

Preventative action parents can take

- ✦ Maintain a positive relationship with your child that encourages, open honest communication
- ✦ Make time to listen to your child
- ✦ Take an active interest in your child's education and look for positive ways to be involved with the school
- ✦ Encourage your child to develop problem-solving skills
- ✦ Allow opportunities for your child to interact with their peers in informal and formal settings
- ✦ Have clear guidelines for behaviour – boundary inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour and encourage your child's positive efforts

Resilience

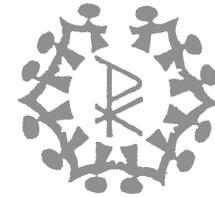
Resilience is the ability to spring back after adversity or bad times. Resilience is fostered by:

- ✦ Family connectedness
- ✦ Peer connectedness
- ✦ Fitting in at school

Working Together

Schools and parents need to work together to promote belonging and foster involvement between staff and students. In such a supportive environment bullying is less likely to occur.

ST. JUDE'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL



A Parent's Guide to Countering Bullying

At St. Jude's School we believe:

- ✦ Everyone has the right to feel safe and valued.
- ✦ It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that this right is enjoyed by all.
- ✦ Bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
- ✦ If bullying occurs, we will work with all those involved to resolve the problem.



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What is Bullying?

Bullying is a repeated pattern of wilful, conscious behaviour intended to hurt, threaten or embarrass an individual or a group. For example, when a person:

- ⊕ is called hurtful, racist or sexist names
- ⊕ is physically harmed or threatened
- ⊕ is sent nasty notes
- ⊕ is deliberately excluded
- ⊕ is teased repeatedly in a nasty way
- ⊕ is singled out for unfair treatment
- ⊕ is picked on
- ⊕ has their property interfered with
- ⊕ has rumours spread about them

Bullying is characterised by an imbalance of power. It is not bullying when two students of equal strength (physical or psychological) are fighting or quarrelling.

Signs and Symptoms

If a child is being bullied, you may observe some of the following indicators:

Emotional: Mood swings, sleep disturbance, eating disorders, depression

Physical: Psychosomatic complaints, stomach-aches, head-aches, negative body language, tics

Social: Social withdrawal, increased sibling rivalry

Behavioural: Outburst of temper, problematic behaviour

Academic: Truancy, decline in work standards

Factors other than bullying can produce the same symptoms, so it is important to discuss the situation with, for example, the school social worker, psychologist or a health practitioner.

What can you do if you think your child is being bullied?

- ⊕ Talk to the child and try and find out what is happening
- ⊕ Listen attentively and ask open questions
- ⊕ Try not to blame or over-react
- ⊕ Reassure the child and let them know you're glad they've told you
- ⊕ Decide if the problem is one the child can deal with or if it needs parent intervention
- ⊕ If you feel the child can deal with the problem, discuss how the child might go about this and make a plan of action
- ⊕ Monitor the situation
- ⊕ If parent action is required, arrange contact with the school
- ⊕ Be willing to work with the school to resolve the problem
- ⊕ Often the child will only present to you aspects of the situation most distressing to them, but may not have presented the whole picture. Let the school find out more about what is happening
- ⊕ If the situation is still not fully resolved, let the school know
- ⊕ Remember that some situations take time and perseverance to resolve



What action will St. Jude's take?

Preventative:

- ⊕ Have a clear school policy about bullying
- ⊕ Have a clear behaviour management system
- ⊕ Promote strong pastoral care practices
- ⊕ Provide comprehensive playground supervision
- ⊕ Encourage peer support (buddies, peer mediation)
- ⊕ Teach problem-solving skills, conflict resolution, protective behaviours and social skills as part of the curriculum
- ⊕ Encourage co-operative learning and mediation training in classes (class meetings and mediation)
- ⊕ Identify individual needs and develop individualised support plans
- ⊕ Organise appropriate referral for any children experiencing difficulties (support teacher, social worker, educational psychologist)
- ⊕ Emphasise a problem-solving, conciliatory approach (listening to both sides - not labelling).

Responsive:

- ⊕ Listen to involved parties to establish what has happened.
- ⊕ Assist with resolution using a combination of methods including:
 - the no blame or shared concern approaches
 - disciplinary consequences
 - parent involvement
 - making amends
 - counselling
- ⊕ Monitor the situation with parents, teachers and the children involved.