



## Anti-Bullying Plan

### School Plan

This plan outlines the processes for preventing and responding to student bullying in our school. Preventing and responding to bullying behaviour in learning and working environments is a shared responsibility of all staff, students, parents, caregivers and members of the wider community.

Our school's plan will be presented at staff meetings, parent meetings and is promoted through the newsletter and our school website.

### Our Values and Expectations

Coffs Harbour Bible Church School accepts and supports that students have a right to learn in a safe and supportive environment protected from harm and hurt. It is the school's desire that all staff and student's seek to maintain a God-honouring, loving, safe and caring environment (1 John 4:7-8; Romans 12:18, John 13:34-35).

Bullying and anti-social behaviour is not acceptable at this school under any circumstances. Bullying, should it occur, needs to be dealt with swiftly and with due thought to procedural fairness.

Students and teachers have the right to expect that they will spend the school day free from the fear of bullying, harassment and intimidation.

#### Bullying:

- devalues, isolates and frightens
- affects an individual's ability to achieve
- has long-term effects on those engaging in bullying behaviour, those who are the subjects of bullying behaviour and the onlookers or bystanders

Students, teachers, parents, caregivers and members of the wider school community have a shared responsibility to:

- Promote positive relationships that respect, protect and accept individual differences and diversity within the whole school community;
- Prevent bullying through education to embed anti-bullying messages;
- Provide *Early Intervention* through monitoring of incidents, identifying students at risk;
- Actively work together to resolve and respond to incidents of bullying behaviours when they occur; and
- Model positive behaviour for their children and other students in our school community.

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## Bullying Defined

The three broad categories of bullying are:

Direct physical bullying e.g. hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, spitting, tripping, pushing, damaging property, intimidating others.

Direct verbal bullying e.g. name-calling, teasing, putdowns, sarcasm, threats, insults, racist remarks, verbal abuse.

Indirect bullying - this is harder to recognise and often carried out without the knowledge of the student who is being attacked. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Indirect bullying behaviour can be:

### Social

- Ignoring
- Excluding
- Ostracising
- Alienating
- Making inappropriate gestures

### Psychological

- Lying and spreading rumours
- Dirty looks
- Hiding or damaging possessions
- Playing jokes to embarrass and humiliate
- Mimicking
- Encouraging others to socially exclude someone
- Damaging someone's social reputation and social acceptance
- Malicious SMS and email messages
- Inappropriate use of camera phones

## 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 negative situations that are often confused with bullying:

- *Mutual conflict* involves 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.

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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*, is not bullying unless 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 are not regarded as bullying. If a student is verbally abused or pushed on only one occasion they are not being bullied.

## Prevention

The Coffs Harbour Bible Church School will minimize bullying by adopting a four-point plan to anti-bullying, which includes:

- Primary Prevention
- Early Intervention
- Intervention
- Post Intervention

### Primary Prevention

The promotion of positive student behaviour is the responsibility of the whole school community through modelling and maintaining high expectations.

The systematic promotion of positive student behaviour will take place through the implementation of these key strategies:

- Explicit teaching of expected behaviour by all classroom teachers at the beginning of each year and at other times when necessary;
- The recognition of student behaviour through positive reinforcement;
- The allocation of merits incorporating the Golden Apple Award for reinforcement of positive behaviour;
- Principal's Christian Character Awards for those displaying Godly Christian character; and
- Provide programs that promote resilience, life skills and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and communication skills, safe use of the Internet e.g., Child Protection, Cybersmart

Other strategies involving staff and the wider community include:

- Professional development for staff related to bullying and the strategies to counteract it;
- Community awareness and input relating to anti-bullying, its characteristics and the schools' programs and response; and
- Maintenance of staff commitment to acknowledge victims of bullying and deal with bullying incidents.

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Student Welfare issues (when necessary) are to be discussed during daily morning staff prayer meetings to:

- Inform staff of potential issues with particular students; and
- Increase supervision of potential problems with students in playgrounds or toilet areas.

## Early Intervention

- Students are to be encouraged to report bullying incidents involving themselves or others to Head Teachers or the Principal.
- Teachers are to regularly remind students to report incidents.
- Parents are encouraged to contact the school if they become aware of a problem.
- Students are recognised for positive behaviours.
- Head Teachers use school discipline system if an incident of bullying occurs.
- All bullying matters to be recorded on the *Bullying Incident Report Form* and the Principal to be notified.

