



31 July 2024

## **Response to Government Inquiry into Discrimination and Bullying in Tasmanian Schools**

This submission addresses the particular areas of (b) and (d) of the terms of reference:  
(b) inquire into and report upon the measure necessary to prevent and remedy discrimination and bullying in Tasmanian schools in regard to students and staff  
(d) examine and recommend what efforts are being made and should be made towards meeting those obligations by Tasmanian schools in regard to students and staff

St Anthony's Catholic School provides education for 210 students from Kindergarten to Grade 6.

### **Our school is a safe place for students because...**

Our school is a safe place for students because we prioritise their wellbeing in every aspect of our environment. We have a dedicated team of teachers and staff who are always vigilant and ready to offer support, both academically and emotionally. Our safety protocols are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that every student feels secure, whether they're in the classroom or on school grounds. We also foster a culture of respect and inclusion, where students are encouraged to voice their concerns and support each other. With these measures in place, we create a nurturing atmosphere where students can focus on learning and growing with confidence.

### **We welcome families who seek the education we provide...**

Regardless of religious affiliation, we welcome all families that would like the education that we provide. Our school values strong partnerships with families, recognising that education is most effective when it involves a shared commitment between home and school. We offer a supportive environment where parents and guardians are encouraged to be active participants in their child's learning journey. By fostering open communication and involvement, we ensure that families are well-informed and engaged in our educational approach, which helps us tailor our support to meet each student's unique needs. Together, we work towards providing a holistic and enriching experience that benefits every student.

### **We have zero tolerance for bullying. We use the following program/s to encourage respect, courtesy and consideration for others...**

We focus on teaching, supporting and encouraging positive behaviour through our School-wide Positive Behaviour Support approach. This includes identifying how to behave in each setting and situation across the school. At the beginning of each year and then as necessary throughout the year, we actively teach students what behaviour is expected in each setting. At whole school gatherings on a Monday morning, we explicitly state what our PBS focus is for the week. By integrating these programs into our daily practices, we strive to create a safe and nurturing environment where every student can thrive.

### **We welcome families from the margins...**

We welcome families from the margins because we believe that every student deserves access to a high-quality education, regardless of their background. Our school is dedicated to creating

an inclusive environment where diversity is celebrated, and all families feel valued and supported.

We actively work to break down barriers to participation by offering resources and support tailored to the needs of marginalized families. This includes providing translation services, flexible meeting times, and outreach efforts to ensure that all voices are heard and respected. Additionally, we engage in ongoing professional development to ensure that our staff is equipped to address and embrace the diverse cultural, economic, and social backgrounds of our students and their families.

We have a thriving community of refugees from Myanmar currently attending our school and, in the past, we have had Sudanese students as well as refugees from other nations. We have a commitment to enrolling families from any background, nationality or religion under the condition that they support our Catholic ethos.

#### [We provide fee assistance for families in genuine need by....](#)

As a Catholic Education system, we offer significant discounts for families on Health Care Cards that reduces our fees by almost 75%. There is no burden of proof to access this discount other than to show the card. By reducing the burden of evidence, we believe that we show that we value the dignity of the family who have a genuine need. We also offer hardship discounts to families that are either experiencing financial hardship or other circumstances that may require fee assistance. This is a more involved process but also shows our concern for the dignity of the family. At any stage of the year, we are willing and able to have conversations with any of our families about fee relief.

#### [Specifically, we utilise the following programs and structures...](#)

We believe that student wellbeing comes from being accepted and welcomed and from experiencing success in learning. To support these goals, all of our education programs are designed to promote a positive and inclusive learning environment. Specifically, we utilize the following programs and structures:

1. **RULER Program:** The RULER program, developed by Yale University, focuses on enhancing emotional intelligence. RULER stands for Recognising, Understanding, Labelling, Expressing, and Regulating emotions. Through this program, students learn to identify and manage their emotions effectively, which helps them build stronger relationships and create a supportive school community. RULER equips students with skills to navigate social interactions and challenges, fostering a greater sense of acceptance and emotional wellbeing.
2. **Positive Behavioural Supports (PBS):** PBS is a proactive approach to establishing the necessary supports for all students to achieve social, emotional, and academic success. This framework emphasises teaching and reinforcing positive behaviours, setting clear expectations, and providing consistent support and recognition. By focusing on positive reinforcement and creating a structured environment, PBS helps students understand what is expected of them and encourages a culture of respect and collaboration.
3. **Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Programs:** Our SEL curriculum complements RULER and PBS by providing additional tools and strategies for students to develop self-awareness, self-regulation, and interpersonal skills. SEL programs help students build resilience, empathy, and effective communication skills, contributing to a positive learning environment where every student feels valued and supported.
4. **Inclusive Teaching Practices:** We implement teaching strategies that recognize and accommodate diverse learning styles and needs. By differentiating instruction and providing varied learning opportunities, we ensure that all students have the chance to experience success and feel included in the learning process.
5. **Student Support Services:** Our school offers various support services, including counselling, mentoring, and academic assistance, to address individual needs and promote overall wellbeing. These services are designed to help students overcome challenges and thrive both academically and personally.

By integrating these programs and structures, we strive to create an environment where students feel accepted, welcomed, and empowered to achieve success in their learning journey.

[Our religion classes teach everyone about God's plan for our happiness and the importance of every person and...](#)

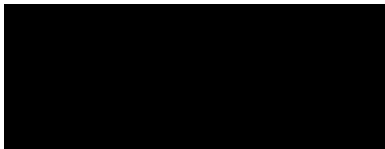
Our religion classes teach everyone about God's plan for our happiness and the importance of every person and their unique contributions to the community. Through our curriculum, students explore the values of love, compassion, and respect that are central to understanding and fulfilling God's purpose for us.

We emphasize that everyone is created with inherent dignity and worth, and we encourage students to recognize and celebrate the diversity and strengths of those around them. Our classes foster a sense of belonging and responsibility, teaching students how to live out their faith in ways that promote positive relationships, social justice, and a deeper sense of community.

By integrating these teachings into our everyday experiences, we aim to nurture a holistic understanding of how living according to these values can lead to personal fulfilment and contribute to a harmonious and supportive environment for everyone.

[We support pastoral care in our school by...](#)

We support pastoral care in our school by providing a nurturing environment that prioritises wellbeing and emotional growth of our students. We offer a counselling service through Catholic Care along with other programs that foster resilience and empathy. We create supportive relationships between staff, students and families that ensure that every student feels heard, valued and supported.



Jason Perry

Principal  
St Anthony's Catholic School