St Martin's School Anti-Bullying Policy

In the spirit of our school Mission Statement and our beliefs about behaviour and learning, at St Martin's, in partnership with parents, staff and students, we will strive to be a community who create a safe environment by:

- *treating each other with dignity and respect and building relationships for life*
- *adopting a proactive rather than a reactive approach to bullying, in the first instance, empowering our children to be successful, resilient, citizens of the future*
- *working together to create a shared understanding of content, processes and procedures contained in this policy*
- *using a 'social group approach' to solving and resolving bullying situations*

Our Anti-Bullying Beliefs at St Martin's:

- bullying is unacceptable; no one ever deserves to be bullied and everyone has the right to feel safe
- bullying is everyone's concern
- all students have the responsibility to help each other make positive behaviour choices in the classroom, out in the playground and when using technology
- all adults have the responsibility to support the growth and resilience of all students and to respond to all bullying issues appropriately (as outlined in this policy)

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is a "systematic and repeated oppression and humiliation, psychological or physical, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group of persons". (Rigby, 2010)

Bullying is when someone has power over another person by hurting or harming that person, more than just once. The bullying is intentional and there is an imbalance of power (eg. someone bigger, stronger, older, more confident etc). Bullying is continuing to 'pick on' someone, torment them or exclude them, so that the person feels helpless.

Cyber bullying is a mode of bullying. It is when bullying, as described above, occurs virtually through the use of technological devices (such as mobile phones, computers or other) via digital communication (such as text messaging, social networking, web pages or other).

At times, real life and cyber bullying may co-occur when devices are used to share offensive digital communication or when digital communication is talked about, with other people.

At St Martin's, we agree that if you are a bystander who is involved in a bullying incident or you witness bullying and do not report the incident, your behaviour could be seen as supporting the bullying.

Forms of Bullying

Physical: When a person (or group of people) uses physical actions to bully, such as but not limited to hitting, poking, tripping or punching. Repeatedly and intentionally damaging someone's belongings is also physical bullying.

Verbal: When a person uses repeated or systematic name-calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks and verbal abuse.

Covert: When a person lies about someone, spreads rumours, plays a nasty joke that makes the person feel humiliated or powerless, mimics or deliberately excluding someone.

Psychological: Threatening, manipulating or stalking someone.

Cyber: Using technology, as mentioned above, to bully verbally, socially or psychologically.

(*Working Together: A toolkit for effective school based action against bullying* DETA 2010)

Bullying may relate to race, religion, culture, appearance, health conditions, sexual orientation, home circumstances, learning needs, disabilities or gender. (*Safe to Learn* DCSF, 2007)

What is NOT Bullying at St Martin's School?

It is important to identify what bullying is NOT. Dr Ken Rigby (2010) identifies that "for some people the term 'bullying' is a highly emotive term and its use may lead to an over-reaction."

The *National Centre Against Bullying* acknowledges that while the following behaviours are often upsetting to those involved, they do NOT constitute bullying:

- mutual arguments and disagreements (where there is no imbalance of power),
- not liking someone or a single act of social rejection,
- one- off acts of meanness or spite,
- isolated incidents of aggression, intimidation or violence.

Role Responsibilities

All members of our community have responsibilities in the successful implementation of our Anti-bullying policy. These include:

Responsibilities of Children

- to not bully others
- to have an understanding of bullying, bullying behaviours, bystanders and cyber bullying
- to appropriately report incidents – if you believe you are being bullied, or as a bystander to a bullying incident
- as a bystander, to help someone being bullied
- to use appropriate, positive anti-bullying behaviours
- to abide the school digital citizenship contract which has been signed

Responsibilities of Staff

- to have a whole school policy that meets the expectation of the school community
- to promote a positive school culture
- to model, educate and suggest appropriate, positive anti-bullying behaviours and supportive bystander behaviours
- to use teaching and learning opportunities to address bullying
- to listen to all student reports and watch for signs of possible bullying
- to ensure that children are supervised adequately
- to respond to all reported and observed incidents of bullying as set out in this policy under **Responding to Bullying**. This includes identification of potential bullying by reporting through the school *Incident Report.* (See Appendix A.)

Responsibilities of Parents

- to support the information outlined in the St Martin's School Bullying Policy
- to model, educate and discuss appropriate, positive anti-bullying behaviours
- to watch for signs of possible bullying
- to encourage and support your child to inform a teacher if they are being bullied or witness bullying as a bystander or speak on their child's behalf about bullying if the child is not confident to do so
- to support the child to comply with the school's digital citizenship contract
- have confidence that the school will take any complaint of bullying seriously through investigation and will involve parents in the ongoing support of their child if there has been a case of bullying.

