Anti-Bullying Policy

Section 301 of the Education Act (the "Act") outlines the guidelines for student conduct. In addition, the Act notes that a board has the responsibility to ensure that each student enrolled in a school and each staff member employed is provided with a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging. One of Mater Boni Consilii Academy's (MBCA) objectives as a School of Integral Formation is the creation of a safe and caring school. MBCA's creation of a caring culture within its school community, where students, staff, and parents encourage, value, support one another, and feel safe; and where abuse, bullying, and discrimination are unacceptable is the desired outcome.

1. There are several criteria used to identify an act of bullying: There is repeated hostile or demeaning behaviour. The behaviour is intended to cause harm, fear, or emotional distress to another individual in the school community. The harm caused includes physical harm, psychological harm, or harm to the individual's reputation. It is important to note that: a) no action toward another student, regardless of the intent of that actions will cause harm, fear, or distress to that student; b) no action toward another student within the school community will diminish the student's reputation within the school community; and c) any action that humiliates or contributes to diminishing the reputation of a student because of race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, physical disability, mental disability, ancestry, place of origin, marital status or parents, source of income of parents, family circumstances, or sexual orientation of students is deemed to be an act of bullying. This behaviour may occur on school grounds, off of school grounds, and via electronic means. If it impacts the extent to which a student feels safe and cared for at school, it is within the school's purview to address.   Bullying often occurs in circumstances where one party endeavors to maintain power and control over another based upon systemic inequalities within a social setting. Bullying must be distinguished from a conflict in relationship, which occurs through single episodic acts of breakdowns in relationship between students. Conflict is an inevitable component of students learning to grow within social relationships. Disagreement and misunderstanding between parties is at the heart of conflict. However, conflict does not constitute premeditated efforts to cause harm, fear, or distress. Parameters for addressing conflict in relationship between students may be dealt with through counseling, administrative intervention, or restorative practices. Regardless of whether school personnel and parents agree that the issue is a confirmed case of bullying or not, school personnel will work constructively to address the issue causing concern.

2. All allegations of bullying will be thoroughly investigated by school personnel.

3. If bullying is occurring, some or all of the following processes will apply: discipline process, intervention process, restorative justice process, or threat-risk assessment process. All these processes are dedicated to eradicating bullying behaviour. Guidance, coaching, and support are also offered to all involved including, when applicable, to the bully, the victim, and the bystanders.

4. Discipline Process - See Student Conduct and Discipline Policy above

5. Intervention Process - Intervention processes are any processes that identify root causes, or triggers, of behaviours and seek to eliminate, avoid, or minimize the triggers. Examples of interventions include behaviour support plan, structured recess, targeted groups led by Family School Liaison Workers and Connections workers.

6. Restorative Justice Process - Restorative practice is a strategy that seeks to repair relationships that have been damaged, including those damaged through bullying. The goal of restorative practice is to bring together the person who did the harm and the harmed person, and have them work together to right the wrong. Restorative practices may be conducted with varying degrees of formality that include meeting with just those students most directly involved in bullying to more formal conferences that include others such as families, school staff, peers and police community liaison officers. An important component of restorative practice is restitution which is the agreed upon action to repair the harm that has been done.

7. Threat-Risk Assessment - In circumstances where a threat has been made a threat risk assessment can be initiated by one of the site-based administrators. A threat assessment is the process of determining if a threat-maker actually poses a risk to a target or targets they have threatened.

8. In establishing consequences for confirmed cases of bullying, teachers and administrators will use corrective interventions that consider the context of the circumstance, the behavioural history of the students involved, and the age and developmental level of the students.

9. Parents play a primary role in assisting with the resolution of matters pertaining to bullying. The parents of both the aggressor and the victim should be consulted and informed about the processes used, as appropriate (discipline, intervention, and restorative).