Anti-Bullying Policy

In all its policies, Marymount International School Rome seeks to act according to the ethos of the School as rooted in our school Mission and the Mission of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary 'That all may have life and live it to the full'. Our commitment to this ethos and to being a Catholic school requires that we always strive primarily for diversity, equity, and inclusion within our community and in our interactions with the wider world. We consider these goals moral imperatives that go beyond legal requirements. In addition, the School undertakes a continual process of review to ensure that policies remain both effective and consistent with our ethos.

This policy is available in an abridged version on the Parent Student Handbooks and on the school website. It is to be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy and the Acceptable Use Policy. Content of this Policy is directly discussed with new staff upon induction into the School and access to a hard copy of the Policy is available upon request.

1. Purpose

Marymount International School is committed to safeguarding and promoting student and staff well being. The purpose of this policy, in line with the School Mission Statement, is to guide students towards the achievement of their full potential by empowering them to think creatively, reason critically, communicate effectively, and learn continuously. In our School, bullying is unacceptable, and reported instances of bullying or subtle unkindness will be followed up swiftly, sensitively and effectively by staff.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to all members of the Marymount Community: students, parents, teachers, administrators, assistants, support staff, and Third Party employees.

3. Definition

Bullying is defined as any behavior by an individual or group which is deliberately hurtful, repeated over time, and can have a serious long-term impact on the person(s) affected. It is difficult for the victims to defend against the behavior as it often involves an imbalance of power. It can be motivated by prejudice, actual or perceived differences in race, religion, culture, sexual orientation, gender, others' disabilities, special educational needs, adoption, marital status, or any other basis protected by law.

Bullying can be:

Cultural Negative stereotyping, unwanted conduct affecting the dignity of others.

Racial Hostile or offensive behavior, verbal, physical, or psychological, due to the victim's race or ethnicity.

Cyberbullying Through any electronic means of communication e.g. mobile phones, videos, cameras, internet sites, social networking sites, etc – these can include real or manipulated images and sexting, causing undue pressure, aggression, molestation, blackmail, defamation, manipulation, false identity, and any other circumstance in compliance with Italian Law n.71 29 May 2017.

Physical Kicking, pushing, hitting or threatening to do so.

Emotional Excluding, hiding possessions, humiliations, threatening gestures, emotional blackmail.

Sexual Unwanted physical contact, comments, or abuse.

Sexist Victimizing someone because of their gender or imposing gender stereotypes

Verbal Name calling, teasing, sarcasm, spreading rumors, graffiti, gestures

Ableist Related to students and persons with disabilities, i.e., discrimination perpetrated deliberately to humiliate or hurt more vulnerable students.

This list is not all-inclusive. Other unwelcome acts or comments of an offensive nature may also constitute bullying.

This policy applies both at school and outside of school.

4. Policy Statement

It is the responsibility of the whole Marymount community to uphold the values of respect and concern for others. All members of the community have the right to remain free from bullying and the fear of bullying. All members should feel free to report any concerns related to bullying in the certain knowledge that those concerns will be listened to and the matter investigated by the designated DSL officers. Those who report an incident of bullying or suspected bullying will be able to do so in safety. Marymount does not tolerate bullying.

5. Procedures for Dealing with Bullying

There are essentially two strands to our Policy:
1. Prevention – this is a whole school approach to raise awareness
2. Dealing with Incidents

1. *Prevention*

At Marymount the emphasis is on kindness, mutual respect, and empathy. There are several avenues through which students are made aware that bullying is not acceptable.

Approved by the Board of Regents: February 2025
To be Reviewed: February 2028

Elementary School

Following the Marymount Way: we take care of ourselves; we take care of others; we take care of this place.

Focused lesson topics: keeping hands to ourselves, respect, kindness, inclusion /exclusion, internationalism, and creating unity through diversity.

Individual and group support with ES Psychologist, ES Student Council, ES Assemblies, introduction of regular well being sessions targeting Gr 1-3, Gr 4-5, annual Retreat.

Secondary School: ATL assemblies, open discussions with teachers, administrators and during Pastoral Care Classes, curriculum opportunities, and individual pastoral care conferencing with the Middle School Assistant Principal Pastoral and High School Assistant Principal Pastoral.

Cyber bullying is also covered in our Acceptable Use Policy signed by all students upon enrolment at Marymount. Both students and parents in the Elementary School complete a course in Digital Citizenship prior to having access to internet services.

2. *Dealing with incidents of Bullying*

If a student is being bullied, or feels s/he is being treated unkindly or insensitively or made unhappy or uncomfortable or feels that this is happening to someone else, s/he should report this immediately to the Principals, Assistant Principals, or Head of School.

The Head, Principal, or Assistant Principal will listen to what the student has to say, inform parents as appropriate, explaining that a bullying incident has been brought to the attention of Administration and that an investigation will be carried out discreetly. In minor incidents the focus is on the need for the bully/bullies to recognise the impact of their deeds and words and on reconciliation before the situation escalates.

Sanctions will depend on the severity of the bullying, ranging from detention and community service to suspension and expulsion in the case of intimidation and persistent bullying. The parents of all the students involved will be informed of the actions taken by Administration. The sanctions will be logged on to Powerschool or filed in the DSL file as appropriate and will be part of the student's school record.

A cyberbullying incident brought to the attention of Administration will be reported to Italian Authorities as required by Italian Law n.71 29 May 2017. In compliance with the law, the School educates and helps students reflect on digital citizenship, digital footprint, and posting of photos, images, and comments on the web space, through regular assemblies.

A bullying incident should be treated as a safeguarding concern where there is 'reasonable cause that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm' and the Safeguarding protocol will be applied to the incident. The School will use the Italian legal instruments when managing allegations of abuse or online grooming.

NB: Bullying is a pattern of behaviors in which a student or students are targeted due to inherent differences such as those listed in the definition above. Bullying is not composed of single acts.

It is important to understand that bullying is not falling out with friends, name calling, arguments, or when the occasional joke is played on someone.

Students sometimes have disagreements with friends or say things because they are upset. When occasional problems such as these arise, they are not considered bullying. It is an important part of a child's development to learn how to deal with friendship breakdowns and odd name calling or childish pranks. We all have to learn how to deal with those situations and develop the necessary social skills to repair friendships.

6. Record of Approval

This Policy was reviewed and approved by the Board of Regents in February 2025.

This Policy will next be reviewed in February 2028.