



St Francis Xavier College

SAFE SCHOOL POLICY

RELATED POLICIES

Complaints Resolution
Pastoral Care
Management of Student Behaviour
Mandatory Reporting
Sexual Harassment
Supervision of Students
Child Protection (CEO)
Child Protection Code of Professional Standards for Catholic Schools
and Systemic Staff (CEO)

Purpose

At Saint Francis Xavier, because of our commitment to Catholic principles and Christian values, all members of the community are to be treated with dignity, courtesy and respect.

It is the responsibility of all members of our school community to contribute to making our learning and working environment safe and free from harassment and violence.

Policy

Through this policy and our actions we aim to :

- assist adults and students actively contribute to making our school a safe place
- ensure that all members of the school community understand and accept their rights and responsibilities
- enable persons affected by harassment or bullying to receive support change the behaviour of those who bully

Definitions.

Harassment (or bullying) is any behaviour which makes people (of any age) feel humiliated, intimidated, offended or unsafe. Harassment can be verbal, emotional, psychological, physical, sexual, religious or racial.

It can include:

- physical contact (pushing, hitting, tripping, kicking, unwanted touching)
- damage to personal belongings
- theft of personal property
- abusive or insulting comments (personal, racist, sexist, family-related)
- rude hand or body gestures
- staring
- threats
- swearing
- name calling
- teasing
- gossiping
- disclosing personal information
- graffiti
- spreading rumours
- deliberate exclusion
- unwanted phone calls
- following or stalking
- offensive or insulting notes, letters or e-mail
- daring, forcing or blackmailing others to do dangerous or embarrassing things

Procedures

STUDENTS

- consider the feelings of others, and behave towards them as you would like to be treated
- talk to a responsible adult if you know about any bullying or teasing
- let the nearest adult know if you see visitors at school
- help make our school a safe place by helping to break up fights
- keep away from people who say they intend to fight or bully
- do not use language which could hurt or offend others
- do not gossip or talk about other people's secrets
- do not use letters, phone or e-mail to annoy people
- do not bring any dangerous items to school

STAFF

- ensure that students, in classroom, playground, corridors, etc, are aware of your commitment to making SFX a safe school
- model appropriate behaviour

- provide opportunities for students to discuss matters of concern
- offer the victim of harassment immediate support and help
- it is usually inappropriate to deal initially with both parties, but assure the victim that action will be taken
- ensure that students who are distressed receive support from appropriate staff member (Counsellor, Year Co-ordinator, front office staff)
- any incident of harassment or bullying, either observed or reported, should be documented, making sure that times, dates, witnesses and full details are included
- the information should be referred, as soon as possible, to the Year co-ordinator or Assistant Principal -Student Welfare
- be aware that visitors to the school may cause problems, so notify front office or offer assistance as appropriate

PARENTS

- encourage your children to discuss matters which concern them
- be aware that signs of distress shown by your child may be related to harassment
- support your child by reporting matters of concern to a staff member, such as Year Co-ordinator, Assistant Principal (by phone or interview)
- discuss suitable strategies for responding to any form of harassment, intimidation or bullying (i.e strategies which do not involve violence or worsening the situation)
- provide advice about conflict resolution and about non-violent responses to difficult situations
- support the school's 'hands-off' requirements and our focus on respect and tolerance

STAFF RESPONSE TO REPORTS OF BULLYING

GATHER INFORMATION

- complete incident report with input from person reporting incident
- record reports from others involved (& witnesses, if possible)
- take care that the situation for the victim does not worsen as a result of reporting/disclosing the incident
- explain to all involved that the aim is to stop the harassment and ensure that tolerance and respect prevail
- while privacy cannot always be guaranteed to victims, discretion and non-escalation of the situation should be seen as essential
- emphasise to students that the response "I was only mucking around" is not to be used as an excuse or defence in situations where harassment or bullying has occurred

TAKE ACTION

- **counsel** the person who has been harassed - include strategies for regaining control of the situation, and enhancing self-esteem
- **reassure** person reporting harassment that they have done the right thing –it's ok to tell
- **emphasise** to persons involved in harassing or bullying others that they must take **responsibility** for their actions
- **consult** about **consequences** for the perpetrators, which will be decided in the context of the particular circumstances and the school's discipline and behaviour management procedures
- **arrange** for close **monitoring** of the situation, with all those involved encouraged to follow-up concerns with a designated staff member
- **take action** to discourage bullying and harassment by working with offenders on strategies to improve **self-esteem and confidence** (to reduce the risks of re-offending)
- **liaise** with the school's **Counsellor** who plays an important part in working with those who are harassed, those who harass and with parents and staff.
- **report** back to person who has informed about harassment, providing information about action taken

CONSEQUENCES

Once the situation has been investigated:

- the people involved will be informed about the serious nature of the situation
- the school's policy on these matters will be presented
- rights and responsibilities will be emphasized
- opportunity for explanation will be provided
- need for future action and commitment to school's values will be discussed

A range of school responses will be presented.

Appropriate action will be decided by the Year Co-ordinator & Assistant Principal, in consultation with the Principal.

Some consequences include:

- exclusion from playground
- 'naming' of people involved, subsequent close monitoring of behaviour
- exclusion from excursions, social events
- detentions (lunchtime, after school, Saturday)
- community service project
- formal apologies and written commitment about future behaviour
- interview with parents
- interview with police and parents
- conditional enrolment
- suspension of enrolment
- exclusion from school

References

SFX Safe School document (SFX Staff Handbook) revised 2010

Approved by:	College Board
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Supersedes Policy Dated:	2005
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Contact Officer:	Principal / AP Student Welfare