## Intervention

- Once identified, the bully, victim and witnesses are spoken to, all incidents or allegations of bullying will be fully investigated.
- Consideration as to why the bullying occurred will be investigated. (e.g. the bigger picture or contributing factors)
- Both bully and victim are to be offered school based assistance and support (i.e. Pastoral care by our Pastors or staff.
- A meeting of relevant persons is to be convened following identification of ongoing bullying behaviour. (Principal, head teacher, parents, students)
- All issues relevant to the behaviour of the student are considered.

## Post Intervention

- The Coffs Harbour Bible Church School's Discipline Policy outlines appropriate procedures of the consequences for inappropriate behaviour in the classroom and in the playground.
- Incidents of bullying will be recorded on *the Bullying Incident Report Form*
- Details of bullying incidents will be communicated to parents in person or by phone conversation.
- Possible consequences for bullying are outlined in discipline policy, (ie detention, parent meetings, suspension, etc).

## Cyber Bullying

- Students are to be taught about cyber-bullying, including its different manifestations and possible effects, through PDHPE and ICT classes.
- Students are encouraged to report any incidents immediately to the teacher. If students feel they can't report to a teacher then they must report to a trusted adult.

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- Students are to be taught to save any form of cyber-bullying as evidence and again to be reported to teacher.
- Parents and carers will be encouraged to report any form of cyber-bullying (and bullying) to the school.
- The school's policy regarding the inappropriate use of ICT equipment to be taught annually to all students.

## **RESPONSE TO AND ADVICE TO BE GIVEN TO STUDENTS WHO ARE BEING BULLIED**

***The initial response of a teacher when a child reports that they are being Bullied is to acknowledge how the student is feeling and to assure the student that it is not their fault.***

The student should be encouraged to –

- Tell the bully to stop. State quite clearly that the behaviour is not wanted, unwelcome, unacceptable and/or offensive – NO, GO, TELL strategy.
- Seek help. Talk about the experience to someone who is trustworthy (class teacher, head teacher, Principal, parent, peer).
- Report the bullying to a member of staff and feel confident that any incident can be resolved satisfactorily.

Other 'self-protective' strategies that might be suggested include:

- Staying away from the bully, or places where bullying occurs.
- Be with friendly, supportive friends.

## **ADVICE TO BE GIVEN TO STUDENTS WHO KNOW SOMEONE ELSE IS BEING BULLIED**

Students should be made aware that witnesses to bullying have a very powerful role to play.

Early intervention can defuse conflict situations before bullying sets in or gets out of hand.

Therefore, the following suggestions should be made:

- If possible, intervene as the bullying occurs by telling the bully to stop. This is very useful if the on-looker student has influence with the bully.
- Refuse to join in with the bullying.
- Support students who are being bullied – just standing by them can be enough.
- Tell an adult if you are concerned about the bullying.
- It is every student's right and responsibility to report bullying whether it happens to oneself or to someone else.

## **THE ROLE OF PARENTS**

The following suggestions are made to parents through print materials and in *Parent Hand Book*.

### **Take an active interest:**

- in your child's social life
- in what is happening at school

### **Encourage your child:**

- to have a Christ-like love for their fellow students
- to accept and tolerate differences in others

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## **Build your child's self-confidence:**

- by recognising and affirming his/her positive qualities and abilities given by God
- by valuing him/her for who he/she is

## **Discuss with your child:**

- the school's expectations about behaviour
- Godly ways to respond if their rights are infringed

## **Make your child accountable by:**

- keeping access to technology in a public part of the house so content and use can be monitored
- letting the school know if the students have a mobile phone for security reason

## **Encourage constructive responses:**

- physical bullying or persistent teasing should be reported
- hitting back or retaliating with name-calling won't solve the problem

## **Set an example**

- be firm, but not aggressive in setting behaviour limits
- be positive in responding to bullying – don't overreact

## **Be alert for signs of distress:**

- unwillingness to attend school
- dropping off in academic performance
- damaged clothing and frequent loss of personal property
- loss of confidence and uncharacteristic mood changes
- withdrawal from social activities

## **Act**

**If your child is being bullied at school, report it to the Head Teacher, or the Principal. Your report will be followed up.**