



St Catherine's School

Student Restorative Wellbeing Policy

2018

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To every child in a Catholic School

We are committed to
knowing you deeply.
We value you as a **capable**
and **competent** learner
and will support your
active engagement in
the learning process.
In **partnership** with you
and your family we commit
to **high expectations**
for your learning progress,
wellbeing and achievement.

You matter to us.

2 St Catherine's School Vision Statement



ST CATHERINE'S SCHOOL

Quality Catholic Education informed by the Dominican tradition

VISION

St Catherine's strives to develop the whole child through contemporary 21st century learning, a strong sense of community and stewardship of the earth, to become active global citizens.

We build relationships that nurture and uphold the dignity of all.

Our faith is embedded in all aspects of our school ensuring a religious dimension in all that we do.

VALUES

St Catherine's is inspired and informed by the Dominican Charism and the Dominican motto Veritas, referring to our desire to seek and embrace truth and what is right and just.

RESPECT

COMMITMENT

SUSTAINABILITY

HONESTY

COMPASSION

VERITAS

3 Introduction

We believe that all human beings have an inherent desire to be in a relationship and it is in this, that we become fully human. We are committed to a restorative culture grounded in our vision, and inspired by our motto of 'veritas' (desire to seek and embrace truth and what is right and just). This culture offers a transformative view of the human person. It focuses on the behavior and its impact rather than on the person, moving away from models that use shame and punishment to externally control behavior. Grounded in experiences of relationships and community, students learn to understand their own behavior and its impact on others, and they develop the skills needed for resolving conflict and building healthy relationships. As a community we have a responsibility to provide the educative and supportive framework to maximize all children's wellbeing and their capacity for positive mental health and flourishing relationships.

Policy Statement

The Restorative Student Wellbeing Policy outlines our beliefs and practice in these areas:

- Behavior education and personal responsibility
- Countering bullying and harassment
- Student positive resolution

4 Aims

At St Catherine's School we aim to:

- ground our student wellbeing practices in our Catholic Identity
- provide safe environments where all can learn, grow and flourish
- create classroom and yard environments for positive relationships, learning and play
- educate students in each of the social and emotional learning competencies: self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, responsible decision making
- provide logical and appropriate stages of intervention that support all students, positive successful relationships and learning
- provide appropriate levels of restorative intervention in the breakdown of relationships

5 Behaviour Education and Personal Responsibility

Building a community of respect

At St Catherine's School we believe

- respect is pivotal to appropriate social interactions, positive peer and teacher relationships and productive learning habits.
- learning to live harmoniously is vital to one's own sense of well-being, the safety of others and contributing positively to the communities in which we participate.
- learning to be respectful is at the centre of supporting children to use desirable ways to communicate and behave.

To create and maintain a community of respect it is essential that all members of the community know about respect, understand what respect is asking of them and how their behaviour builds or diminishes a community of respect.

The five dimensions of respect in a community of respect are:

1. Respect for self
2. Respect for others
3. Respect for teachers
4. Respect for learning
5. Respect for the environment

6 Restorative Practices

In order to build and nurture respectful relationships, St Catherine's School draws on Restorative Practices. Restorative Practices are a series of processes premised on the innate dignity of each person. They proceed on the basis that unresolved conflict must be involved in the resolution of the conflict. As such, the processes model and practice the necessary life skills to resolve conflict. Restorative Practices aim toward a community that values diversity, rigorous debate and respect for self and other.

A community grounded in a restorative philosophy requires the commitment of all members of the community. This policy therefore outlines the responsibilities of school leadership, students, teachers (this includes all adults working in the school community) and parents/carers. These responsibilities are outlined in relation to the three key areas of this policy: Behaviour Education and Personal Responsibility; Countering Bullying and Harassment; Student Positive Resolution.

7 Code of Respect - Yard / Classroom

Code of Respect – Yard

As the students of St Catherine's School, we:

- strive to create a positive outdoor environment.
- respect other's, ourselves, equipment and teachers.
- listen to everyone's opinions and ideas.
- respect each other's personal space.
- Always display our five school values at all times.

As the students of St Catherine's School, we strive to create a positive outdoor environment. We respect each other and value our resources. We do our best to honor our surroundings and to appreciate everything in our school yard.

We listen to teachers requests and respect our peer's opinions and inputs.

