ST. MARY'S HIGH SCHOOL GATESHEAD

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

(2016)

1. PREAMBLE

"We are made in the image and likeness of God." Genesis 1:27

Bullying is not acceptable. Bullying can impact on the capacity of children to achieve their God given potential. Bullying is not a normal part of growing up. Bullying can seriously harm a child physically, emotionally and psychologically.

At St. Mary's we are committed to promoting a safe environment where all community members may grow and develop. The modelling of positive behaviours and anti-bullying strategies at St. Mary's are vital aspects of students learning and parent reporting. We are committed to minimising risk of inappropriate behaviours becoming accepted, tolerated or even endemic through well-articulated, understood and implemented policies and procedures which are regularly reviewed.

2. DEFINITION

At St. Mary's we recognise that there is no definitive definition of bullying, however the most influential research of what constitutes bullying has been proposed by Olweus(1993):

*"**...bullying may be defined as** a student being exposed, repeatedly over time, to intentional injury or discomfort inflicted by one or more other students. This may include physical contact, verbal assault, making obscene gestures or facial expressions, and intentionally excluding the student."*

The *National Safe Schools Framework* (2011) defines bullying as repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons.

"...Bullying is thus conceived largely in behavioural terms, that is, involves negative actions on the part of the perpetrator."[Rigby(2006) from *Bullying Solutions* p.4]

At St. Mary's we recognise that cyber bullying is a significant area of concern and action. **Cyber bullying may be defined as:**

"...any form of bullying that utilises technology such as instant messaging, online chat rooms, online bulletin boards and email. In many ways this is a more insidious form of bullying since it may reach into a victim's home." In other words, technology now allows the bully to inflict psychological harm on his or her victim anywhere and anytime without respite. (Schools and the Law – Des Butler and Ben Matthews p.46)

The Commonwealth Code sets as an offence the use of a carriage service(such as a mobile phone or the internet) in a way that is menacing, harassing or offensive. The maximum penalty for committing the offence is 3 years imprisonment.

'Sexting' is an occurrence that may be considered bullying. Under present legislation perpetrators place themselves in the serious position of making, viewing and or sending inappropriate and unlawful material.

To reinforce our school mantra: '*Be safe. Be respectful. Be a learner*', we will respond to all repeated incidents of inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour on an individual basis.

3. RATIONALE

"The effects of Bullying are enormously damaging to the physical and mental health of many children and that these effects can persist into adult years" (Ken Rigby, Building Interventions in School, 2010, pg. IX)

With this in mind bullying behaviour is in conflict with the core values and purpose of our school. In working towards an authentic Catholic school culture we acknowledge that bullying must be recognised, named and addressed.

4. AIMS

This policy aims to:

- Ensure the rights of all students and staff at St Mary's to experience a school environment free from the fear of bullying, harassment, intimidation and victimisation.
- Promote a proactive attitude to, and clear understanding of, whole-school processes in order to prevent, reduce and respond to bullying behaviour (inclusive of cyber-bullying).
- Establish a clear and consistent approach to the management of school record keeping processes in relation to the case management of bullying issues (inclusive of cyber bullying).

5. IMPLEMENTATION

5.1.1 Preventative Programs

(a) Committed to the principles of Restorative Justice, St Mary's adopts positive behaviour supports in all areas of community life to establish a safe and respectful environment.

All members of our community are introduced to the schools mantra of "Be Safe", "Be a Learner," "Be Respectful"; and the explicit behaviours that support these ideals.

These behaviours are consistently reinforced through a variety of educational experiences such as:

- Student induction processes at the beginning of each school year
- Peer Support Program
- Community days
- Whole School Assemblies
- Year Assemblies
- Roll Call
- Educational Dramatic Productions – e.g. Brainstorm productions
- Year 8 Camp
- Year 9 Leadership Program
- Year 10 optional retreat program

(b) New enrolments undergo a formal interview process where previous bullying incidents are identified. Explicit behaviours around supports within St Mary's are communicated.

(c) Teachers have received training in Restorative Justice techniques including strategies and behaviour supports such as:

- Circles
- Community conferencing.

