

**Addressing Bullying Behaviour – A Whole School Approach**

(28th July 2015)

The Wollumbin Community of Schools provide caring environments where every student can feel safe and respected. Bullying of any kind is not acceptable in our schools.

**NO ONE HAS THE RIGHT TO BULLY ANOTHER PERSON**

**NO ONE HAS TO TOLERATE BULLYING**

Schools exist in a society where incidents of bullying behaviour may occur. Preventing and responding to bullying behaviour in learning and working environments is a shared responsibility of all departmental staff, students, parents, caregivers and members of the wider school community.

All members of the school community contribute to the prevention of bullying by modelling and promoting appropriate behaviour and respectful relationships.

Bullying will be taken seriously and is not acceptable in any form.

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

Any inappropriate behaviour that gets in the way of teaching and learning at the school and interferes with the wellbeing of students and staff cannot be accepted.

This policy applies to all student bullying behaviour, including cyber bullying, that occurs at school, off school premises and/or outside of school hours where there is a clear and close relationship between the school and the conduct of the student.

**Definition of Bullying**

Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social, or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. It is a planned and persistent attempt to cause distress. Cyber bullying refers to bullying through information and communications technologies such as SMS, emails and social networks.

Bullying can involve humiliation, dominations, intimidation, victimisation, and all forms of harassment including that based on sex, race, disability, homosexuality or transgender. Bullying in any form, or for any reason, can have long-term effects on those involved including bystanders.

Sudden flare ups or conflict / fights between equals or single incidents **are not defined as bullying.**

**Types of Bullying Behaviour** (include)

Physical – hitting, kicking, pushing, spitting, throwing objects, tripping, branding, and obscene gestures.

Verbal – insults, name calling, teasing, swearing, put downs, demanding money or goods.

Social – alienation, exclusion, note passing, rumours, gossip, stalking.

Psychological – hiding or damaging possessions, staring, pulling faces, overt and covert threatening.

**Dealing with Incidents of Bullying**

Wollumbin High School’s procedures for handling bullying complaints are based on the *Restorative Justice Approach* described by the Australian Institute of Criminology. That is, the handling of bullying complaints makes it clear to the offender that bullying behaviour is not tolerated within the school community whilst providing respectful support for the individuals involved. There are five principles that underpin this approach:

1. Students who bully can change their behaviour;
2. Bullying behaviour is the problem, not the person;
3. Harm caused must be acknowledged;
4. Reparation is essential;
5. Bullies and the bullied require support and care.

**Morrison,B. (2002),** Bullying In Schools: A Restorative Justice Approach, **Australian Institute of Criminology**.

**What to do if you are being bullied?**

1. If you feel you are being bullied report it to a teacher or the Deputy Principal. You will be asked about the bullying behaviour. The staff member may separate you from the student engaged in the bullying behaviour.
2. If the staff member substantiates that bullying has probably happened they will refer incident and studentto the relevant Year Adviser or to the Deputy Principal.
3. The Year Adviser or Deputy Principal will interview the student alleged to be engaging in bullying behaviour. During the interview notes will be taken to document the incident.
4. If bullying is substantiated, the student engaging in bullying behaviour will be asked to agree to cease the bullying behaviour. This may be done in writing.
5. If bullying is not substantiated, the issue will be dealt with according to Wollumbin High Behaviour Code for Students and Student Expectations.
6. The student engaged in bullying behaviour will be informed of the following:

Bullying is unacceptable and must stop immediately.

A record will be made on their personal file (by the staff member using RISC).

A letter will be sent home to inform their parents, by either the Year adviser or Deputy Principal.

1. Further incidents of bullying behaviour will be handled by the Deputy Principal and may result in **suspension from school**.

**Dealing with Bullying Flowchart**

Investigation

All students involved given opportunity to describe and explain their behaviours and feelings

School is notified of bullying incident

Person who is Bullying

Recognition of consequences of their behaviour. Consistent with the school’s Behaviour Code for Students, support the student to not repeat unacceptable behaviours.

On-going monitoring

Parents are contacted if deemed necessary

Person being Bullied

Development of strategies to build self-esteem and resilience

**Advice for Dealing with Bullying Behaviour**

**Victims**

* Ignore the situation and keep playing or working.
* Walk away and ignore the bully and places where the bullying occurs.
* Try to talk with the person you are having a problem with.
* Try making a deal or agreement with the other person.
* Try to stand up for yourself in a positive way. Say “*Stop, I don’t like it*!”
* Talk to a friend to get some ideas on how to respond peacefully.
* Get help from someone in my support group: family, teacher, school support team, school counsellor.

**Bystanders**

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 have been made:

* Let the person doing the bullying know that what they are doing is bullying;
* Refuse to join in with their bullying and walk away;
* Support the student who is being bullied;
* Ask a teacher or support person for help;
* Support his/her friends and protect them from bullying by being there for them.

**Parents and Caregivers**

**Parents and caregivers have an important role when dealing with bullying.**

There are things you can do if you think your child is bullying others or being bullied?

* Talk to your child & encourage them to be open.
* Talk to your child’s class teacher or Year Adviser.
* Talk to your child’s school Principal or Deputy Principal.
* Talk to your child’s school counsellor.
* Call the Parenting line.
* Call the Family Help line.

**Contacts**

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