



SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT POLICY

1. PURPOSE

St Hilda's Anglican School for Girls is committed to providing a safe and caring environment which fosters respect for others, compassion and companionship in times of fun, hard work and worry.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all students of the School.

3. BACKGROUND

"Bullying is a behaviour which can be defined as the repeated attack, physical, psychological, social or verbal, which is formally or situationally defined, on those who are powerless to resist, with the intention of causing distress for their own gain or gratification." Besag (1989)

Bullying can take many forms. We consider the following behaviour to be bullying:

4. DEFINITIONS

4.1 Verbal bullying:

- constant teasing in a sarcastic and offensive manner
- name-calling and offensive nicknames
- swearing to unsettle or upset others
- homophobic comments to cause distress
- racist or sexist comments

4.2 Physical bullying:

- hitting, kicking, pinching, pushing, bumping, shoving, scratching, slapping, biting, punching or tripping someone repeatedly
- unwanted physical or sexual touching
- throwing objects with the intent to injure or annoy

4.3 Emotional bullying includes:

- being excluded from group conversations and activities
- making up or spreading rumours to facilitate dislike for someone
- being ignored repeatedly
- purposeful misleading or being lied to
- making stories up to get others into trouble

4.4 Threatening/Psychological bullying:

- stalking, threats or implied threats
- dirty looks
- manipulation – pressuring others to do things they don't want to do

- intimidation – forcing students to do demeaning or embarrassing acts
- extortion – forcing someone to give you money or material items

4.5 Property Abuse:

- Stealing money repeatedly
- Interfering with someone’s belongings
- Damaging other personal items
- Repeatedly hiding someone’s possessions

4.6 Cyber bullying:

- Spreading gossip and rumours through email, phone, chat room and internet
- Sending offensive text/phone and email messages
- Abusive phone calls
- Posting personal information on internet sites without permission to cause distress and humiliation

Evidence suggests that verbal and indirect forms of bullying are more prevalent among girls.

Bullying is predominantly a secretive activity and is perpetuated because of the unwillingness of the person being victimised to tell adults.

5. LEGISLATION

Nil

6. RELATED POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Child Protection Policy
 School Community Code of Conduct
 Internet User’s Acceptable Use Policy

7. POLICY

7.1 At St Hilda’s Anglican School for Girls, we:

- Talk openly about bullying on a regular basis – what it is, how it affects us, and what we can do about it
- Teach our students the skills with which to build their self-esteem and empower them to take responsibility for themselves. Give them the opportunity to practise these skills
- Evaluate the effectiveness of our anti-bullying policies
- View anti-bullying to be a tripartite responsibility of the staff, students and parents

7.2 Staff are expected to:

- Model appropriate behaviour at all times
- Deal with all reported and observed incidents of bullying
- Acknowledge the right of parents to speak with school authorities if they believe their child is being bullied

7.3 Students are expected to:

- Inform someone if they are being bullied or if they see someone else being bullied – both at school and on the way to and from school
- Help someone who is being bullied

- Not bully others

7.4 Parents are encouraged to:

- Watch for signs that their child may be being bullied or bullying others
- Speak to someone on staff if their child is being bullied or if they suspect their child is being bullied
- Support the School's position that any form of bullying is unacceptable

8. GUIDELINES

8.1 Responding to bullying:

Bullying behaviours can vary enormously in their extent and intent and, as a consequence, each needs to be dealt with differently and on an individual basis.

Sometimes students are reluctant to pursue bullying and their reluctance and concerns are respected. The action pursued depends upon the extent to which the recipient is prepared to be involved in the response and whether the incident was observed.

Initially the staff member who observes the incident or receives the report will:

- Take the report seriously
- Take time to explore the situation
- Maintain a record
- Determine the appropriate action which may include a number of responses depending on the nature of the situation

8.2 The action may include the following:

- Advising or conferring with the Head of the Junior School, Dean of Students, Heads of Year or School Psychologists
- Reassuring and supporting the recipient
- Working with the perpetrator
- Clarifying with the perpetrator the possible sanctions and the inappropriateness of their behaviour
- Working with groups of students
- Working with the bystanders, those students observing the behaviours but doing nothing
- If appropriate responding using the "No Blame Approach" (Maines & Robinson) and the "Method of Shared Concern" (Pikas)
- Restorative justice aimed at resolving conflict and repairing harm
- Conducting other forms of mediation sessions with both parties concerned
- Informing parents
- Informing other relevant teaching staff

8.3 Repeated or severe reports of bullying will result in:

- The Principal being informed
- The parents of all parties being informed and their assistance sought
- A statement outlining consequences issued by the School for further incidences
- If deemed appropriate a suspension from school may result
- Additional strategies designed to assist in the fostering of respect for others which may include on-going counselling, anger management or social skills development

8.4 Curriculum and Tutorial Program Initiatives

Specific issues are targeted systematically through curricula and the pastoral care tutorial program in Years 3 - 10.

9. BREACH

If you breach this policy you may be subject to disciplinary action in line with the Student Behaviour Management Policy.

10. REFERENCES

Berne, S. (1999). *Bullying – An Effective Anti-Bullying Program for Primary Schools*. Hawker Brownlow Ed: Aust.

The Friendly Schools & Families website is <http://www.friendlyschoools.com.au/>

Information on Aussie Optimism is available through <http://psych.curtin.edu.au/research/aussieoptimism/index.htm>

Bullying. No Way! www.bullyingnoway.com.au.

Rigby, K. (1996). *Bullying in Schools and what to do about it*. ACER: Victoria.

CybersafeKids and Online Resources. <http://www.cybersafeworld.com/>
<http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/>

<http://www.michaelcarr-gregg.com.au/> is the website for Michael Carr-Gregg, an Australian psychologist.

Responsibility: Dean of Students
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