All St Mary's staff have the ability to encourage empathy and act as restorative facilitators.

5.1.2 Reporting and record keeping

a) St Mary's teachers are committed to the investigation of reports around bullying, with the implementation of the following procedures:

Bullying Assessment and Action Flowchart (see Appendix 1)

Anti-Bullying procedures for Staff Flowchart (see Appendix 2)

5.1.3 Promoting Anti Bullying across the Community

a) In order to communicate and disseminate information regarding the schools Anti-bullying policy to appropriate stakeholders, the following procedures are in place:

- Display Laminated "Procedure for Students" (**see appendix 3**) in all classroom settings and diary.
- Presenting relevant documentation at Parent information nights at beginning of school year.
- Including relevant information in enrolment packages.(**see appendix 4)** and school newsletters

Procedures for Students (see Appendix 3)

5.1.4 Safety Procedures in relation to reporting of bullying incidents

Procedures for keeping safe members of the school community who report bullying incidents, and follow-up supports.

a) Through St Mary's strong commitment to upholding the school's **"BE SAFE"** mantra; the promotion of individual responsibilities around unsafe behaviour is consistently enforced. (Roll Call, Year assemblies, School assemblies, newsletter, classroom expectations)
These responsibilities include: "Report unsafe and unfair behaviour or incidents to staff" – St. Mary's diary.

Confidentiality around reporting is the fundamental principle when bullying behaviours are disclosed.

b) In keeping with the St Mary's Action Flowchart the following interventions are put in place in Steps 1 - 3:

1. Provide appropriate support structures for targeted student
   May include safe space, guided choice, removal from particular environments, contact with home, access to counsellor, feedback to classroom teachers
2. Discipline aggressor for bullying, based on the seriousness and persistence of the behaviour using procedures from school policy (see 5.1.5)
   May include removal from school environment, contact home, education around behaviour
3. Educate and counsel all students, including bystanders, about bullying
   May include PBS strategies, RJ meetings, feedback to classes or stakeholders.

5.1.5 Statements of Consequence

Consequences for students who ignore school rules.

a) Whilst St Mary's is committed to the principles of Positive Behaviour Support, and Restorative Justice (inappropriate behaviour is viewed as a "learning error") Diocesan Policy is implemented around extreme behaviour and may result in:

- Reporting to appropriate authorities where necessary (i.e. Police, CSO,)
- Referral to Director for expulsion
- Possible exclusion through suspension – Internal or External
- Parent/Student/case manager interview

5.1.6 Contact Information and Services

Contact information for the Police Liaison Officer and other support services available to the school community.

a) St. Mary's has developed a wide range of support services and consults appropriate agencies depending on the individual nature of each case. St Mary's network of support includes:
   - School Counsellors – Paisley, Morris
   - CSO Well-Being Officer – Maree Martin
   - Police Liaison Officer – Rachel Garland 0437778707
   - Zimmerman services
   - Catholic Care Youth Services
   - Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMS)
   - Kids Helpline
   - Cybersafetyforparents.mn.catholic.edu.au
   - Bullyingnoway.com.au
   - Generation next website
   - www.cybersmart.gov.au

5.1.7 Support of Staff for Professional Learning

a) In relation to Professional Learning around Anti-Bullying, opportunities for staff include:
   - Professional Learning Meetings
   - Professional Development opportunities through Catholic School Office (CSO)
   - Attendance to Generation Next conferences
   - IT safety resources/Cyber safety resources produced by Learning Technology Coordinator
   - Staff involvement in policy development

5.1.8 Ongoing follow up and monitoring

a) In accordance with the St. Mary's Bullying Assessment and Action Flowchart (5.1.2) individuals are tracked by their case-managers.

5.1.9 Community Development and Review of Anti – Bullying Policy

a) In alignment with school Annual Strategic Plan the Anti-Bullying Policy will be reviewed on a yearly basis. This review will involve parents, student, and staff. It is also inclusive of data collection, survey instruments, collaboration with Parent and Friends Association, and Student Pastoral Council.

