



St Patrick's College
LAUNCESTON

28 August 2024

282 Westbury Road
Prospect TAS 7250
PO Box 401, Prospect TAS 7250
ABN: 87 092 083 980
T: 03 6341 9988

E: [REDACTED]

From the Office of the Principal

To Whom It May Concern:

RE: Response to Government Inquiry into Discrimination & 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 measures 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 Patrick's College is a Co-educational Catholic College for students from Years 7-12. Our current enrolment is 1550 students. Our intake of 280 students at Year 7 each year is made up of approximately 140 students from our Catholic feeder schools and the remaining students from up to 15 DECYP schools.

All programs and decisions at the College are made from a student-centred perspective with the aim of supporting our students to flourish and thrive. Student wellbeing is supported through College Programs, Staffing Structures, and supports offered to our students. The College focuses on all staff and students working together in a respectful and supportive environment for all.

At St Patrick's College we welcome all families through our enrolments. We currently have an enrolment of 1550 students. Of these, 140 students identify as having English as a second language; 69 of our students are on a Visa; 82 students are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and we have recently had 256 students approved for funding under the NCCD. We are a diverse community of students.

We welcome families who are unable to access our College fees. Families can apply for fee discounts to our College based on their ability to pay. Families who are on a Health Care Card pay a set amount of \$1700.00 (and may still apply for remission if this amount is not attainable for them). Families who enter Australia on a Humanitarian Visa are supported with full fee remittance, uniform, computer and book provisions for their first three years at the College.

St Patrick's College is a safe place for students to learn, interact and flourish. Our College structure supports this. Students are in Tutor Groups with students from Years 7-12 (Home Rooms in Year 9) where they meet with their first contact for each day, their Tutor Teacher. House Heads each have eight Tutor Groups that they are responsible for. The Tutor and House Head are the first adult contacts for students to work with in terms of Pastoral Care and Wellbeing Support. At our College we have a three school structure - Middle School - Years 7 and 8, Croagh Patrick Campus - Year 9 and Senior School - Years 10-12. Each School is supported by a Head of School, Director of Curriculum and Director of Pastoral Care. These staff provide further contacts for our students in the pastoral, wellbeing and learning settings.



In Years 7 and 8 our students participate in a subject each week called BeSPC. This subject is taken by House Heads and other significant House staff. During this subject, students have opportunities to explore many areas and topics of their lives, such as, Vaping, Bullying, AI, what it means to be a St Patrick's College person, Personal Development, Resilience and Mental Health and many other topics. In Year 9 our students are engaged in the Rite Journey Program. The Rite Journey Program acknowledges and celebrates each student's shift into adulthood, offers conversations and experiences to guide this transition, fosters connections with positive adult role models, educates and includes parents/guardians in the process, connects students with their strengths and builds self-awareness. Our students in Year 10 engage in the ACE Program - Accepted, Connected and Empowered.

The approach of each of these Programs is to support students in being St Patrick's College people - who are caring, can forgive others, are compassionate and meet our College values. We follow a Positive Behaviour Framework - The goal of School Wide Positive Behaviour Support at St Patrick's College is to create and maintain a positive and safe learning environment that enhances our school culture where we maximise individual academic and social growth. In accordance with our Mission we are a school community of faith, learning, respect and service in the Catholic tradition. Our Positive Behaviour Support Framework focuses on three behaviours: Participate in our Community, Be a Learner and Show Respect.

Our College has a strong emphasis on our students seeking support through our Students Wellbeing Support Team. This team is comprised of Counsellors/Social Workers and Psychologists who work with Tutor Teachers, House Heads and Leadership Teams to support students. Students are able to self-refer for support.

Our students participate in Meanings Values Purpose and Spirituality classes from Years 7-12. These classes are based on our Good News for Living Framework in Years 7-10 and on TASC Courses in Years 11-12. Through the Religious Education program (MVPS) students develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours necessary for discernment and decision-making, and for acting justly. At St Patrick's College 'we value a school where we grow in awareness and respond to the needs of others in a spirit of service'. We challenge our students to put their faith into action through the quality of their relationships, in giving and compassion and throughout their lives. There is a strong focus on Social Justice at St Patrick's College where students engage in Social Justice work and groups from Years 7-12. Our ASCENT Program is an opportunity to participate in carefully structured programs during Years 10, 11 and 12. Participation in ASCENT enables students to grow and develop as compassionate people in our society, with the support of trained staff.

In supporting all in our Community, we operate under a Pastoral Care Protocol and an Anti-Bullying and Harassment Protocol. Both policies are underpinned by Restorative Practices in working to bring all into our community. Our Protocols are used to determine how incidents of bullying are followed up in our community. We operate under the definition of Bullying as "an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm."

When Bullying occurs at St Patrick's College, we follow our College protocols in supporting our young people through restorative process where and when appropriate and by following our protocols to support students when Restoration is not the best option.

