1.0 Rationale
Our Lady of Mercy Catholic College Burraneer does not tolerate bullying. Within the College we seek to build a safe and caring environment in which everyone has the right to feel safe and valued, where individual differences are accepted as everyone’s right. Bullying and cyber-bullying disregard core values of the Catholic faith including dignity, respect, justice, equity, compassion, trust and courage. We all share in the responsibility of caring for others within and beyond the College community.

2.0 Definition (CEO Anti-Bullying Policy)

2.1 Bullying
Bullying is 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 can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and all forms of harassment including that based on sex, race, disability, sexual orientation or practice of religion. Bullying of any form, or for any reason, can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.
Bullying can happen anywhere: at school, travelling to and from school, in sporting teams, between neighbours, or in the workplace.

Bullying behaviour can be:
• **Verbal**, eg name calling, teasing, abuse, putdowns, sarcasm, insults, threats
• **Physical**, eg hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting
• **Social**, eg ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating, making inappropriate gestures
• **Psychological**, eg spreading rumours, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions, malicious SMS and email messages, inappropriate use of camera phones.

Conflict or fights between equals and single incidents are not defined as bullying.

Bullying behaviour is not:
• Children not getting along well
• A situation of mutual conflict
• Single episodes of nastiness or random acts of aggression or intimidation.

2.2 Cyber-bullying
Cyber-bullying involves the use of any information communication technology by an individual or group to carry out deliberate, isolated or repeatedly hostile behaviour that is intended to harm others, or is undertaken recklessly without concern for its impact on others. By virtue of its nature, technology facilitates repeated access to harmful content. In certain circumstances cyber-bullying can be a single event.
3.0 Principles
Our Lady of Mercy Catholic College Burraneer aims to provide a supportive environment that encourages positive and respectful relationships between all members of the school community by:

- Encouraging young people to learn the values of tolerance, honesty, self-discipline and co-operation within the community
- Creating a safe and happy environment for both students and staff
- Incorporating anti-bullying educational activities into pastoral programs
- Including anti-bullying activities across all KLA’s ensuring a whole school approach
- Informing students, parents and staff of the College’s Anti-bullying Policy and acting immediately upon any reported cases of bullying
- Encouraging staff and particularly students in leadership positions such as School Leaders and members of the SRC to be role models

4.0 Guidelines
4.1 How to prevent bullying
- Be accepting, tolerant, understanding and respectful of individual differences, strengths and weaknesses
- Deal with conflicts in a calm and respectful manner
- Use Restorative Practices to resolve conflict

4.2 How to respond to bullying
Bullying is viewed as a serious breach of the College code of discipline. Any reports of bullying will be investigated thoroughly and appropriate actions will be taken.
All members of the community – students, staff and parents - have the right to experience positive and respectful relationships.

4.2.1 What students can do
- Build positive relationships with others so that bullying does not occur
- Tell the person who is bullying (or bullying someone else) that their actions are unwanted and must stop
- If appropriate, approach the person responsible or if the bullying does not stop, report the bullying to a teacher, School Counsellor, Year Coordinator, Pastoral Care Coordinator or Assistant Principal, Principal whether it is happening to you or to someone else
- Refuse to be involved in any bullying
- If bullying continues report the problem again
- Develop strategies to better cope and prevent being bullied
- Cyber-bullying:
  - Do not respond to the abuse
  - Do not engage with the abuse, rather leave the online area, stop the activity or block the sender
  - Talk to someone about it, ignoring bullying may lead to it becoming worse - tell an adult you trust – your parents, a teacher, Year Coordinator, Pastoral Care Coordinator, Assistant Principal or Principal
- Keep a record or print out of messages or a screenshot to help identify the bully and show to whomever you have reported the incident
- Get a new phone number or account name if necessary and only give it to one person at a time
- Never give anyone access to your accounts or divulge your usernames and passwords

**4.2.2 What staff can do**
- Be positive role models in relationships with others
- Treat all instances of bullying seriously, document on Sentral and notify the Year Coordinator
- Educate students in ways to prevent bullying
- Through punctuality, active supervision and challenging unacceptable behaviour, staff can play an active role in preventing bullying in class and on the playground
- Respect the privacy of the individuals involved in bullying

