

Yarrabah School

Student Bullying Prevention

POLICY

Bullying Prevention Policy

A person is bullied when someone, or a group of people, deliberately upset or hurt that person or damage their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion. There is an imbalance of power in incidents of bullying with the bully or bullies having more power at the time due to age, size, status or other reasons.

Types of Bullying

There are three broad categories of bullying.

- **Direct physical bullying** e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging their property, including threats of violence.
- **Direct verbal or written bullying** e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.
- **Indirect bullying** This form of bullying is harder to recognise and often carried out behind the bullied student's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation.

Indirect bullying includes:

- Lying and spreading rumours
- Playing nasty jokes and other behaviours expected to cause offence, humiliation and intimidation.
- Mimicking to upset others and embarrass
- Encouraging others to socially exclude someone
- Damaging someone's social reputation and social acceptance
- Cyber-bullying, which involves the use of email, text messages or chat rooms to humiliate and distress.

What Bullying is Not

Many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management. There are three socially unpleasant situations that are often confused with bullying:

Mutual conflict

In mutual conflict situations, 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 when one person becomes targeted repeatedly for 'retaliation' in a one-sided way.

Social rejection or dislike

Unless the social rejection is directed towards someone specific and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others, it is not bullying.

Single-episode

Single episodes of nastiness or meanness, physical aggression, random acts of aggression or intimidation are not the same as bullying, eg; if a student is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied.

Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different students is not the same as bullying. However, since the school has 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.

Rationale

The school will provide a positive culture where bullying is not accepted, and in so doing, all will have the right of respect from others, the right to learn or to teach, and a right to feel safe and secure in their school environment at all times.

Aims:

- To reinforce within the school community what bullying is, and the fact that it is unacceptable.
- To alert everyone within the school community of the signs and evidence of bullying and to ensure bullying is reported to staff whether a person is an observer or a victim.
- To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up appropriately.
- To seek parental and peer-group support and co-operation at all times.

Implementation:

- Bullying may consist of physical harm, harassment, verbal insults or hurtful remarks, or actions designed to hurt somebody's reputation, social standing or to cause humiliation. Bullying may be carried out directly or indirectly, and may include the use of digital technologies such as social network sites, websites or on-line chat rooms.
- Our school has adopted a zero tolerance position on bullying.
- Our school will combat bullying by providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment based on the Effective School's model.
- We have adopted a four-phase approach to bullying.

A. Primary Prevention:

- Professional development for staff (one staff meeting a year) relating to bullying, harassment and proven counter measures.

- Each classroom teacher to identify with students types of bullying, as well as the consequences and impact of bullying.
- Community awareness and input relating to bullying, its characteristics and the school's programs and response, complemented by clear processes for reporting suspected bullying.
- The provision of programs that promote inclusiveness, resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving will form an integral part of our curriculum. In particular, social skills training and bystander training that builds skills in children to challenge and/or report unacceptable behaviour will be central to our curriculum.
- A bullying survey will be introduced, administered and responded to annually.
- The 'Play Based learning Program' to be implemented across the whole school.
- Anti-bullying messages and posters will be displayed around the school.
- Student Representative Council, peer support delegates, staff and students to promote the philosophy of 'No Put Downs'.
- Teachers will be trained in cyber-safety. Cyber-safety awareness programs will be provided for parents and cyber-safety will form part of each child's ICT curriculum.

B. Isolated, Infrequent or Less Serious Incidents:

- All instances of suspected bullying or inappropriate behaviour must be responded to by staff.
- Parents are encouraged to contact the school if they suspect a bullying or behaviour problem.
- The school will reinforce with children the importance of appropriately reporting incidents of inappropriate behaviour involving themselves or others, and the imperative that staff respond appropriately and proportionally to each allegation consistent with the school's Student Code of Conduct, including the proper reporting and recording of the incidents on our incident report system.
- Parents are to be contacted if their child is alleged to have been bullied or experienced inappropriate behaviour, or if their child appears to have behaved inappropriately or bullied someone else.
- Appropriate and proportional consequences may include a verbal apology, using a sign/symbol to express remorse, completing a Behaviour Incident activity, reporting to PLC leader, loss of privileges etc.
- Public recognition and reward for positive behaviour and resolution of problems will occur as appropriate.

C. Repetitive or Serious Incidents:

- Serious incidents and/or repetitive incidents of bullying or unacceptable behaviour must be reported, responded to by staff and documented.
- Serious incidents are those that include physical assault, sexual assault, criminal activity involving theft or serious damage of property, serious threats or homophobic bullying etc.

- All such incidents or allegations will be properly investigated and documented. Depending upon the nature of each incident, they may be also be reported to and investigated by police, reported to the Student Critical Incident Advisory Unit, and/or reported to the Department's Security Service Unit.
- The school may contact support professionals such as Welfare officers, Welfare coordinators or Councillors and/or Student Support Officers for assistance and support.
- Students and staff and parents identified by others as bullies will be informed of allegations.
- Both bullies and victims will be offered counselling and support.
- All repetitive or serious incidents must be brought to the attention of the principal class members of the school.
- The most appropriate staff member will contact parents of the targeted child. Principal class members will contact parents of alleged perpetrators unless advised by police etc not to do so.
- Regional office will provide support as appropriate, and the Principal will monitor the investigation and review the situation until matters are appropriately resolved.
- Consequences of repetitive or serious incidents may include loss of privileges, counselling, conciliation or any other consequences consistent with the school's Student Code of Conduct.
- A management strategy for all parties will be developed in consultation with the students and parents involved.
- Parents or community members who bully or harass or abuse staff will be provided with official warnings, and if necessary referred to the police, and/or have Trespass restrictions placed upon them by the principal consistent with the Summary Offences Act.

D. Post Incident:

- It is important that appropriate strategies are put in place after the incident has been resolved for all students involved. Appropriate strategies may include:-
- Conciliation meetings between all parties
- Ongoing monitoring of students involved.
- Identification of an agreed key contact staff member for each student involved.
- Follow-up meetings regarding each child's management strategy.
- Ongoing communication with parents.
- Counselling from appropriate agencies of support officers etc for both parties.
- Reinforcement of positive behaviours and appropriate behaviour strategies

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in....

April 2018