understanding Bullying, Social Difficulties and Conflict

While we strive to achieve a kind and caring school environment, social difficulties that cause distress between students will often occur. **It is important to identify that not all conflict is in fact bullying.** While all concerns reported by a student will be listened to carefully, the approach taken to assist in the resolution of the difficulty will vary depending upon the type of conflict being reported.

Below is a brief outline of the types of social conflict that may occur within a school community;

1 Social Isolation and/ or rejection

Social exclusion without the intent to distress the person

2 Conflict

Specific disagreement or dispute between peers who are friends or former friends

3 Random acts of aggression, intimidation or meanness

A person is randomly targeted and the intent is to cause distress or persuade the person to do something that causes discomfort. Empathy for others and their rights are lacking. This is a serious breach of College rules and will be appropriately dealt with.

4 Bullying or harassment

A regular pattern of aggression on a predictable basis with the intent to harm or distress with an imbalance in social power being evident.

(Definitions adapted from: Bounce Back: www.bounceback.com.au)

In this fourth category (bullying or harassment), the types of behaviour that constitute bullying may include :

Physical: Any action that involves intentional physical contact with a targeted person or persuading another person to harm a specific person.

Social: Continual directed and hurtful comments about a person's appearance, family or background. Social pressure which is applied with the intent to persuade a person to engage in unwanted activities, discussions or relationships.

Verbal: Continual comments directed at a specific person that are intended to hurt and / or humiliate. This includes the spreading of malicious rumours to incite student dislike of someone.

Cyber bullying: Ongoing harassing or abusive emails, messages or inappropriate use of social media. Intimidation or gossip – spread through information technology.

Non-Verbal: Threatening and/or obscene gestures. Removing and/or damaging other's belongings.

Deliberate exclusion from a group or activity with the intent to distress.

Harassment:

Harassment is any unwanted, unwelcome or uninvited behaviour which makes a person feel humiliated, intimidated or offended.

Responding to Reports of Social Conflict, Bullying and/or Harassment

- In responding to reports of social conflict, staff at the College will support the students involved while observing each student's dignity and agreed confidentiality.
- Responding to reports requires an understanding of patterns of social interaction and brain development in young people. As our primary aim is to educate our students and further develop their empathy and interpersonal skills, a number of models and practical intervention styles will be used to assist students. For example; solution focussed directed conversations, building resiliency, conflict resolution, restorative justice and methods of shared concern.
- Although these approaches are not based on sanctions or punishments, the College has a range of such measures available, up to and including suspension or exclusion which are in accordance with our Behaviour Support model and which may be used in response to severe or extended acts of bullying, acts of violence or aggression.
- It is crucial that students, families and College staff work together to determine an intervention or response to the reported conflict that best meets the needs of the individual student reporting the concern.
- It is intended that each intervention also provides for the personal, social and emotional growth of all parties involved.
- Parents and students should be assured that all reports of bullying, harassment and acts of aggression will be taken seriously and promptly investigated.
- Reported incidents will be documented. The records regarding the management of the incident will remain with the relevant Year Coordinator who records the agreed action/s to be taken. The relevant Year Coordinator monitors the affected students for as long as is required.

Reporting Conflict, Bullying and/or Harassment

Procedures - Students

- Students who are bullied or who witness bullying are asked to communicate their concerns with a teacher, a staff member, and / or their parents.
- Students reporting incidents of bullying can be assured that their conversations are confidential.
- Students will be asked to give full details of the event and the information will then be forwarded to the appropriate Year Coordinator.
- Students can also report instances of bullying by emailing staysafe@lasalle.wa.edu.au
All emails are viewed by the relevant Year Coordinator.

Procedures - Parents

- Parents are encouraged to listen carefully to any reports of social conflict and /or bullying.
- Parents are asked to contact the relevant Year Coordinator to report any incidents of bullying as soon as possible. (Parents are advised to not speak directly with any alleged student/s or family concerned, including via social media).
- Parents may be asked by College staff to document information that can assist with the resolution of the reported incident.
- Parents are also asked to work with the College to seek solutions to any reported incidents of social conflict and / or bullying.

Whole School Approaches

La Salle College is committed to implementing whole school approaches to Social Conflict and Bullying that have been developed in response to evidence gained from ethically sound research projects (for example the Telethon Kids Institute).

Currently, La Salle College has specific programs included across the Year 7 -10 curriculum that assist in the social and emotional development of students within our community.