

### **Purpose**

The Anti-Bullying Policy is a comprehensive, whole school approach, which aims to enhance the development of a school environment where students feel safe, valued, engaged and purposeful.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to staff, students and parents.

### **Whitsunday Christian College Policy and Procedure Details**

Bullying can take a number of forms (verbal, physical, social or psychological), including (but not exclusive to) name-calling, spreading rumours, ignoring, exclusion, teasing, put-downs, sarcasm, threats, physical contact, unwanted sexual contact or innuendo, hitting, spitting, kicking, tripping, racism, interference with, or damage to property. These incidents involve an imbalance of power.

#### **Definition:**

Harass: To repeatedly trouble, worry, annoy or accost.

Violence: Using physical force to injure, control or intimidate others, or to cause harm or destruction.

#### **Bullying Prevention**

- Use of the curriculum to work on aspects of bullying wherever possible. The inclusion of an anti-bullying segment in the schools' curriculum and pastoral care.
- Use of the "Dealing with Bullying and Harassment" materials with appropriate classes.
- Staff training and support to equip staff to: reinforce school policy, integrate strategies into class curriculum, teach self-protective behaviours to students, respond effectively to bullying incidents, resolve incidents, and to utilise other support structures within the school to manage difficulties.
- Explanation and discussions of this policy (e.g. in form classes and assembly) and publication in the school newsletter.
- Observation of students by teachers both inside and outside the classroom.
- Involvement of non-teaching staff including community and school support staff.
- Discussions with and encouragement of senior students to become involved with younger students.
- Collection of relevant behavioural data when students first enroll at school.
- Professional development for teachers.

## Procedure

### Step 1: Identification of issue

A report is made by a student, parent or staff member to a Head of School.

At this point the HoS (Head of School) may need to seek more information. A determination will be made if the matter is a bullying incident or other student-to-student conflict incident.

- If bullying incident proceed to Step 2.
- If other student-to-student conflict incident proceed as per Discipline and Behaviour Management procedures.
- Additionally if the matter is not defined as a bullying incident but nevertheless seems to have an ongoing nature. The coordinator may put a “Tracking complaints between students” monitoring system in place. This will enable further analysis. Refer to relevant procedures.

### Step 2: Formal bullying incident meeting and recording.

The HoS holds a meeting with the students involved. The Chaplain may be used as a support person.

- Both parties are made aware of the bullying strategy and policy.
- The actual issues surrounding the particular incident are reviewed.
- Students are helped to devise strategies for conflict resolution.
- Attempts are made to reach a position where both parties are satisfied with the outcome; i.e. the aggrieved student feels secure and the offender is prepared to modify his/her behaviour in the future.
- The aggrieved student understands that any further bullying must be reported immediately.
- A record of statements will be maintained for each formal bullying incident.

The strategy at this stage may only include mediation or mediation and consequences under the behaviour management system and is intended to support the aggrieved and make the offender aware of the school policy and of the consequences if behaviour does not change.

Step 2 may need to be repeated but with additional consequences.

What happens if bullying does not seem to stop?

If repeated consequences and counselling does not stop the bullying, further sanctions will be imposed. These could include, but are not confined to:

- Exclusion from certain areas of the school premises
- Internal Suspension
- Behaviour Contract
- Major fixed term suspension
- Permanent exclusion

### **3. Roles and Responsibilities**

3.1 The school will:

- 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 in-bounds areas of the school are patrolled.

3.2 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 aggrieved student 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.

3.3 Student Responsibilities: Students should:

- Report all incidents of bullying to a staff member
- Actively support students they know are being bullied.
- Refuse to become involved in bullying, including as a bystander.

3.4 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 child's Home Class Teacher if they know, or think, their child is being bullied. Follow this initial contact up with a meeting with Home Class Teacher.
- 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
- Not organise meetings and attempt to gang up on a child or teacher, rather follow the system as advertised and focus on the needs of their children. [Parents need to be aware of privacy, Child Protection and College policies in regards to this matter and understand that they may face legal action by other parties, criminal proceedings by the police or contractual implications with the College.]
- Ensure they do not model bullying behaviour in interactions they have with the school staff and administration.
- Contact the relevant HoS for more information.
- Contact the Principal if they have further concerns.

#### **4. Examples of bullying and not bullying**

4.1 Bullying: There are three broad categories of bullying:

- Direct physical bullying e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.
- Direct verbal bullying e.g. name calling, insults, 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 to embarrass and humiliate
  - Provoking a food-allergic reaction
  - Mimicking
  - Damaging someone's social reputation and social acceptance
  - Encouraging others to socially exclude someone
  - Cyber-bullying, which involves the use of email, text messages or chat rooms to humiliate and distress. Cyber-bullying, or e-bullying, is a reasonably recent type of bullying which involves the use of information and communication technologies such as email, (mobile) phone and text messages, instant messaging (SMS), chat rooms and video internet sites e.g. YouTube. It can be particularly harmful because it can happen anywhere and at any time. Thus young people who are the victims of cyber-bullying have no place where they feel safe. If the bullying is of a serious and threatening nature then obviously it becomes a legal issue and students and parents should seek advice by reporting the matter to the police.

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

#### 4.2 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, but rather they are dealt with under the behaviour management system.

#### **5. How we communicate this anti-bullying policy.**

The policy of the Whitsunday Christian College is to take a proactive approach to bullying by establishing processes to educate and inform students about bullying and procedures to follow in the event that a student is being bullied.

Students upon entry to the Whitsunday Christian College and all on-going students will be educated about the College's anti-bullying guidelines as follows:

All year levels will be taken through activities and discussions on the issue of bullying each year through lessons and assemblies.

In addition, parents will be included in the education process at enrolment and through the newsletter, etc. All teaching staff will be regularly educated with regard to bullying at our school and more importantly, what their responsibilities are.

## 6. Review and Evaluation of System

The school keeps central records of all reported incidents of defined 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.

### **What can you do if you are being bullied?**

- Try not to show that you are upset. Bullies feel great if they have upset you.
- Try to be assertive - look and sound confident.
- Walk quickly and confidently even if you don't feel that way inside - appearing confident is helpful.
- If students have been calling you names or teasing etc., reassure yourself that you are OK, and that those students are the ones with the problems.
- Report it - remember that the bullying will continue if those responsible think they can get away with their behaviour.
- Talk to a friend/friends about it.
- Avoid risk situations where possible, or stay close to adults or friends.
- Consider whether you have been bullying yourself, e.g. have you been name calling, annoying, threatening, showing off etc? If you have, change what you are doing.
- If bullying continues after reporting it, report it again - talk to a Teacher or the SWO.