Code of Respect - Classroom

Each classroom articulates how they will demonstrate respect for themselves, each other, the teacher, learning and the environment. The Code is developed collaboratively with the students and is the primary point of reference for resolving conflicts when they arise.

Each class is to develop their own Code of Respect – Classroom by Week 3, Term 1 for the current school year.

8 Responsibilities of:

Leadership:

At St Catherine's School leadership will:

- create and nurture a school environment that:
 - is an expression of our Catholic Identity
 - promotes positive relationships and learning for all staff and students
 - is grounded in a restorative philosophy

- work with teachers each year to develop a student wellbeing plan that:
 - explicitly teaches the five areas of social and emotional learning (self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making and relationships)
 - establishes in collaboration with the students a Code of Respect that provides a foundation for positive relationships and learning within the classroom
 - reflects upon the way in which the physical environment needs to be set up to promote positive relationships and learning
 - names how positive classroom relationships are established and maintained
 - identifies encouragement and re-directing strategies that keep students focused on learning
 - teaches children to understand and where appropriate, use affective statements
- develop with staff a shared understanding of play environments that support positive relationships and safety for all students that includes:
 - structures within the physical environment to support positive relationships and play (e.g. rosters for sharing yard space, social stories about safe play)
 - the use of restorative chats when relationships in the yard break down
 - additional support for students having difficulty engaging in safe yard play
- document and follow up restorative agreements
- be aware of relevant policies, practices and legal obligations

Teachers:

- be aware of, support and model the Code of Respect of St Catherine's School
- create an environment for successful relationships and learning and document this each year in the wellbeing plan
- implement the wellbeing plan in daily practice
- be aware of their own and others behavior and its impact on relationships and learning
- care for all students in our community
- commit to following the restorative process when behaviours have become disruptive to relationships, learning and / or play
- document and follow up restorative agreements
- participate in the development, implementation and review of the school's policy
- participate in ongoing professional learning in student wellbeing
- be aware of relevant policies, practices and legal obligations including protective practice and mandatory notification requirements
- use Circle Time once a week
- **Circle Time:** A planned, regular time, where students are brought together to sit in a circle to engage in a range of group activities. The main aims of Circle Time are to mix students up so they interact outside of their normal groups, help students develop understanding of self and others, and promote a positive sense of community through a range of structured interpersonal interactions. ***Teachers will focus on topical issues that are happening in the classroom or the yard.***
- *Examen and Meditation, Children : Close to the mystery of God- refer to appendix 9 and 10*

Students:

- be aware of and support the Code of Respect
- be active and engaged members of the St Catherine's School community, upholding our motto of 'veritas'

- grow in understanding of their own and others behaviour and its impact on relationships and learning
- commit to following the restorative process when behaviours have become disruptive to relationships, learning and / or play

Parents and Carers:

- support the values of St Catherine's School
- commit to supporting the school's restorative processes
- support their children to:
 - be active and engaged in school life
 - grow in understanding of their own and others' behaviour and its impact on relationships and learning
- be aware of their own behaviour and its impact on relationships with others in the school community
- support the school in their philosophy towards management of student wellbeing

9 Countering Bullying and Harassment

Definition

Bullying is a systematic and **repeated abuse of power**. In general, bullying may be defined as:

- Dominating or hurting someone
 - Unfair action by the perpetrator(s) and an imbalance of power
 - A lack of adequate defense by the target and feeling of oppression and humiliation
- (Dr. Ken Rigby, 2010)

Definition of Bullying (Bullying No Way website)

- 1) The national definition of bullying for Australian schools says:

Bullying is an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more persons. Bullying can happen in person or online, and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert).

Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.

Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.

- 2) Behaviours that do not constitute bullying include:
 - Mutual arguments and disagreements (where there is no power imbalance)
 - Not liking someone or a single act of social rejection
 - One-off acts of meanness or spite
 - Isolated incidents of aggression, intimidation or violence.

However, these conflicts still need to be addressed and resolved.

- 3) Exploring the definition further
Bullying has three main features:
 - It involves a misuse of power in a relationship

- It is ongoing and repeated, and
- It involves behaviours that can cause harm.

Harassment is repeated, unwanted behavior that is annoying and also involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons.

Behaviours can be impolite or rude such as inadvertently saying or doing something that offend someone or forgetting to use our manners. At other times children can be deliberately mean and purposefully say or do something to hurt another person. Both these instances can be hurtful and damaging to relationships and can be addressed through restorative processes. These are not the same as bullying which is intentional and repeated behavior involving an imbalance of power.