5.1.10 Responsibilities of school leaders, teachers, students

The Principal will:

a. Develop a shared understanding with staff and community members of bullying behaviour that involves all forms of bullying including cyber bullying.
b. Ensure the development, implementation and evaluation of preventative strategies and programs to promote student safety and wellbeing
c. Provide support to any student who has been affected by, engaged in or witnessed bullying behaviour
d. Be responsible for the implementation of the school's anti bullying policy and procedures
e. Initiate police support (Police liaison officers) and or intervention when required
f. Provide regular updates to parents or caregivers regarding the management of specific incidents
g. Ensure that an annual communication of the contents of the policy be made to the school community
h. Maintain an ongoing and annual evaluation process of the policy with students, staff and caregivers
i. Monitor student understanding and satisfaction of school processes
j. Identify patterns of bullying behaviour and initiate school action to address them
k. Engage students in the evaluation of anti-bullying processes within the school

School staff will:

a. Respond to a student's call for assistance, after his/her reporting of inappropriate behaviours in relation to all forms of bullying. This includes the use of technology (e.g. text messaging or social networking site usage). Failure to take action may indicate a breach in the duty of care owed to the student.

b. Seek advice from their supervisor(s) if they require confirmation or clarification regarding an incident of alleged bullying behaviour.

c. Maintain an up to date knowledge of school policies relating to bullying behaviour

Students will:

a. Promote positive relationships that respect and accept individual difference and diversity

b. Follow the school procedures in reporting and responding to bullying behaviour

c. Work collaboratively with staff and peers to resolve incidents of bullying

d. Have an awareness and understanding of what constitutes bullying while being charged with the responsibility of being respectful of one another

e. Participate in the annual evaluation of school anti bullying processes and procedures

6. BUDGET

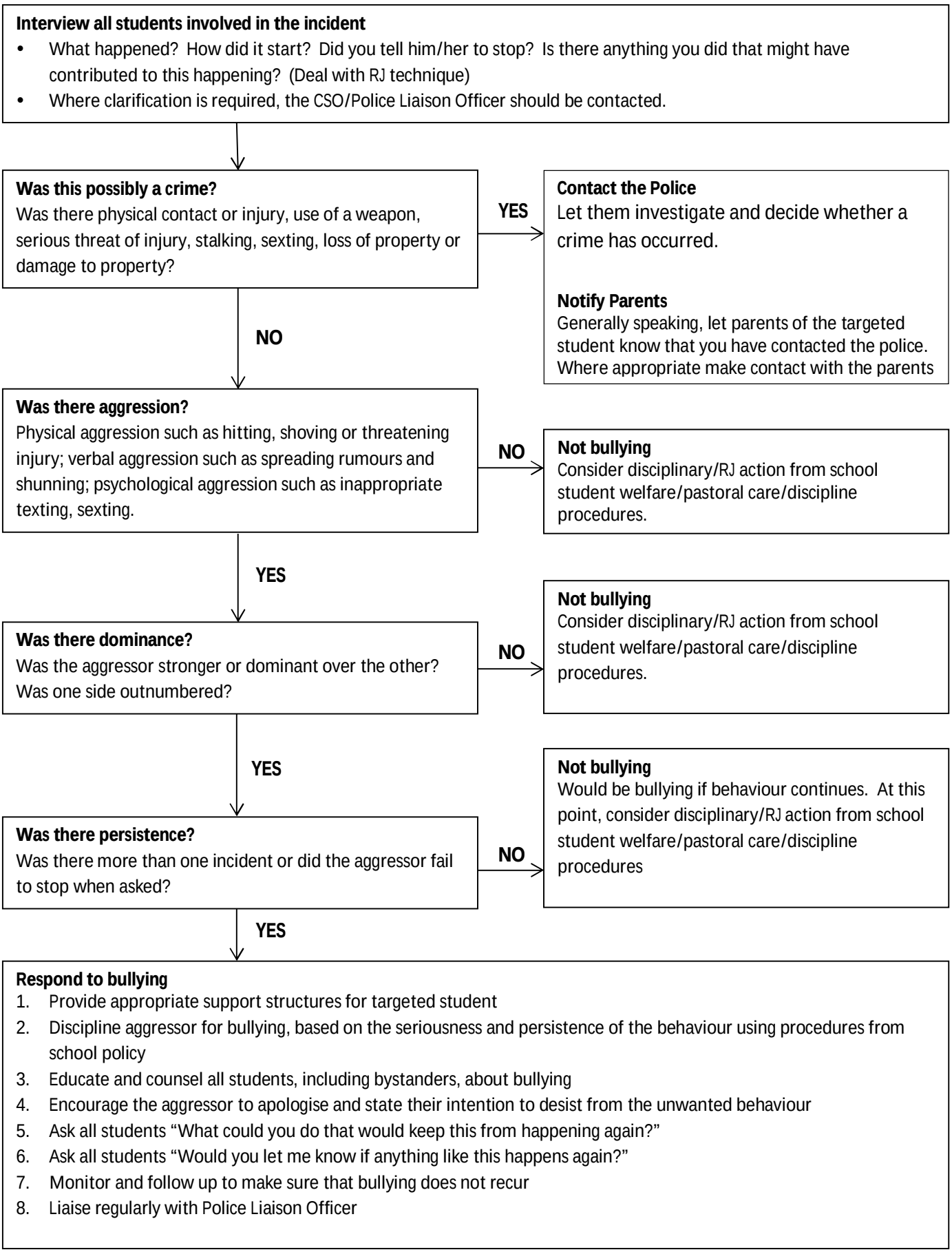
St. Mary's will make provision each year in its annual budget for professional development opportunities for staff in this area. The school will budget for anti-bullying resources that develop ongoing understanding and ownership of programs.