St Martin's Proactive Anti-bullying Strategies

Strategies to actively prevent bullying include:

1. Primary Prevention Education
2. Early Intervention Strategies
3. Intervention Procedures
4. Restoration of Well-Being

1. Primary Prevention Education

Primary prevention education includes the teaching of curriculum content particular to supporting the resilience of students. At St Martin's, we teach the ACARA General Capabilities which outline this content. These include the:

- Personal and Social Capability
- Ethical Capability

Resources that teachers use to support this teaching include:

- Bounce Back program
- Circle Time
- You Can Do It program
- Cyber Education through regular whole school and in class Digital Citizenship lessons and activities
- Regular parent education via the school newsletter
- Annual participation in the National Day of action against Bullying
- Year 7 Leadership program
- Buddy programs in each year level
- School camps and excursions

2. Early Intervention Strategies

Early intervention strategies include:

- 2013 whole community review of the Anti-bullying policy including audit of whole community beliefs and experiences.
- ongoing monitoring of policy and practices and promotion of whole school proactive strategies through the staff committee: Student Safety and Support Committee.
- mapping and planning for of potential risks including geographical areas and students at risk. At times this may include changes to duty areas, additional staff allocation or running of programs for targeted students.
- development and display of whole school Anti-bullying Posters.
- intensive teaching and reminding of the school's anti-bullying views at the beginning of each school year along.
- celebration of annual 'National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence'.

3. Intervention procedures

Intervention procedures are clearly outlined in the Process of Response Section of this document. These are the procedures that occur in the event that a bullying incident is identified.

4. Restoration of well-being

This includes supporting both the victim and perpetrator with educational and or therapeutic interventions in the event that they need additional support. This support may involve the teaming of the following people:
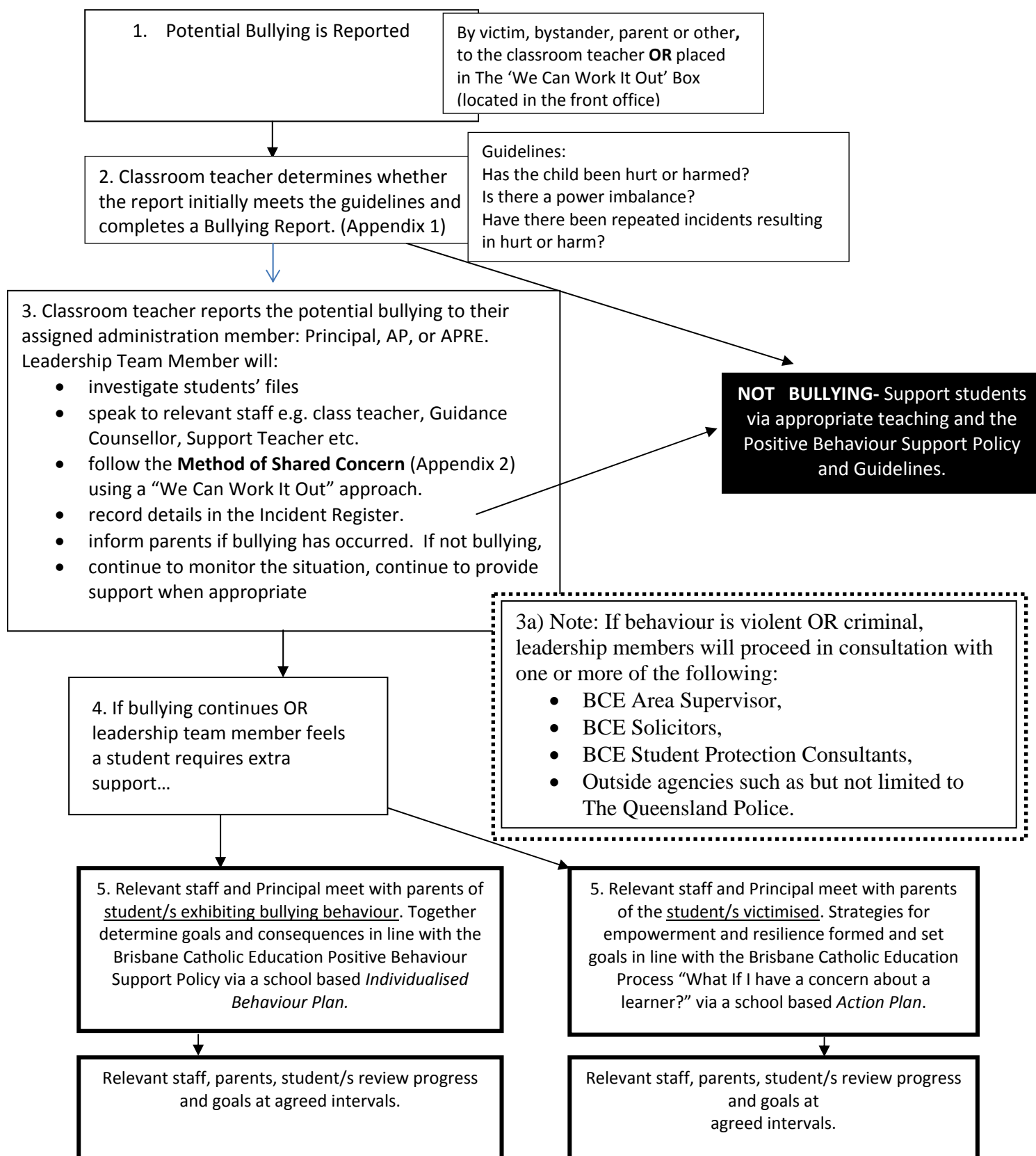
- Student, Parents, Leadership Team Members, Classroom Teacher, Support Teacher, Guidance Counsellor, outside agencies (eg.Private counsellor)