Types of Bullying and Harassment

Physical

Physical bullying and harassment is any deliberate physical action such as:

- invading personal space
- physically harming or making a person feel threatened or offended
- using another person's possessions without their consent
- graffiti or damage to others' possessions or property
- commenting negatively on a person's appearance

Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying and harassment refers to bullying through the use of information communication technologies such as email, text messaging, messenger, MSN, social networking sites, blogs, chat rooms, etc. to:

- make unwanted statements about another person
- put down others, verbally or with the use of images
- exclude others
- imitate, mimic or impersonate others
- start or participate in the spread of rumours and gossip about another person
- stalk or harass others
- post photos of others

Cyber bullying can include messages, use of offensive images or use of a person's photo without their permission

Emotional / Verbal

Emotional bullying and harassment involves using any words or action that are unwanted and repeated and which a person finds offensive, such as:

- excluding others
- acting in a disrespectful or mean way e.g. rolling eyes, body language that excludes or intimidates, moving, hiding or destroying another person's things
- verbal threats
- threatening someone by using stand over tactics
- making others feel insecure
- using emotions to try and control others
- name calling
- offensive language, notes or images
- putting people down
- targeting people because of their race, gender, sexuality, religious belief, physical appearance or intellectual capacity

Sexual

Sexual bullying and harassment is behavior of a sexual nature which a person finds offensive. This type of harassment can be verbal or non-verbal, such as:

- touching or brushing against a person in a sexual manner
- sexually oriented jokes, drawings, literature or online material
- commenting negatively on a person's physical appearance

10 Restorative Plan - (Classroom)

At St Catherine's, students and staff will follow a Restorative Plan (see Appendix 1)

1. Positive correction
2. Affective Statement
3. Restorative visit 1
4. Restorative visit 2
5. Restorative Meeting (with leadership, teacher and child)
6. Conditions of enrolment contract (Principal, Parents, Teacher)

11 Extreme Class / Yard Behaviour

Extreme Class / Yard Behaviour, the Restorative Plan **begins at Restorative Meeting** (Straight to Leadership in charge)

1. Meeting with Leadership (straight away)
2. Parents from both parties will also be notified by phone by leadership involved. (on the day or within 12-24 hours of incident)
3. Student / students will be kept in for 20 minutes of the next break period. Complete the Agreement Form ** in extreme cases, student may be suspended (**Conditions of enrolment** (Contract))
4. If the agreement is broken within 24 hours then Conditions of enrolment applies – parents called in. (Principal discretion)
5. **Refer to Restorative Meetings and Conditions of enrolment**

If the said incident happens prior to:

11am – Student will be kept in at Recess

1pm – student will be kept in at Lunch

3.05pm – student will be kept in after school (parents to be notified) and possibly recess the following day

(If the teacher has yard duty rostered on, the Leadership team will cover yard duty)

6. If Jason Mittiga (Principal) / Tanya Stott Aprim is absent from the school at the time of the offensive behavior Melinda James will oversee all students in Rec – Year 2 Lukas Antoniadis will oversee all students in Year 3 – Year 7

12 REPEAT BEHAVIOUR

Principal discretion applies in more serious circumstances

If child is already on level 1 Conditions of enrolment, then they go to level 2 Conditions of enrolment(May be higher level- depending on severity of incident)

Principal to decide if they go back through the Restorative plan process. The contract should spell this out clearly. **(Appendix 7)**

13 Yard behaviour – low level (green slip)

Student is to walk with the teacher on yard duty if low level behaviour and have a Restorative chat.

Yard duty teacher to fill out green slip for our records so that we can see if this a reoccurring behaviour. eg: Tackling, rough play, out of bounds, no hat, answering back, name calling etc.

Teachers to use discretion and professional judgement. (Parent not notified)

Designated ESO to record weekly on one drive file.

14 Class behaviour low level

If class behaviour is low level teachers are to follow Restorative Plan system.

Low level behaviour may consist of: interrupting, calling out, not following instructions, talking, not respecting others right to learn etc...

15 Resources

Circle Time

Hansberry, B. and Langley, J. (2013) *The grab and go circle time kit for teaching restorative behaviour*. Sydney, Inyahead Press.

Roffey, S. (2006) *Circle time for emotional literacy*. Los Angeles, Sage Publications.