**4.2.3 What parents can do**
- Take an active interest in your daughter’s social life and acquaintances
- Advise your daughter to speak to a member of staff. If possible allow your daughter to report and deal with the problem herself as this often leads to the development of necessary social and communication skills in such situations
- If necessary, inform your daughter’s Homeroom Teacher or Year Coordinator or the Pastoral Care Coordinator
- It can be counter-productive for parents/guardians to contact parents/guardians of the student(s) involved - under no circumstance should parents/guardians contact the student(s) involved
- Understand that the resolution of the situation may take time
- Encourage your daughter to speak openly with you and to look to positive strategies to deal with her feelings
- Monitor your daughter’s progress and if concerned contact the College
- Cyber-bullying
  - Place and keep home computers in an open, common area
  - Inform Internet Service Provider (ISP), the website owner or mobile phone service provider of any abuse
  - Keep records for evidence by saving or printing out messages or keeping a screenshot and note the time and date
  - Install parental control programs on home computers that provide filters for both instant messaging and chat rooms
  - Report serious incidences to the police

**4.2.4 External Support Services**
- Headspace Miranda
  - www.headspace.org.au/miranda
  - 9575 1500
5.0 Process For Dealing with Bullying

Any parent, teacher, or student(s) can report suspected bullying. The investigation will take place in a timely manner that respects the dignity and privacy of those involved whilst observing due process and procedural fairness.

**Step 1**
Follow the Anti-Bullying Response Plan:
- The Year Coordinator of both the student who is reporting being bullied and the student accused of bullying are informed via a Sentral/Wellbeing notification
- The student making the report is interviewed by the Year Coordinator and given reassurance that the matter will be investigated - this student may ask another teacher or student to be present to support her
- Background information is collected from various sources and documented in Sentral/Wellbeing
- It is made clear that any suggestion of retaliation by any party will be treated as harassment
- Students involved may be referred to the School Counsellor
- If the incident is found to warrant action then the student accused of bullying is advised of the following Restorative Practices:
  - Her actions must stop and the student should reflect on what she can do to make the situation better and ensure that it never happens again
  - Those who have been bullied do not want similar incidents to continue
  - The person accused of bullying is to attend a follow-up meeting with the Year Coordinator for ongoing monitoring of the situation
  - Parents/guardians are informed of the incident and the actions taken

**Step 2**
If the bullying continues or is repeated then some of these more formal actions will take place and documented in Sentral/Wellbeing:
- The Pastoral Care Coordinator or Assistant Principal will meet with students affected and a support person (if requested)
- Parents/guardians are informed of the incident and the actions taken
- An Individual Positive Behaviour Plan will be formulated and copies will be given to those involved
- In an agreed period of time the group will reconvene to review the incident
- Both the victim and the bully may be referred to counselling or a conflict resolution process
Step 3
If bullying continues, the Assistant Principal will place the student on an internal school suspension, which is documented in Sentral/Wellbeing.
• The Assistant Principal and Pastoral Care Coordinator will meet the student’s parents
• Both the victim and the bully will be referred to counselling or a conflict resolution process

Step 4
If bullying continues, the Principal or delegate will suspend the student, which is documented in Sentral/Wellbeing.
• An interview between the Principal or delegate and parents will take place
• Before returning to school a re-entry interview between the parent, Principal or delegate and student will take place

Step 5
If bullying persists or is of an extremely serious nature, the Principal will discuss the student’s enrolment at the College with the parents. Serious incidences will be reported to the police.

6.0 Documenting and tracking bullying incidents
It is the responsibility of the reporting teacher to record the initial report in Sentral/Wellbeing and notify the Year Coordinator. When this occurs both the Assistant Principal and Pastoral Care Coordinator are automatically notified via an email and a Sentral alert notification. The basic tracking information is recorded on a Google spreadsheet. Where possible written reports from all students involved will be gathered and uploaded onto Sentral/Wellbeing. A record of all subsequent interviews and actions are recorded in Sentral/Wellbeing.

Students at their enrolment interview are asked questions about previous experiences or involvement with bullying and shared with their Year Coordinator. If more information is required, the Principal or delegate will contact the previous school. All this data is documented in Sentral/Wellbeing. Information is sought from feeder Catholic Primary schools about students who are transitioning to the College from Year 6 who have been involved in bullying.

When a student leaves OLMC Burraneer, the Principal or delegate will inform the school to which the student is moving, if they have been involved in any form of bullying.

The Catholic Education Office, Sydney has produced a brochure Working Together Anti-Bullying in Sydney Catholic Schools. This is a resource for parents addressing bullying and is available from Student Services or the College Website. Both the CEO Sydney and OLMC College Burraneer Anti-Bullying policies are available on the College website.