The particular supports and interventions would be articulated in the student's individual plan; either:

i) A school based Action Plan,
ii) An Individual Behaviour Support Plan.

Process for Responding to Bullying at St Martin's

When a bullying incident is reported or observed the following steps will be taken. This process may be accelerated according to student age and the seriousness of the incident.

1. Potential Bullying is Reported

By victim, bystander, parent or other, to the classroom teacher **OR** placed in The 'We Can Work It Out' Box (located in the front office)

2. Classroom teacher determines whether the report initially meets the guidelines and completes a Bullying Report. (Appendix 1)

Guidelines:
Has the child been hurt or harmed?
Is there a power imbalance?
Have there been repeated incidents resulting in hurt or harm?

3. Classroom teacher reports the potential bullying to their assigned administration member: Principal, AP, or APRE. Leadership Team Member will:
- investigate students' files
- speak to relevant staff e.g. class teacher, Guidance Counsellor, Support Teacher etc.
- follow the **Method of Shared Concern** (Appendix 2) using a "We Can Work It Out" approach.
- record details in the Incident Register.
- inform parents if bullying has occurred. If not bullying, continue to monitor the situation, continue to provide support when appropriate

NOT BULLYING- Support students via appropriate teaching and the Positive Behaviour Support Policy and Guidelines.

4. If bullying continues OR leadership team member feels a student requires extra support…

3a) Note: If behaviour is violent OR criminal, leadership members will proceed in consultation with one or more of the following:
- BCE Area Supervisor,
- BCE Solicitors,
- BCE Student Protection Consultants,
- Outside agencies such as but not limited to The Queensland Police.

5. Relevant staff and Principal meet with parents of student/s exhibiting bullying behaviour. Together determine goals and consequences in line with the Brisbane Catholic Education Positive Behaviour Support Policy via a school based *Individualised Behaviour Plan.*

5. Relevant staff and Principal meet with parents of the student/s victimised. Strategies for empowerment and resilience formed and set goals in line with the Brisbane Catholic Education Process "What If I have a concern about a learner?" via a school based *Action Plan*.

Relevant staff, parents, student/s review progress and goals at agreed intervals.

Relevant staff, parents, student/s review progress and goals at agreed intervals.

How Will the School Respond to Cyber-bullying?

When a cyber-bullying incident occurs, students are advised to tell an adult immediately. In this instance, staff will follow the **Responding to Bullying Process** outlines above.

If it is reported to the school, the school will assist to review the report and take appropriate action.

St Martin's advises parents to report any cyber bullying or suspicious activity on the internet to the relevant authorities. For further information please refer to www.acma.gov.au and www.thinkuknow.org.au or contact your local Queensland Police station.

Reference to the St Martin's Positive Behaviour Policy

This Anti-bullying Policy is separate to the St Martin's school based Positive Behaviour Policy.   The St Martin's Positive Behaviour Policy has been developed in accordance with Brisbane Catholic Education 'Student Behaviour Support Policy' and 'Student Behaviour Support Regulations and Guidelines'. For issues relating to continued non-compliance resulting in suspension and exclusion please refer to these documents.