7. EVALUATION

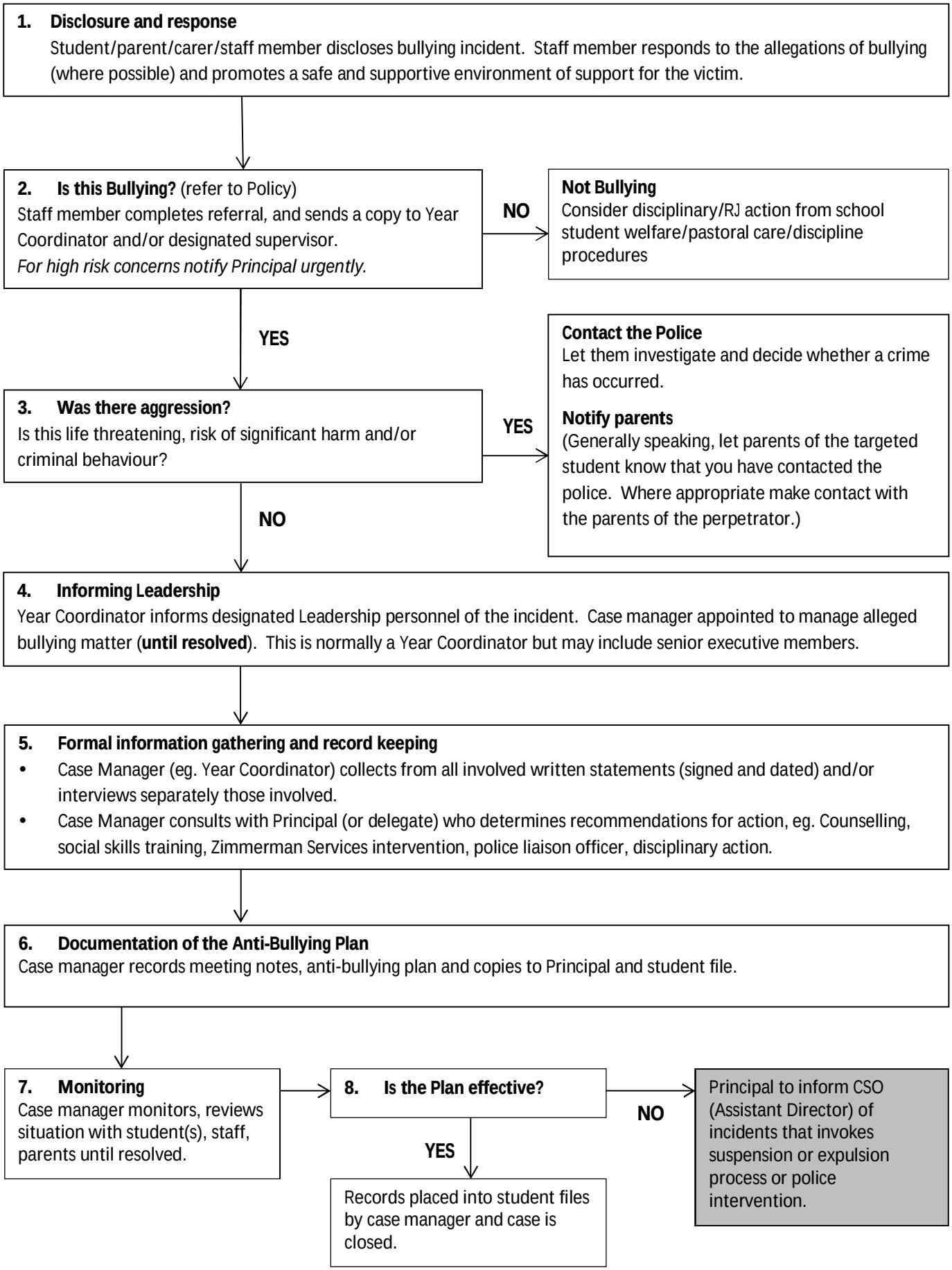
St Marys will annually revisit the procedures explicit within the Anti-bullying policy (see IMPLEMENTATION 5.1.9)

