

# Anti-Bullying Policy

All members of the The School of Total Education community have the right to be in an environment free from fear, intimidation and harassment. All students have the right to feel safe and comfortable at school and to be treated with understanding and respect by others. Bullying in any of its forms will not be tolerated in our school community, and will be treated seriously.

## Definition

Bullying is a form of abuse. Bullying is when someone repeatedly uses their power to hurt or intimidate others. Bullying can be verbal, physical, emotional, electronic or sexual. It may be planned, spontaneous or even unintentional.

The key features of bullying are that it:

- causes hurt and distress;
- is repeated;
- involves the use of power in an unfair way.

## Bullying Behaviour is

Examples of bullying behaviour include, but are not limited to, the following categories:

Bullying is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening.

Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records).

Bullying of any form or for any reason can have immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.

## Covert bullying

Covert bullying can be very difficult for someone outside of the interaction to identify. It can include hand gestures and threatening looks, whispering, excluding or turning your back on a person, restricting where a person can sit and who they can talk with. Social bullying (spreading rumours, manipulation of relationships, excluding, isolating) is often covert bullying.

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**Cyberbullying**

Cyberbullying includes any form of bullying behaviour that occurs online or via a mobile device. It can be verbal or written, and can include threats of violence as well as images, videos and/or audio.

**Physical bullying**

Physical bullying includes hitting, pushing, shoving or intimidating or otherwise physically hurting another person, damaging or stealing their belongings. It includes threats of violence.

**Social bullying**

This is sometimes called relational or emotional bullying, and includes deliberately excluding someone, spreading rumours, sharing information that will have a harmful effect on the other person and/or damaging a person's social reputation or social acceptance.

**Verbal and written bullying**

Verbal and written bullying includes name-calling or insulting someone about an attribute, quality or personal characteristic.

**What bullying is not**

Bullying is different from ordinary teasing, rough-and-tumble or school yard fights. What makes it different is that the incidents are ongoing, and there is usually an imbalance of size, strength and power between the students involved. In formulating an effective approach to dealing with bullying it is helpful to note what bullying is not.

Bullying is not:

- Mutual conflict where there is an argument or disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the problem. However, unresolved mutual conflict sometimes develops into a bullying situation with one person becoming targeted repeatedly for 'retaliation' in a one-sided way.
- Social rejection or dislike – It is not feasible to think that every student must like every other student. Refusing to play with a particular child or, for example, not inviting them to a birthday party is not bullying, provided social rejection is not directed towards someone specific and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.
- Single-episode acts of nastiness or meanness, or random acts of aggression or intimidation. A single episode of nastiness, physical aggression, verbal abuse or an occasional push or shove is not bullying, neither is nastiness or physical aggression directed towards many different students. The difference is that bullying is, by definition, action that happens on more than one occasion. However, since schools have a duty of care to provide a student with a safe and supportive school environment, single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression should not be ignored or condoned.

## Policy

The basic beliefs underlying the policy are:

1. Every individual has value in a community.
2. Every individual has the right to feel safe from bullying or harassment in all its forms.
3. Every conflict can be resolved. Victims and bullies both need help to solve conflict.
4. Every individual in a community is responsible for the safety of other individuals in that community.
5. Every individual in a community is responsible for ensuring that other individuals in that community can reach their potential in a supportive and non-threatening environment.

**All members of the School community have a responsibility to respond to incidents of bullying.**

The School Undertakes to:

- Provide a supportive environment which encourages positive relationships between students, staff and parents.
- Provide curriculum material which will help develop appropriate social skills, positive relationships and resilience.
- Provide counselling to students in dealing with conflict resolution; to those on both the giving and receiving ends of bullying.

## Scope

This policy applies to employees, volunteers, parents/carers/students, and people visiting the school site.

## Responsibility

Principal

## Point of Contact

Bullying Contact Person

## Intervention

### Discouraging Bullying

The methods used by the School to discourage bullying will vary from time-to-time with new initiatives being introduced when thought appropriate. These include, but are not limited to:

- Including anti-bullying/respectful relationship messages in the Health Curriculum

- Printing Anti-bullying policies on the School Website, in Student Record Books; on the Hub and the Administration Portal.
- Periodically undertaking confidential Secondary surveys of student wellbeing and bullying behaviour and where possible following up on identified perpetrators and targets.
- Employing Chaplains and Welfare Officer who have specialist skills in helping both targets and perpetrators of bullying.
- Ensuring effective pastoral support for students through the appointment of Heads of House, Year Level Co-ordinators and Deputy Heads of School.
- Engaging Student Groups (Student Council, Student Wellbeing Committees) to instigate anti-bullying initiatives.
- Using an appropriate range of interventions and sanctions applicable to the age group and the situation to promote respectful relationships behaviour.
- Sanctioning students who repeatedly use racial, homophobic, misogynistic and discriminatory language and gestures even if it's meant in a friendly jovial manner as stated in the Secondary Code of Conduct
- Monitoring staff and parent use of language whilst engaged in School activities to ensure that racial, homophobic, misogynistic and discriminatory language is not used.
- Educating Parents and Staff on the differences between anti-social or negative behaviours and bullying.
- Encouraging staff to adopt classroom management techniques that discourage opportunities for bullying behaviours.
- Training staff to detect bullying behaviours.
- Encouraging staff to actively supervise whilst on duty so that there is a pervasive sense of staff presence.
- Emphasising respectful relationships during teacher inductions and teacher development
- Reviewing the School's *Anti-bullying Policy* periodically, in order to ensure it remains effective and relevant.
- Buddy systems within and across Primary and Secondary
  
- Extra curricular activities available during school

## Intervention

An incident of bullying might be reported by a student, parent, visitor or member of staff.