St Patrick's College operates under the Policies of Catholic Education Tasmania and our own Protocols. These can be viewed on our College webpage. [St Patrick's College Website](http://www.stpatricks.tas.edu.au)

BELOW ARE RESPONSES FROM STUDENTS TO THE QUESTION

With a short turn around in preparing this submission, I asked ten students to provide a response to the below questions.

1. *What can you tell me about Bullying ("an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm.") and Discrimination at St Patrick's College?*
&
2. *How do you feel it is dealt with here?*



Dear Mrs Illingworth

Thanks for allowing me to share my opinions on bullying and harassment, it means a lot to feel that my voice is being heard and I think hearing the voices and opinions of students is an important step to ensuring a good future for St Patrick's College.

I feel that bullying in school is a complicated subject that should be dealt with on a case by case basis. From my experience at St Patrick's College and a few instances I have been a part of and / or heard about, the school has been good with ensuring the bullied / harassed student is cared for, and kept informed about progress into an investigation around bullying. The teachers at St Patrick's College also help with making sure a student is comfortable in a class, and that they feel safe on school grounds. Teachers are easy to approach and listen to concerns well, and are good at making sure instances get followed up on to ensure the safety of students at the school. Overall I would say that St Patrick's College is good at dealing with bullying and harassment, especially when it comes to the safety and comfort of students during and after bullying incidents.

Thanks again for this opportunity to share my opinions.

Dear Mrs Illingworth

Bullying is a topic that is hard to tackle in a school. It is unfair to demand a school to resolve bullying completely as this isn't possible. I believe that is for many reasons, one of which is the stigma around bullying. There remains a stigma around bullying, especially in male circles, as people may be scared to admit they have been bullied to protect their dignity or ego. A second reason is how inherently cruel clique dynamics are in all social environments. If a victim announces that they are a victim and the school attempts to resolve the issues it can paint a target on the back of the individual leading to further harassment. This is a cruel fact about adolescent social interaction and can not be resolved through school action. I admit I have been the target of bullying whilst attending St Patrick's, however, I had never felt that I was lacking a safety net or that I had no one to talk to. The school counsellors and the close relationships many of the students have with their tutor teacher or house head enable the school to aid the student as best they can. The help that the school can provide is not purely symbolic either. Conversations with the school counsellors to overcome the emotional damage bullying can have are incredibly effective and, when applicable, in severe cases the intolerance of any physical violence has allowed for justice and for a safe academic environment.

The opportunity to have my voice heard is very important and so I applaud Mrs Illingworth for opening up to hear the voices of the students of St Patrick's.

Thank you for this opportunity,

Sometimes at breaks there are minor inconveniences that happen between my peers, this is quite well resolved by the teachers who are out on duty at the time. The teachers usually get over to these arguments or fights and break them up immediately, then the teacher will try to get them to make up. So overall the teachers do quite well to resolve and fix the things that happen like bullying or fighting. In our school we are kind to each other because it is good to display SPC behaviour and to be a kind friend.



I feel safe at my school because of the way that the teachers deal with bullying. Bullying is a terrible way to go about using your feelings, because it can really make people feel bad about themselves especially if it is repetitive. Anytime I have ever had a problem with someone or something the teachers get both of the perspectives so they know what is happening and they make sure the person is ok, and they provide information about the SWSS team that can help with mental health, the teachers give reasonable consequences to the extent of bullying that has happened and to make sure it doesn't happen again and that is why I like my school.

Bullying is something that is an ongoing situation, not just here at St Patricks College, but across society itself. I feel that the majority of bullying, whether it be physical, verbal, online, etc is something that in today's world people, especially us within schools are unable to recognise when and what bullying is. Due to this, a lot of bullying and situations that go unnoticed are not recognized until it is nearly too late.

I know that when bullying is brought to teachers' and staff's attention though, they try and attempt to deal with the situation as quickly as possible. The college doesn't tolerate physical or verbal abuse of any sort and action is taken when this occurs, I feel that there isn't enough discipline sometimes for some students when this occurs and this is what makes a continuous behavioral pattern. It is however hard for the school to be able to monitor and take action when it comes to cyberbullying, which is where most bullying and discrimination can occur, this is where I feel that the no phone rule is great for school, but when the students leave school grounds this is where it becomes more challenging. I know that as a year 11 student, I have multiple teachers across the college, especially Mrs Schipper, that I know I can go to about any situation including this if I needed to, and this is one of the many reasons I love St Patricks College.

I suggest different workshops and groups of people to come in and talk about what bullying may and could look or feel like, so the people within our college can know and understand what they can do and what their peers can do when this occurs, no I am not saying it is going to fix the bullying or discrimination within our college and society, but taking steps like this to help people recognize and take action, rather than accepting discrimination and bullying.

Although I feel that more workshops and group sessions talk about bullying and discrimination, I think that one of many good things that schools can help with this is within the tutor. I know that having peers and a teacher I can talk to about my problems is a comforting and good feeling to have and I know that I make sure I branch out to the middle schoolers especially to try and make conversations and be another trusted peer for my people to come to. I love being someone people can come to about their problems and I know that I can either be a trusted person or a person to take action and leadership when I believe is right. Moving schools halfway through year 9 and am now in year 11, one reason being due to lack of support at my old school now knowing I have peers and teachers I can turn to makes me feel safe and respected, and that is what makes my time at St Patrick's College worthwhile.