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Bullying Assessment and Action Flowchart



Appendix 2 Anti-Bullying procedures for Staff Flowchart



Appendix 3 Procedures for Students

These procedures are to be reinforced by the school (school leaders, teachers, classroom/playground posters).

If you feel you are a victim of bullying:

1. Tell a teacher or another adult at school you trust.
2. Tell your Family.
3. Take a friend with you if you are worried to tell someone by yourself.
4. Keep telling a person until someone listens.
5. Don't blame yourself for what has happened.

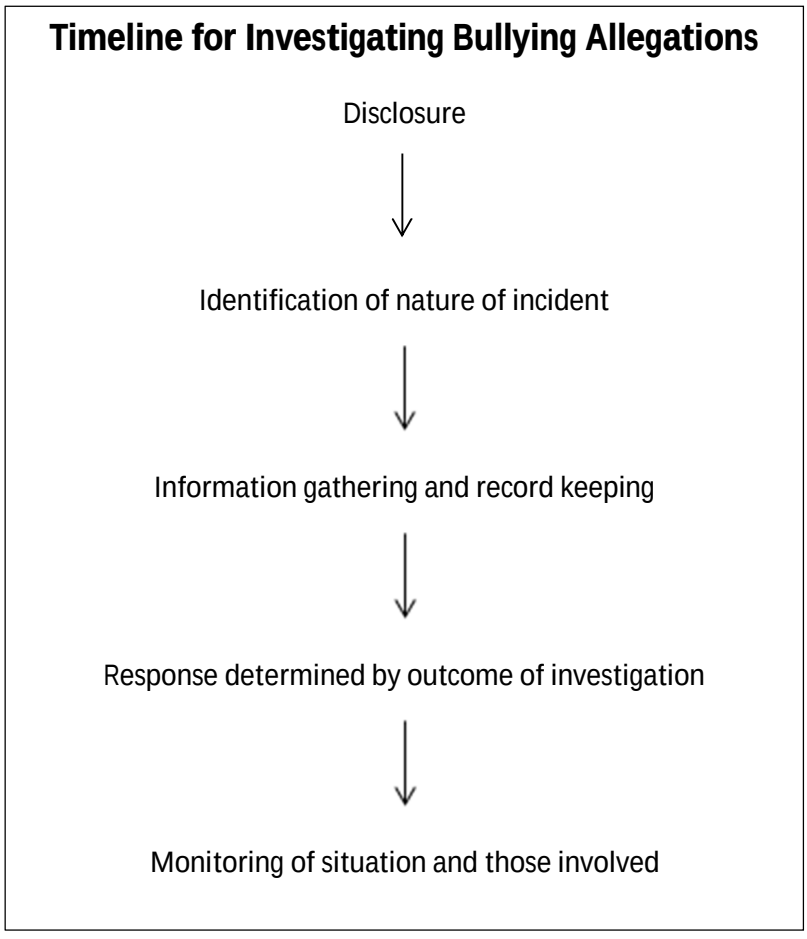
Appendix 4

Response to Allegations of Bullying at St. Mary's

At St. Mary's we are committed to promoting a safe environment where all community members may grow and develop. With this in mind, bullying behaviour is in conflict with the core values and purpose of our school.

As a school, we respond to all reports of alleged bullying following the school's Bullying Policies and Procedures.

This process may take up to a week to complete depending on the nature of the alleged bullying and will follow the structure outlined in the following flowchart.



The investigation will include interviews with all relevant parties to determine if the reported incident is bullying. If it is identified as bullying, then appropriate action will be taken by the school, including informing the parents of students involved.

Parents and students are encouraged to report any incidents that make them feel unsafe, uncomfortable or disrespected.

Appendix 5 Alleged Bullying initial action tool

Bullying is a serious offence and is not acceptable in our school. All school employees are required to report alleged violations and every act of bullying will be duly investigated, and parents/carers informed.

School: .....

Student Coordinator .....

Name/Roll Call of student: .....

Date/time of incident: .....

Where did incident occur? Please circle below:

On bus transport	In playground	In classroom	Outside school	Other

Who reported the alleged incident? Please circle below:

Alleged victim(s)	Other student(s)	Parent/ Carer	Member of staff	Wider school community member	Other

Identify the nature of the alleged bullying incident Please circle below:

Written Eg. Graffiti, notes, letters, writing on books, written threats, ridicule through drawings, etc.