You can do it! Circle time kits 1 and 2

Prayer

Children: Close to the Mystery of Good. A CESA Stimulus Paper

Examen prayer app

Restorative Practices

Hansberry, B. (2016) *A Practical Introduction to Restorative Practice in Schools : Theory, Skills and Guidance*. London, Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Thorsborne, M. ed. (2014) *The Psychology of Emotion in Restorative Practice : How Affect Script Psychology Explains How and Why Restorative Practice Works*. London, Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Social and Emotional Learning

<http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/>

Le Messurier, M. and Nawana Parker, M. (2011) *What's the buzz? A social skills enrichment programme for primary students*. London, Routledge.

Le Messurier, M. and Nawane Parker, M. (2015) *What's the buzz? For early learners*. London, Routledge.

Program Achieve. Third edition.

<https://www.esafety.gov.au/>

<http://www.cybersafekids.com.au/>

<http://www.cybersafetysolutions.com.au/>

<https://www.studentwellbeinghub.edu.au/>

Other programs/curriculum areas

Australian Curriculum Health and Physical Education - <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/>

Child Protection Curriculum - <http://rantraining.e3learning.com.au/>

Made In the Image of God

National Safe Schools Framework - <https://www.education.gov.au/national-safe-schools-framework-0>

16 Appendices

1. Explanation of Restorative Plan
2. Draft letter/ email to parents
3. Slips for yard behaviour
4. Restorative Conversation
5. Agreement Form Restorative Conversation – Teacher and Child
6. Agreement Form Restorative Conversation- Child and child
7. Conditions of enrolment contract
8. Meditation / Examen
9. Children : Close to the mystery of God document
10. Definition of Bullying

Appendix 1:

Explanation of the Restorative Plan System (Classroom)

Positive Correction

(Teacher directed)

- Tactical ignoring /Non-verbal messages/ proximity quiet questioning/ pause direction

Affective Statement

- Affirm the student
- State the offending behaviour (link to the code of respect)
- Tell the student how you feel (use an I statement)
- State the desirable behaviour

Restorative Visit 1

(to another class)

The student is sent to another class to reflect on their behaviour (**write out class code of respect**)

Restorative Visit 2: to leadership until the next break or for period of time

Class: The student is sent to designated leadership. Teacher involved to email parents (appendix 2). Student sent back to class at leadership discretion.

Teacher to record on one drive

Re – entry back in to the classroom (Restorative Chat)

The teacher has a Restorative chat with the student,

If it is one student sent out, the teacher will go through the following:

*Why were you sent out?

*What were you thinking about at the time? *

*What needs to happen for you to work successfully?

If two children are sent out, the teacher will have Restorative Chat (see below) with both students upon re-entering the room.

- What happened?
- Who has been affected / hurt by what happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What needs to happen to restore the relationship?

Restorative Meeting (Leadership directed) - sent to Leadership-
(*All serious incidents Fast tracked to Restorative Meeting or Conditions of enrolment -Principal discretion*) classroom or yard

This occurs at the break (as indicated above) and involves Leadership / Teacher / Student

A restorative conversation seeks to do the following (**appendix 4**)

- 1) Facilitate a respectful dialogue between those in discord
- 2) Identify the harm caused to a relationship
- 3) Elicit an empathic response from the person exhibiting disrespectful behaviour
- 4) Discuss how to repair the harm to the relationship
- 5) Establish an agreement that describes respectful interaction
- 6) Support those in discord to maintain a respectful relationship
- 7) L/ship to type up *Restorative agreement (Appendix 5 and 6)***
- 8) Leadership notify parents re next step. Leadership to record on one drive

Conditions of enrolment (Serious/ Extreme/ repeat behaviour)

(Principal directed) with parents / teacher / child) (*If child repeats behavior or gets to this level*)

Principal to determine whether this level is applicable for all situations- eg seriousness of incident/ repeat behaviour

EG: Extreme Bullying/ Extreme violence/ inappropriate class yard behaviour/ rude, inappropriate language/ gestures

All serious incidents straight to Restorative Conversation or Conditions of enrolment (Principal discretion)

Provide parents/ child /teacher with letter of conditions of enrolment contract to be signed by all parties (Appendix 7)

Level 1: 1 day internal suspension

Level 2 3 day internal suspension

Level 3 3 day external suspension

Level 4: CEO intervention about conditions of enrolment

Leadership Duties 2018

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Jason	Jason	Tanya	Jason/ Melinda	Tanya

Appendix 2: Email sent to parents after Restorative visit 2 (by teacher)

Date

Dear _____,

I am writing to inform you that today I have had to ask your child to spend some time in another class. After being reminded of our Class Code of Conduct and School Values, your child continued to interrupt the class' learning time and their own learning time. They were asked to reflect on their behaviour during this time.

