

CHOOSE PEER RESPECT PROCEDURE

Updated: 2020
Review: 2024

Choosing Peer Respect

Our Lady of Mercy College is a Catholic school with a responsibility to provide an educational environment that promotes the dignity and respect of the person.

Each of us at Our Lady of Mercy College is recognised as a unique individual bringing to the College special qualities and gifts to share. We all have a right to be respected and a responsibility to respect each other.

We aim to foster caring and positive relationships with others and therefore eliminate bullying. Educational outcomes, physical health and emotional well-being will be enhanced by a focus on caring for others at Our Lady of Mercy College.

Becoming a member of the Our Lady of Mercy College community brings rights and responsibilities. The College respects the rights of its students and staff to be free from all forms of negative behaviour including bullying.

All members of our community are expected to take responsibility to foster positive and caring behaviour.

Guidelines for Care of Self and Others

EXPECTATIONS <i>I HAVE THE EXPECTATION...</i>	RESPONSIBILITIES <i>I HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO...</i>
...to be happy and treated with understanding	...treat others with understanding
...to be treated with respect and politeness	...treat others politely and with respect
...to feel safe and secure	...care for others as I would want them to care for me
...that my property will be safe	...take care of my belongings and those of others
...of maximising my educational opportunities	...cooperate with teachers and students to allow everyone's learning to proceed
...of pleasant, clean and well-maintained school and grounds	...be a steward for the College environment

Definitions

Our Lady of Mercy College has a vision which challenges us to create a community in which students and staff seek to care for each other. As a Catholic College we respond to the call of Jesus to love one another.

Bullying is any repeated behaviour by a person, or persons, usually more powerful, which intentionally or unintentionally, hurts, injures, embarrasses, upsets or frightens another person. Bullying can be physical, verbal, emotional or social in nature. Cyber bullying is another form of bullying which



includes text or images posted on personal websites or transmitted via email or mobile phones.

Equally, it is important to know when an action is **NOT bullying**. Hurtful forms of communication do not necessarily fall into the category of bullying; though these actions can be disturbing, unpleasant, or mean. An isolated act of mean behaviour, excluding someone from a group or a disagreement among peers is not bullying.

All actions that are not respectful towards others, will be addressed in an appropriate and transparent way; to ensure positive outcomes for those affected by the actions.

Principles

Our Lady of Mercy College, we must accept responsibility to care for each other and in so doing address any form of bullying. Uncaring behaviour should be reported to ensure that it does not persist, nor is it condoned.

Processes

Strategies to promote a caring positive environment at Our Lady of Mercy College:

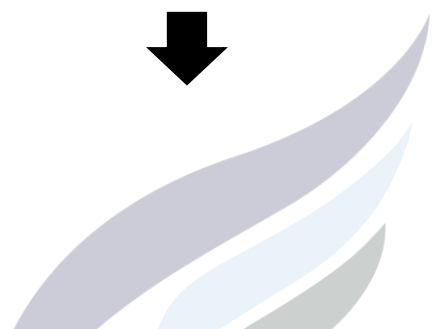
- All members of the Our Lady of Mercy College community are to have access and exposure to the Choose Peer Respect Policy.
- The Choose Peer Respect Policy is to be incorporated into the Pastoral Care program at each year level.
- All staff members, through professional development, should be aware of their role in the promotion of the Choose Peer Respect Policy.
- Pastoral Care Staff (homeroom teachers, Heads of Year, Deputies, School Counsellor and the Principal) are available for students and parents to discuss matters relating to this Policy.
- Positive and caring topics will be highlighted in the curriculum and through the newsletter
- Active supervision will occur in the school yard and for all class/school activities.
- Parents/Guardians are actively encouraged to contact the College, with any concerns.
- The College undertakes to maintain strict confidentiality when dealing with reported incidents of bullying, or behaviour that is harmful to others.
- No student will be worse off for reporting instances of bullying; the staff is committed to supporting students who are experiencing bullying, or who are supporting those they may feel are being treated in an uncaring way (bullied).

Action Plan to Promote Caring Behaviour

A. Ignore uncaring behaviour and show it doesn't upset you

Uncaring behaviour stops. The situation improves

If uncaring behaviour continues





- B. If you feel comfortable to approach the other person or persons, tell them their behaviour is unwanted. Think about how you may also be able to change your behaviour to improve the situation.

Uncaring behaviour stops. The situation improves

If uncaring behaviour continues



- C. Talk it over with someone you can trust to help you, for example:
- Friends
 - Mother/Father or other family member
 - Homeroom Teacher
 - Teacher
 - Student Leaders
 - School Counsellor

Talk openly, sharing what you have already tried, and act on suggestions.

Uncaring behaviour stops. The situation improves

If uncaring behaviour continues



- D. Go to your Homeroom Teacher, Head of Year, Deputy, School Counsellor or the Principal and talk openly about the problem. Allow the adult to take suitable action. Disciplinary action may include:
- giving students opportunity to reflect on their behaviour
 - parental involvement with the College
 - range of sanctions including review of enrolment status
 - counselling

Bystanders Can Make a Difference!

Many uncaring and bullying situations occur in the presence of other people. **Bystanders** are people who are present but who may not be directly involved in an uncaring or bullying situation.

Bystander behaviour is crucial to the continuation or cessation of uncaring and bullying behaviour.

Bystanders may not realise that sometimes they are actually supporting, either actively or passively, bullying and uncaring behaviour.

At Our Lady of Mercy College we expect that all members of our community will seek to promote positive and caring behaviour.



Uncaring and bullying behaviour can be rejected or challenged by:

- not laughing or joining in
- not helping to spread gossip and rumours about others
- not going along with someone being excluded
- telling the uncaring person that their behaviour is unwanted or unfair
- offering support to the person or persons at whom the uncaring and bullying behaviour is being directed, and encouraging her/him to respond to the situation assertively and report it to her/his Homeroom Teacher
- reporting your concerns to your Homeroom Teacher

Bystanders have the ability to reduce the severity of uncaring and bullying situations and help prevent further uncaring and bullying situations.

Our Lady of Mercy College expects all community members to actively support making positive behaviour choices. Everyone can take positive action to minimise the harm done in a situation where bullying or uncaring behaviour occurs.

Actions may include:

- Be confident and understand the importance of protecting the wellbeing of others
- Be willing to support others, where you see a need
- Actively promote kindness and good will
- Encourage personal resilience
- Strive to be inclusive

Parents Can Help!

Parents are encouraged to show your interest:

- in what your child does and how she or he is feeling
- in your child's academic, social, cultural and sporting life at Our Lady of Mercy College

Foster a tolerant home environment:

- listen sympathetically
- encourage your child to bring her/his friends' home
- accept and tolerate differences in others

Encourage your child's self-esteem:

- value your child for who she/he is
- be positive in the things you say and do
- nurture your child's positive qualities.





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Be observant and look out for:

- any changes in child's behaviour
- reluctance to attend school
- unexplained illnesses
- moodiness, appearing distressed or anxious

If your child does talk to you about uncaring behaviour listen sympathetically without blame. Support her/his feelings and let her/him know you care. Encourage your child to address the situation in a confident and assertive manner and communicate your concerns to the College.

Allow the College to respond to these situations in an appropriate manner.

Your first contact should usually be with your child's Homeroom Teacher.

Our Lady of Mercy College

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