Thank you, Mrs Illingworth, for coming and giving some of us students a voice when it comes to difficult discussions like this. I appreciate this opportunity to give my opinion and I am so appreciative of the new and improved things you have done for this college to make it a better place for everyone and to help reduce bullying, discrimination, abuse, and other challenges that are taking place within schools.

Thank you again.

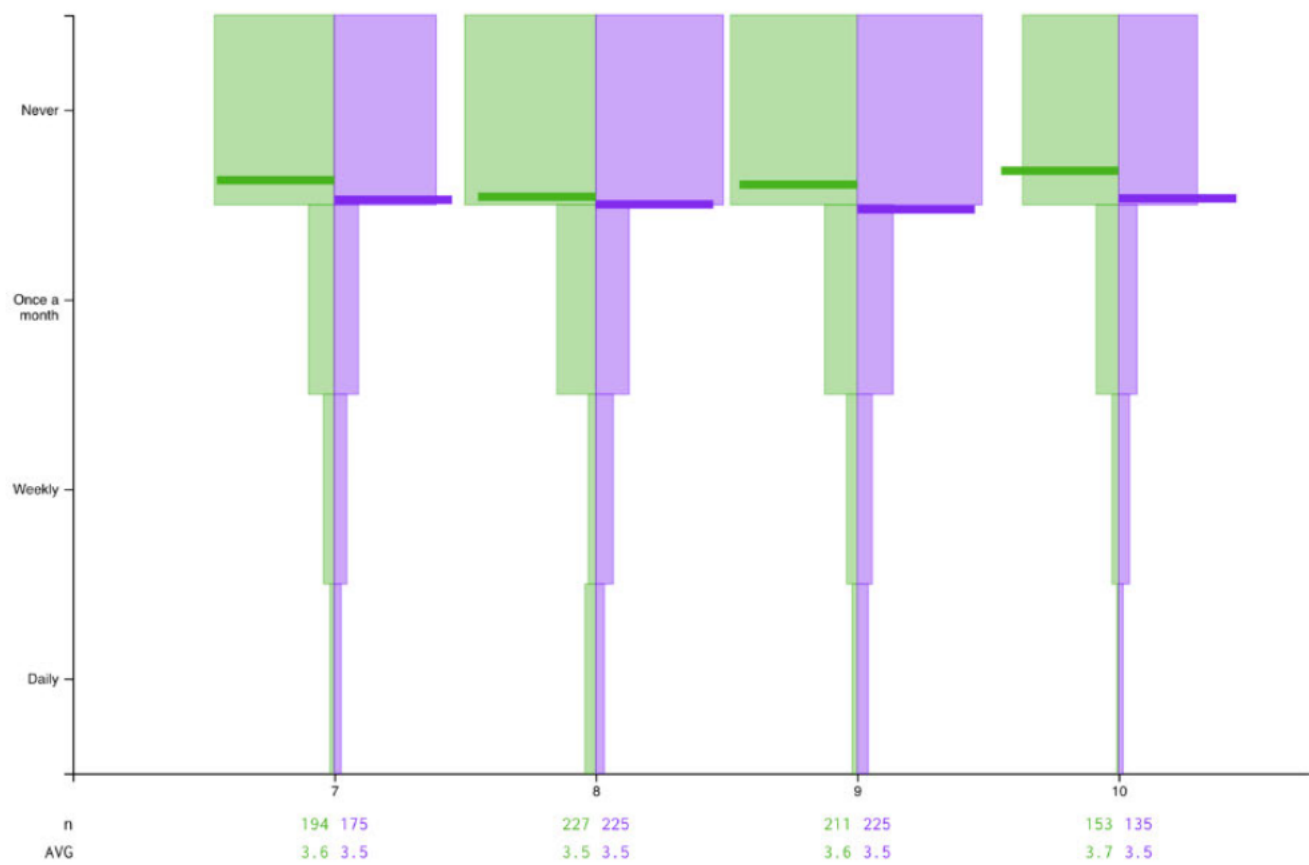
DATA

We are unable to extract data under 'Bullying' from School Box however have included the following data. This Pictograph is data taken from Student Responses in 2023 for students from Year 7-10 at St Patrick's College.



2023 Resilient Youth Survey

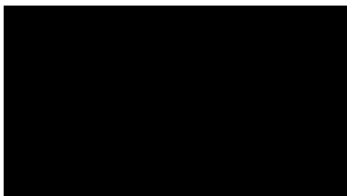
In the last month, I have been bullied at school.



75% responded to never
Between 6 and 10% daily or weekly

Should you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me via the College on 6341 9988 or via email [redacted].

Kind regards,



Mrs Elizabeth Illingworth
St Patricks College Principal