Upon returning to the class, your child and I have discussed the expectations of learning in our room.

If you wish to speak to me about this, please feel free to contact me.

Kind regards

Teacher name

Appendix 3: Slips for yard

Term	Week	Date	Time	Teacher	Class or Yard	Description	Record of agreement

Appendix 4: Restorative Meeting/ Conversation- Leadership (Appendix 4a: Rec-Year 2 / Appendix 4b: Years 3-7)

4A (R-2 each teacher has a hard copy)

4B

The Conversation (Script)

1.

P. What happened?

V. What did you think when you realised what had happened?

F. Summarise or paraphrase the dialogue

#####

2.

P Who has been affected by what you did?

V How has this affected you and others?

F. Summarise or paraphrase the dialogue

#####

3.

V. What do you think needs to happen to make things better?

P What do you need to do to make things better?

F. Summarise and Negotiate (agreement)

#####

4. Facilitator to draw up (*refer to appendix 5 and 6*)

Agreement:

Child:

Teacher:

*An then explain what will happen if they go to next level- **Conditions of enrolment***

#####

The Conclusion (Script)

1. Thank both people for their participation and affirm their efforts to resolve their conflict
2. State the agreement
3. Record the agreement
4. State the monitoring process or offer continued support

The Agreement

1. Who is involved
2. The incident
3. The date of restorative conversation
4. The agreement
5. Have all involved sign it
6. Keep it on file
7. Does it need monitoring?

Appendix 5: Restorative Meeting/ Agreement Teacher and Child

Restorative Agreement Friday 9th June

Child:

Pay attention more in class
Put up my hand
Wait for people to finish
Commit to doing my work
Respect myself, Miss, Teachers and class mates
Be honest with myself and be true to myself
Do not be silly as this affects others

Teacher:

For to commit to his learning
For to respect me, other teachers, class mates and himself
For to manage his own behaviour and become a self-managed learner

***If goes through this process again and gets up to A conditions of enrolment meeting his parents, teacher and Mr Mittiga will be involved in a meeting.
We are here to support and work with to be the best person he can be at St Catherine's.***

I agree to this Restorative agreement: Child

I agree to this Restorative agreement: Teacher

Appendix 6: Child and child

Restorative Agreement Monday 21st August

Child 1:

Child 1 has decided that:

..... to play in the forest or oval for all of Week 5- not on tennis courts

We will meet again in Week 6 to see how child 1 is feeling about the situation

Child 1 should always have the right to feel safe at school

Child 2:

Although child 2 is not happy with the outcome of being removed from the tennis courts he understands why

Child 2 is not to make contact with Child 1

Child 2 is not to speak to him inappropriately or tease him in any way, shape or form

If Child 2 does not adhere to this agreement his parents will be called in and a further suspension will take place.

I agree to this Restorative agreement: Child 1

I agree to this Restorative agreement: Child 2

Signed: Mr Mittiga

Appendix 7: Conditions of enrolment contract

Step 6

Conditions of enrolment for: Reggio Emilia

Reggio..... Will be internally suspended for (either level 1 or level 2, depending on severity of incident) **Principal discretion.**

Reggio (**explain incident**) bullied a child continuously and has not displayed our school values and this will not be tolerated at our school.

When Reggio re -enters the classroom after the suspension he will go back to the Restorative system and follow the steps .**If Reggio repeats the behavior he will go straight to the next level in step 8.**

If Reggio repeats the behaviour weeks/ months down the track for the first time since the initial incident, the Principal will use his discretion to determine what step/ level he goes to- depending on the severity of the incident.

Level 1: 1 day internal suspension

Level 2: 3 day internal suspension (if deemed extremely serious by the Principal)

Level 3: 2 day external suspension

Level 4: CEO involvement re enrolment

I agree to the processes outlined above and will support the Restorative Well-being Policy at St Catherine's.

