



Safe School Procedures

Responsibilities

All members of the Mercedes College community have a responsibility to ensure that others feel respected, safe, and valued.

The Student Role

- Students are encouraged to use their skills in being independent, resilient, and proactive, when it is safe to do so, by using the following steps:
- Behave positively towards other students at all times, including out of school hours and when away from school grounds when representing the college, in uniform, online or in the wider community.
- Use non-violent responses to negative attention from others.
- Engage in educational programs designed to inform, protect, and prevent bullying and harassment.
- Ignore and walk away: bullying may stop if bullies do not receive the reaction that they are seeking.
- Seek out a friend or peer to support you.
- Report: If the bullying or harassment continues, report the behaviour immediately to their Class/Home Group Teacher, Year Level Leader, another staff member, or family (particularly if bullying is occurring away from the college site or online).

The Bystander Role

- Bystanders observing or being aware of bullying and/or harassment have a responsibility to report this information to a staff member. This allows staff to investigate the report, ensure that all students are safe, and feel valued and supported. A bystander can be proactive about stopping the bullying/harassment by:
- Refusing to be involved in any bullying or harassment, including out of school hours and when away from school grounds.
- Asking for the bullying to stop (where safe and appropriate).
- Reporting the incident to the Class or Home Group Teacher, subject or yard duty teacher, or any staff member.
- Being supportive of those affected and encouraging them to seek help and support.

The Staff Member Role

- All College staff have a responsibility to adhere to the Catholic Education SA Code of Conduct and ensure that any bullying or harassment involving any member of the College community is addressed as soon as possible. Most incidents of bullying and/or harassment will need to be communicated with other appropriate staff members to best support students and allow follow up to occur. Staff are responsible for:
- Creating a college climate where bullying and harassment are not tolerated.
- Being a positive role model in all words, actions, and choices.
- Teaching respectful relationships and restorative practices.
- Being proactive in responding to bullying behaviour and observant of signs of distress, changes in behaviour or suspected incidents of bullying or harassment.
- Taking appropriate actions to prevent occasions for bullying or harassment.
- Supporting students through restorative practice skills and strategies for preventing, responding to, and resolving bullying and harassment.
- Ensuring that all students are aware of the Safe School Policy and associated Procedures.
- Taking steps to support students experiencing bullying and harassment and respond immediately, efficiently, and appropriately to reports of bullying or harassment.
- Reporting incidents of bullying or harassment via the student information system.



The College Leadership Role

Mercedes College leadership have responsibility for ensuring that the whole community understands the distinction between bullying and developmentally typical behaviour, that bullying, and harassment will not be tolerated, and how each member will respond to observed and reported incidents. This includes:

- Creating a college climate where bullying and harassment are not tolerated, by upholding and living the college values enshrined in the Mercy Keys.
- Responding immediately, effectively, and appropriately to incidents and reports of bullying or harassment in support of college staff, students, and families.
- Communicating to community members, relevant policy and procedural updates in relation to the Catholic Education SA Code of Conduct and the Safe School Policy.
- Ensuring that Catholic Social Teaching, natural justice and procedural fairness inform the college's duty of care and pastoral care responses in order to prevent, or resolve conflict and to heal relationships.
- Enacting the College's grievance procedures to investigate complaints lodged against action taken under this Policy.
- Regularly reviewing and updating the Safe School Policy.

The Family Role

- Be a positive role model.
- Be supportive and take an interest in their child's social life.
- Recognise signs of change or distress in their child and be available to listen supportively to reports of bullying or harassment.
- Clarify the distinction between developmentally typical behaviour and bullying and harassment and ways to effectively respond.
- Discuss respectful and positive strategies for dealing with bullying or harassment.
- Inform college staff of suspected bullying or harassment or if necessary, SA Police where there is a concern for student personal safety.
- Keep copies of evidence of bullying and harassment (e.g., screenshots from social media) and provide these to the College or SA Police as appropriate.
- Be supportive of the College's processes and work cooperatively with College staff to seek appropriate resolution to any issues that may occur.

Resources

National Safe Schools Framework: http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/_resources/NSSFramework.pdf

Student Wellbeing Hub: <https://studentwellbeinghub.edu.au/>

Bullying No Way: <https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/>

SA Commissioner for Children and Young People, "The Bullying Project": <https://www.cyp.com.au/bullying-consultations>