



Process for dealing with incidents of bullying

Definitions

Bullying: is the act of knowingly causing either emotional or physical harm to another through repetitive actions. It often occurs when the perpetrator uses power over the victim. Eg verbal threats, pushing, excluding, rumour spreading “Non selective bullying” is where a student demonstrates repeated bullying behaviours that are not confined to one student but to a variety of students in separate incidents.

Cyber Bullying: is the sending or publishing electronically derogatory or defaming information either in written or visual form. This includes but is not limited to email, text messaging, facebook, twitter, tumblr, youtube and instagram. The effects of cyberbullying are often viral in nature. The intention is often to intimidate, control, manipulate, put down or humiliate the recipient. Once posted comments remain alive and cannot be easily undone. They have the potential of reaching a wide network of people.

Digital footprints: are traces left behind by someone’s activity in a digital environment. For privacy and protection of all community members students must not post photos of themselves or other students in school uniform or in the school setting. Students should also note that inappropriate images of themselves may be illegal so parents and police will be notified where necessary. Posting photos of staff, parents or other students without permission is strictly prohibited.

Every report of an incident of bullying behaviour is to be treated as a serious issue.

The following are the procedures to be followed when a complaint is made:

1. The staff member to whom an incident is reported will make a written record including information on
 - a. the alleged victim(s)
 - b. the alleged bully(ies)
 - c. what is alleged to have happened
 - d. where and when the incident is alleged to have occurred.
2. This information is passed on to the relevant Pastoral Guardian who will interview
 - a. the alleged victim(s) to confirm the information if the victim(s) was not the person who reported the incident, and
 - b. those accused of the bullying behaviour to inform them of the accusation, give them the opportunity to respond and to issue a warning that a repeat offence directed at the current or other victims will lead to the steps outlined in (4) - (5).

3. The Pastoral Guardian may facilitate a face-to-face meeting between the parties if it is judged that such a meeting would be productive and not escalate the situation. The victim(s) / perpetrator(s) may be referred for counselling.
4. A second documented offence will result in the parents of the bully being required to attend an interview with the accused student. At this meeting, the student will be warned that a third offence may result in suspension of up to three days.
5. A third offence will normally result in a period of suspension unless there are other circumstances which make this action inappropriate.

A fourth offence may lead to the student permanently excluding herself from the Mount Alvernia community.

Notes:

In addition to being able to report incidents of bullying to a staff member, Mount Alvernia has an online reporting system that can be used to report any behaviour that is not considered appropriate for our Franciscan Community. This reporting tool can be found on MOODLE. Any malicious or false accusations will be treated as incidents of bullying in themselves and the above process will be applied.