Signed Student:

Signed Parent/s:

Signed Teacher:

Signed Principal:

Appendix 8: Meditation/ Examen

The Examen is a method of reviewing your day in the presence of God. It's actually an attitude more than a method, a time set aside for thankful reflection on where God is in your everyday life. It has five steps, which most people take more or less in order, and it usually takes 15 to 20 minutes per day. Below is the 5 step process:

1. **Ask God for light.**

I want to look at my day with God's eyes, not merely my own.

2. **Give thanks.**

The day I have just lived is a gift from God. Be grateful for it.

3. **Review the day.**

I carefully look back on the day just completed, being guided by the Holy Spirit.

4. **Face your shortcomings.**

I face up to what is wrong – in my life and in me.

5. **Look towards the day to come.**

I ask where I need God in the day to come.

Appendix 9: Children: Close to the mystery of God

Children: Close to the Mystery of God:

Every child is held in God's infinite tenderness and God is present in each of their lives. The significance of children's lives is reflected in the Catholic Church's strong commitment to education in South Australia.

At St Catherine's we seek to educate children not only as participants in Australian society but also as people of faith, and so bring faith and culture together.

Our reflection to date on the theology of childhood as led us to revisit the sources of Catholic faith. The Gospel account of Jesus', interaction with children have inspired us again. We have not only appreciated children's unsurpassable value in the Catholic Tradition – that every child is of inestimable value – but also see again the mystery of God's love revealed in children's experience, even amidst life's brokenness and limits.

We strive to inspire learners who will:

- feel connected to God, humanity, the earth and it's creatures
- be active in creating a just and sustainable future for all
- see themselves and others as greatly and equally cherished by God
- make decisions based on securing the common good.
- be creative, wise and consultative
- be able to interact and communicate in a way the preserves the virtues of justice, charity and truth
- grow morally, spiritually, socially and intellectually
- recognise the synthesis between faith, culture, life and learning.

Appendix 10: Background Notes for Understanding Bullying

What is Bullying?

A definition of adults

Bullying is:

- a repeated, unjustifiable behaviour;
- that may be physical, verbal and/or psychological;
- this is intended to cause fear, distress, or harm to another;
- that is conducted by a more powerful individual or group;
- against a less powerful individual who is unable to effectively resist.

A definition for children

Bullying is: when these things happen again and again to someone and it is hard for the student being bullied to stop these things from happening:

- being ignored, left out on purpose, or not allowed to join in.
- being made fun of and teased in a mean and hurtful way
- lies or nasty stories are told about someone to make other children not like them
- being made afraid of getting hurt
- staring or giving someone mean look or gestures
- forcing someone to do things they don't want to do.
- Being hit, kicked or pushed around.

Bullying is used by a more powerful person to cause fear, distress and/or harm against a less powerful person unable to stop the bullying from happening.

How is bullying different to other forms of aggression?

Like other forms of aggressive behaviour, bullying involved the intention of an individual or group to cause harm to one or more others. However, bullying has the following unique characteristics:

- A power imbalance is present;
- The aggressive act is unprovoked by the victim or perceived as unjustified by others; and
- The action is repeated between the same individuals.

Is Fighting Bullying?

While fighting between two students of equal power is of concern, it is not bullying. It is the presence of a power imbalance that distinguishes bullying from fighting, conflict, violence and disagreement. It is this imbalance that makes mistreatment of the victim possible.

“Teachers get remarkably fed up with children who fight or scrap with one another. But they are not bullies because they fight, and the one who wins is most certainly not a bully because he wins. The mindless and degrading violence of strong against weak may be bullying, but fighting, by definition, is not”

Is Teasing Bullying?

Teasing, done in mutual fun and jest, where all individuals are involved and feel capable of responding, is not bullying. However, teasing that is done in a mean and hurtful way, that involves a power imbalance whereby one individual feels powerless to respond or to stop what is happening, is bullying.

The Importance of Language

It is important that bullying is seen as a behaviour and not personified in the form of a 'bully'. The message students receive should be that bullying is an unacceptable behaviour. A school-based program should not focus on 'busting' the bullies.

This focus promotes force and exclusion as a means of getting one's way, in other words, exactly what bullying is. It also labels students who engage in bullying as 'bullies' and may marginalise and exclude them from behaviour change activities, because the message they receive is that they, as a 'bully', are not wanted or valued.

Activities to reduce and prevent bullying should promote the message that all students are valued but engaging in bullying behaviour is unacceptable. Written information and policy should reflect this by referring to 'students who engage in bullying' or 'students who bully others' and 'students who are bullied' or 'students who are the target of bullying'.