

Monday 26 August, 2024

**SUBMISSION FOR INQUIRY INTO DISCRIMINATION AND BULLYING IN TASMANIAN SCHOOLS - MACKILLOP CATHOLIC COLLEGE**

At MacKillop Catholic College, the cornerstone of our educational approach is creating a safe, nurturing environment where every student can thrive. Our commitment to safety is reflected in every aspect of our school culture, from our protocols and vision statement to our positive behaviour framework and pastoral care initiatives.

Our school is a safe place for students because we adhere to a comprehensive Safe College Protocol that underpins our daily operations. This protocol demands high standards of behaviour, ensuring that every member of our school community—students, staff, and parents/guardians—understands and upholds our commitment to a harassment-free environment. We proactively detect and prevent harassment, educate students about respectful behaviour, and offer robust support to victims. Our zero-tolerance stance on bullying means that incidents are addressed promptly, with the aim of reforming behaviour and fostering a culture of respect and compassion. This unwavering commitment ensures that our school remains a secure and supportive place for every student.

We welcome families who seek the education we provide because our educational environment is designed to support and nurture the growth of each student. By aligning with our vision statement of being a Christ-Centred learning community that fosters excellence, compassion, and service, we create an atmosphere that attracts families looking for a holistic and values-driven education. Our inclusive approach means that families from diverse backgrounds find a supportive community at MacKillop Catholic College, where their children can excel academically and personally.

We have zero tolerance for bullying. Our Safe College Protocol ensures that all forms of bullying are addressed swiftly and effectively. We emphasise a proactive approach where all members of the community—students, staff, and parents/guardians—are encouraged to report and intervene in bullying situations. This proactive stance helps in creating an environment where bullying is neither tolerated nor accepted, thereby ensuring a safe and respectful space for all students.

Our Social and Emotional Wellbeing Program, explicitly taught in classes, along with our year level retreat programs encourage respect, courtesy, and consideration for others. Our Positive Behaviour Framework, informed by the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework (ASWF) and positive education principles, is central to promoting these values. This framework encourages students to take responsibility for their behaviour while fostering an inclusive environment where respect, courtesy, and consideration are paramount. Through structured programs and positive reinforcement strategies, we support students in developing and maintaining high standards of interpersonal behaviour.

We welcome families from the margins because we are committed to inclusivity and diversity. Our school culture values every individual and seeks to provide an environment where all families feel respected and valued. This commitment extends to supporting families who may face economic or social challenges, ensuring that every student has the opportunity to succeed.

We provide fee assistance for families in genuine need by offering financial support programs designed to alleviate the burden on families who are experiencing economic hardship. This assistance ensures that financial constraints do not hinder a student's access to quality education and school resources, reflecting our commitment to equity and inclusion.

We believe that student wellbeing comes from being accepted and welcomed and from experiencing success in learning. Our educational programs are crafted with these goals in mind. We utilise various programs and structures, such as individualised learning plans, mentoring, and support services, to ensure that each student feels a sense of belonging and achieves their full potential. This holistic approach to education helps in building a strong foundation for both academic and personal success.

Our Theology and Spirituality classes teach everyone about God's plan for our happiness and the importance of every person. By integrating faith-based teachings with our educational objectives, we emphasise the inherent worth and dignity of each individual. These classes reinforce our values of compassion, respect, and service, guiding students towards a deeper understanding of their role in the community and the world.

We support pastoral care in our school by implementing a range of services designed to address the emotional and social needs of students. Our Pastoral Care Team provides counselling, mentorship, and support to help students navigate personal challenges and build resilience. This comprehensive support system ensures that students receive the guidance they need to thrive both academically and personally.

At MacKillop Catholic College, we utilise a diverse range of information sources to comprehensively assess and enhance student safety, sense of belonging, and inclusivity. By integrating data from the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) Social & Emotional Wellbeing Survey, the Resilient Youth Survey from The Resilience Project, and various parent surveys, we gain a multi-faceted understanding of our students' experiences and needs. The ACER Survey provides insights into emotional and social wellbeing, while the Resilient Youth Survey offers perspectives on resilience and coping strategies. Parent surveys contribute valuable feedback on school climate and inclusivity from a family viewpoint. Together, these tools allow us to craft targeted interventions and foster a supportive environment where every student feels valued and secure.

In summary, MacKillop Catholic College is dedicated to maintaining a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment where every student can achieve their best. Through our Safe College Protocol, Positive Behaviour Framework, and robust pastoral care, we create a community where students are supported, valued, and empowered to succeed.



Brendan Gill

**ACTING COLLEGE PRINCIPAL**