1. All students identified as being involved in an *anti-social/negative behaviour* incident for the first time will be interviewed by the staff member who observed the incident or to whom it was reported along with the Home Group or Classroom Teacher.
2. The Contact Person interviews the victim and bully separately and records the details of the incident in writing on a standard proforma. (on Sharepoint-Anti Bullying Policy)

The interviewer makes both parties aware of the bullying strategy and policy and discusses the issues surrounding the particular incident. The interviewer works with the students to devise strategies for conflict resolution. The interviewer attempts to reach a position where both parties are satisfied with the outcome; i.e. the victim

feels secure and the bully is prepared to modify his/her behaviour in future. The victim understands that any further bullying must be reported immediately. The strategy at this stage is not to apportion blame, or to punish; but to support the victim and make the perpetrator aware of the school policy and of the consequences if behaviour does not change.

The incident will be discussed with the students involved and they will have the opportunity to have their voice heard. The Primary, Junior or Senior Secondary Coordinator may be a part of this process.

Once this has occurred the focus will be on achieving acceptable behaviour from the students involved, and this will be reported back to the Classroom Teacher and Home Group Teacher, and Deputy Principal, who will record details of the incident.

3. If a student/s is identified as being involved in a further incident involving the same target or displaying the same negative behaviour, the issue will be treated as bullying. The school has a 'no-blame' approach to bullying. That is, its main aim is to stop the bullying, rather than punish the perpetrator, although that does not preclude punishment if bullying persists.

The student/s will be interviewed by Deputy Principal

At the discretion of the Deputy Principal, a number of different methods may be used by the School to resolve the bullying conflict depending on the situation, including but not limited to restorative justice, behaviour management, buddy system. Counselling may be recommended for the target and/or perpetrator of the bullying.

If bullying amounts to harm as referred to in the school's Child Protection Policy then the matter must be dealt with under the Child Protection Policy.

Parents of both parties will be informed explaining the situation, outlining the strategies that have been determined and reinforcing the consequences that may flow from a repeat of bullying.

4. Students who continue to be involved in ongoing bullying will be interviewed by the Deputy Principal or Principal together with their parents. If a solution to a particular problem is not found, the school may consider the use of an outside person, such as a trained mediator, to assist in reaching a resolution.

5. Should the bullying continue, appropriate action, which may include suspension or expulsion, will be taken at the discretion of the Principal.

At all steps incidents of bullying and how each incident was handled, which strategies worked and which didn't are documented Sharepoint in Student records and used to improve the program.

The school keeps central records of all reported incidents of bullying. These are analysed on a regular basis to ascertain major areas where bullying occurs, sex and age of victims and bullies, and strategies which have been successful. A review of the school's policy is undertaken every 12 months, taking into account this annual data.

An important consideration for schools, teachers, parents and students is that overcoming bullying is neither simple nor quick. Schools need to constantly reinforce the fact that bullying is not acceptable and to remind students how to counteract bullying, as well as offering programs to lift self-esteem and resilience; students need to be made aware of their responsibilities not to bully and not to condone bullying by being silent bystanders; and parents need to be confident to approach the school with their concerns, and encouraged to work with schools in a non-blame situation so that their children are protected.

## **SCHOOL AND STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **The school will:**

- Involve students, staff and parents in the development and regularly review of its Anti-Bullying Policy,
- Identify one or more members of staff as a Bullying Contact Person.
- Ensure all staff members are familiar with the school's anti-bullying policy and provide appropriate professional development on a regular basis, including at the time of induction of new staff members.
- Ensure that all accessible areas of the school are patrolled thoroughly.

### **Staff members will:**

- Watch for early signs of distress in students. This could be evident in any aspect of school life.
- Ensure they are familiar with the school's anti-bullying policy.
- Where bullying is observed, intervene immediately to stop the bullying.
- Offer the victim immediate support and help and outline what will now happen.
- Educate all students with regard to their responsibilities as bystanders to a bullying incident.
- Ensure they do not model bullying behaviour in interactions they have with students, parents or other staff members.

## **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Students should:**

- Report all incidents of bullying to a trusted senior student, teacher or year level coordinator or other staff member or, anonymously, via the school's anti-bullying email address.
- Actively support students they know are being bullied.
- Refuse to become involved in bullying, including as a bystander.

## PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

### Parents should:

- Watch for signs of distress in their child, such as, unwillingness to attend school, a pattern of headaches or stomach aches, equipment that has gone missing, request for extra pocket money, damaged clothing or bruising. Early contact is essential at this point.
- Take an active interest in their child's social life.
- Report to the school's Bullying Contact Person or any other member of school staff if they know, or think, their child is being bullied.
- Keep a written record if the bullying persists: Who, What, Where and When?
- Advise their child to tell a trusted teacher.
- Tell their child that there is nothing wrong with them.
- NOT encourage their child to hit back or respond verbally.
- Ensure they do not model bullying behaviour in interactions they have with the school staff and administration.

## POLICY RELEASE DETAILS

### Date of Policy

September 2021

### Approved by Board

Date September 2021

### Review Date

Annually, in consultation with students, staff and parents

## RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

Child Protection Policy  
Workplace Bullying Policy  
Anti Discrimination Policy  
Computer Use Policy  
Code of Conduct Policy  
Disability Discrimination Policy  
Student Code of Conduct Policy  
Conflict of Interest Policy