St Joseph's NS, Castlemaine

Anti-Bullying Policy

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of St Joseph's NS, Castlemaine has adopted the following anti-nullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which were published in September 2013.

2. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore, fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

- A positive school culture and climate which –
  - o Is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
  - o Encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment
  - o Promotes respectful relationships across the school community
- Effective leadership
- A school-wide approach
- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures that
  - o build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils and
  - o explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying - see 5.1(b)
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils
- Supports for staff
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow-up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies)
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy

3. In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* bullying is defined as follows:
    Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

    The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:
    *   Deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying
    *   Cyber bullying
    *   Identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, transphobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special education needs.

    Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

    However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

    Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

    Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.*

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows: (see section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):* The teaching staff of St Joseph's NS, Castlemaine.

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:

    5.1 (a) The teaching of specific programmes *Stay Safe* and RSE which deal specifically with the topic of bullying will be implemented:
    *   How to define bullying
    *   Recognising bullying
    *   The effects of bullying
    *   What to do if one is being bullied

    5.1 (b) How to define bullying – Bullying is defined as unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

    In addition to Stay Safe and RSE, the DES document *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* will inform the school's education and prevention strategies. Mindful that we are dealing with primary school children, any necessary reference to homophobic or transphobic bullying will be made in a way

that is age appropriate and in keeping with the school's Catholic ethos. While very young children will not be explicitly informed regarding every type of bullying, the awareness of the school staff and management of issues surrounding homophobic and transphobic bullying will help to ensure that the school is a bullying-aware and bullying-unfriendly environment.

5.2 Taking opportunities and making space within the teaching of other subjects to revise the core issues of (a) how to define bullying, (b) recognising bullying and (c) what to do if one is bullied.

5.3 Consistently teaching on a school-wide basis, how to recognise the language and behaviour of bullying. Any language and behaviour (including text messages, images and statements) which isolate, insult, exclude, threaten and discriminate is seen as bullying, Children are explicitly taught the rules regarding bullying behaviour and language and all incidents are followed through with those who ignored the rules.