Appendix 1

Classroom Teacher Bullying Report

A bullying report was made to me:

Date and time: _____

By: _____

Method of Communication: _____ (if written, please attach a copy)

Details communicated to me about the potential bullying situation:

Discussion points:

Outcome of the discussion:

In my opinion this report of bullying indicated that:

Bullying includes ALL of the following:	YES	NO	DETAILS
The child has been hurt or harmed.			
There is a power imbalance (eg someone bigger, older, stronger, more confident etc)			
There have been repeated incidents resulting in hurt or harm			

Signed:_____

Date:_____

Please email to your allocated leadership team member.

Appendix 2

Method of Shared Concern

The following is a highly simplified account of the Method. Please see the article on our school website for further information. ("The Method of Shared Concern as an Intervention Technique to Address Bullying in School: An Overview and Appraisal" K.Rigby, 2005).

The Method of Shared Concern is an approach to resolving bully/victim problems, originally suggested by Pikas (2002). It involves a series of meetings with students suspected of being involved in a case of bullying.

1. The process can begin when an individual OR several students suspected of engaging in bullying a targeted person are identified. They often form a quite heterogeneous group.

2. Each is interviewed in turn. The practitioner begins by sharing a concern with each of the suspected bullies over the plight of the target.
   'It looks like Tom is having a hard time at school.'
   The suspected bully is asked to say what he or she is prepared to do to improve the situation. The practitioner then arranges a further meeting to assess progress.

3. After each of the suspected bullies has been interviewed the practitioner meets with the targeted student. Typically this person has become very dejected and needs help. At the interview it is explained that each of the suspected bullies has undertaken to help to improve matters. The practitioner expresses strong support. Nevertheless, the target is asked whether he or she may have contributed to the problem in some way.
   'Tom, I wonder if there is anything you might be doing to cause them to treat you badly'.
   In most cases the target is quite innocent but in about 20% of cases there has been some provocation.

4. After the practitioner has seen the suspected bullies again and ascertained that progress has been made, they are brought together for a meeting at which they are asked to decide among themselves what they are prepared to say to the target when he or she joins them.
   'I would like us now to make a plan for when we meet with Tom.'

5. At the subsequent 'summit meeting' with the target present the suspected bullies make an agreed statement or proposal to resolve the problem. This may be an apology or a statement that they will not continue to harm. The target may become very dejected and needs help. Be negotiated, as in the following scenario with a group of girls:
   'We are sorry, Joanne, but you haven't been very nice to us, you know.'

6. Finally, the practitioner discusses with them how they can sustain the improved relationship and offers to help if any further problems arise. Needless to say, the situation still needs to be monitored.

Evaluation
The process requires several meetings with the students involved in the bullying, first as individuals, then in a group over a two-week period. Convicting students of bullying and administering 'consequences' in the form of sanctions or punishments is often seen as quicker. But unfortunately when this is done the bullying often continues in covert and damaging ways. The cases then need further attention and this can ultimately prove to be very time-consuming. It is claimed that the method of Shared Concern can produce enduring Solutions.

References

Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY). (2009). *Inquiry into the impact of violence on young Australians.* South Australia.

Bernard, M., & Milne, M. (2008). *Schools Procedures and Practices for Responding to Students Who Bully*. Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

Cross, D., Shaw, T., Pearce, N., Erceg, E., Waters, S., Pintabona, Y., & Hall, M. (2007). *School-based intervention research to reduce bullying in Australia 1999-2006. What works, what doesn't and what's promising?* School of Exercise, Edith Cowan University, Perth.

Lodge,J., & Frydenberg, E. (2007). *Cyber-Bullying in Australian Schools: Profiles of Adolescent Coping and Insights for School Practitioners*.

McGrath, Dr H. (2005) *Making Australian Schools Safer: A Summary Report of the Outcomes from the National Safe Schools Framework Best Practice Grants Programme (2004-2005)*. Faculty of Education, Deakin University, Melbourne.

Merrell, K. W., & Isava, D. M. (2008) *How Effective are School Bullying Intervention Programs? A Meta-Analysis of Intervention Research.* School Psychology Quarterley, V23, No. 1, 26-42. American Psychological Association, Washington, DC, USA.

Queensland Government, (2010) *Working Together: A toolkit for effective school based action against bullying.*

Rigby, K. (2010). *Addressing Bullying in Queensland Schools*: Consultancy for the Department of Education and Training, Brisbane.

Rigby, K. (2010a) *Breaking the Cycle*. Education Review, Sydney.

Rigby, K. (2010b) *Enhancing Responses to Bullying in Queensland Schools*, Department of Education and Training, Brisbane.

Rigby, K (2005) *The Method of Shared Concern as an Intervention Technique to Address Bullying in Schools: An Overview and Appraisal.*