



## Understanding Bullying

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### A Shared Commitment in CESL Schools

At Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd (CESL) schools, we are committed to creating safe, inclusive and respectful learning environments where every child and young person feels valued, connected and supported.

An important part of this work is helping our communities understand what bullying is — and what it is not.

Bullying is more than a disagreement, conflict or one-off incident between students. The definition used across our schools is:

Bullying is the repeated and intentional behaviour of causing fear, distress or harm towards another person that involves an imbalance of power. It can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and harassment

This definition highlights several important elements of bullying:

- **Repeated behaviour** – it happens more than once or has the potential to continue.
- **Intentional harm** – the behaviour is deliberate.
- **Power imbalance** – one person or group has power over another, whether physical, social or emotional.

Bullying can occur in person or online and may include verbal, social, physical or cyberbullying behaviours.

The recent Australian Government Anti-bullying Rapid Review report emphasised the importance of schools, families and communities working together to prevent bullying and respond early when concerns arise. The review highlighted that effective bullying prevention is strengthened through positive relationships, student voice, wellbeing supports and strong partnerships between schools and families.

Within CESL schools, our approach is guided by the belief that every person is made in the image of God and deserves to be treated with dignity, compassion and respect. We are called to foster communities where people feel safe, included and connected, and where relationships are nurtured through empathy and a shared responsibility for wellbeing.

Parents and carers play an important role in supporting children and young people to navigate friendships, relationships and conflict. Some ways families can help include:

- encouraging open and calm conversations about school and friendships
- helping children identify respectful relationship behaviours
- supporting children to seek help when they feel unsafe or excluded
- modelling respectful communication at home and online
- working collaboratively with schools when concerns arise.

At times, children may experience conflict, friendship challenges or disagreements that can be upsetting but may not meet the definition of bullying. Schools work carefully to understand each situation and provide appropriate support and guidance for all students involved.

If parents, carers or students have concerns about bullying or student wellbeing, the first point of contact should be the classroom teacher or homeroom teacher. Early communication and partnership between home and school helps ensure concerns can be understood, responded to and supported in a timely and collaborative way

Together, through our shared commitment to wellbeing, respectful relationships and the values of our Sandhurst community, we can continue to create school environments where every child and young person feels safe, known and able to flourish.