Social Eg. Lying, spreading rumours, playing a nasty joke, mimicking and deliberate exclusion, etc.
Verbal Eg. Name-calling, insults, threats, severe sarcasm, abusive comments, racist remarks etc.
Physical Eg. Pushing, shoving, fighting, tripping, hitting, poking, spitting, etc
Psychological bullying Eg. Intimidation, manipulation and stalking
Damage to property Eg. Theft of bags, clothes, money, property, tearing clothes, ripping books, etc
Bystander Encouraging others to bully or witnessing bullying without taking affirmative action
Briefly outline what occurred in the alleged incident:

Is there concern the alleged incident may have been influenced by any of the following?
Please circle:

Race/culture	Disability	Gender	Socio-economic status	Other

Is there evidence of an imbalance of power in this incident through either:
Please circle:

Academic ability	Age	Social status	Strength	Size	Other

Is there evidence that this behaviour is deliberate or planned?

According to the alleged victim has he/she experienced other or repeated incidences of bullying from the alleged perpetrator? (If yes, please give dates, who was involved, outcomes)

Is there any relevant background/history to this alleged incident?

Were there any witnesses? (Identify student names and roll calls)

What do the witnesses to the alleged incident perceive happened?

What effect is the situation having on the alleged victim's wellbeing including self-esteem, feelings about school, motivation, relationships with peers, physical health, etc?

What is required to resolve this situation now and in the future?

Indicate the investigative procedures carried out

Please circle:

Interviewed student(s) involved	Interviewed parents of victim(s)	Interviewed parents of alleged perpetrator(s)

After investigation, was the allegation of bullying substantiated?

Yes / No

If **'No'**, please sign below and place a copy of this bullying Situation Analysis Tool into student(s) file and refer to school's Behaviour Management Policy.

If 'Yes' please sign below, place copy of this Bullying Situation Analysis Tool into student(s) file and consult with a member of the Leadership Team about the school's response.

Signed …… Date ……

Appendix 6 Examplar letter to parents to victim

Appendix 7 Examplar letter to parents to perpetrator

Appendix 8 Referral Form (staff drive/proformas/referral 1)