Aldinga Beach B - 7 School

ANTI BULLYING POLICY

Introduction

Aldinga Beach R-7 School provides a safe, inclusive, supportive and ordered learning environment free from bullying, harassment and violence. Bullying including: cyber bullying, discrimination, harassment and violence, are not acceptable in this school and will be dealt with seriously.

The school will work with the school community and other services and agencies to support its students in being responsible and productive members of this community.

Definitions

Bullying: is repeated verbal, physical or social behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons.

- Cyber bullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies
- Conflict or fights between equals and single incidents are not regarded as bullying.
- *Bullying can have long term effects on those involved, including bystanders.*

Cyber Bullying: uses e-technology as a means of victimising others. It is the use of an internet service or mobile technologies such as email, chat rooms, discussion groups, instant messaging, web pages or SMS, with the intent of harming another person.

Activities can include repeated negative messages, sexual and racist harassment, denigration, impersonation, trickery, exclusion and cyber-stalking. Cyber Bullying may involve varying levels of severity, ranging from occasional messages to frequently repeated and highly disturbing threats to a person's life.

Cyber Bullying can occur from a single act when the message or picture is sent to more than one person. For example, a person who may only press send once, but the choice to send the message to multiple addresses, makes the action more than a single incident.

Discrimination occurs when people are treated less favourably than others because of: race, culture or ethnic origin, religion, physical characteristics, gender, sexual orientation, marital, parenting or economic status, age, and/or ability or disability.
Discrimination is often ongoing and commonly involves exclusion or rejection.

Harassment is behaviour that targets an individual or group, and that offends, humiliates, intimidates or creates a hostile environment.
Harassment is an ongoing pattern of behaviour.

Violence is the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against another person/s that results in psychological harm, injury or in some cases death. Violence may involve provoked or unprovoked acts and can be a single incident, a random act or can occur over time.

Examples of Bullying:
• **Physical:** hitting, pushing, touching, grabbing, looks, stares, facial expressions, gestures, spitting, taking or damaging property
• **Verbal or written:** spoken or written insults, threats, suggestive comments, teasing, name-calling, unfair criticism, spreading rumours
• **Cyber:** using e-mail, voice and text messaging, social networking sites, photographic and video images
• **Graffiti/ Vandalism:** using pictures, tags or words in a negative way
• **Social:** forming groups to exclude, ignore and disrespect; influencing, encouraging or organising someone else to be involved in any type of bullying or harassment

Examples of Sexual Harassment:
• Unwanted touching, hugging, kissing, brushing up against a person, staring or leering
• Suggestive comments or jokes; sexually explicit pictures, screen savers, posters, graffiti, letters, messages, magazines or any other visual or written medium
• Unwelcome invitations to go out on dates
• Requests for sex
• Inappropriate and intrusive personal questions about a person's private life or his/her body
• Insults, taunts, teasing or name calling of a sexual nature; or sexually explicit conversation
• Accessing sexually explicit internet sites
• Offensive telephone calls, letters, e-mails or mobile phone text messages
• Posting filmed or photographed images or comments on social networking sites
• Behaviour that may constitute a criminal offence under criminal law and reportable to the police, such as physical or indecent assault, stalking, obscene communications, and sexual assault

Bystander Behaviour

A bystander is someone who sees or knows about maltreatment, harassment, aggression, violence or bullying that is happening to someone else. Supportive bystander behaviours are actions / words that are intended to support someone who is being attacked, abused or bullied.
The actions of a supportive bystander can stop or diminish a bullying incident or help another person to recover from it.

Reporting and Responsibilities

Reporting of a Bullying Incident
Who to report to?
Parents and students can report incidents of bullying, including cyber bullying, to their class teacher in the first instance and, if the incident is serious or unresolved, to the school counsellor, principal or senior leaders, or to someone on the school's staff they have confidence in.
It is difficult for the school to follow up on an incident if staff are unaware of it and, therefore, we encourage all incidents to be reported.

How to report?
Parents and students may find it helpful to write down the details of the incident as a first step.
A face-to-face discussion is usually the best way of reporting an incident. If dissatisfied with the outcome, follow up with a written statement with the request for a further meeting.
If seriously concerned about the manner in which the school is dealing with an incident, a parent can contact DECD Southern Regional Office for support, 82073700.

When to report?
Reporting of an incident should occur as soon after the incident as possible. This gives the school the best opportunity to follow up the incident and intervene.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PRINCIPAL, STAFF, STUDENTS AND PARENTS

The Principal has responsibility to:
- develop, implement and review annually the school's anti-bullying policy (involving staff, parents and students), consistent with Cossey Report recommendations.
- survey regularly all or a random selection of students, parents and teachers
- provide to the Governing Council updates each term in relation to school bullying data and trends and any anti-bullying programs/initiatives in place or being considered
- make this report available to the general school community via the newsletter and place on the school's website for easy access by parents.
- include the topic of bullying behaviour as a council meeting agenda item at least once per term
- ensure that new staff and new students and their families are aware of the school community's negotiated anti-bullying policy and the decision-making procedures open to them if they wish to influence school practice
- ensure the inclusion of the school's Student Code of Conduct as part of the school's enrolment process
- manage the incidents of bullying in a way that is consistent with the DECD School Discipline Policy
- provide in-service training and development to counsellors and other key staff in effective strategies in managing bullying
- ensure ongoing training and development of teachers, induction of students and the provision of information to parents

- manage a whole-school-change approach to ensure the Keeping Safe Child Protection Curriculum is implemented in all year levels
- ensure that all parents have access to:
  - the school's Anti Bullying Policy,
  - the DECD Bullying and Harassment at School: Advice for parents and caregivers leaflet
  - information about the Keeping Safe Child Protection Curriculum and related documents, including providing access via the school's website
  - the reports to Governing Council each term, via the newsletter and on the school's website
- Ensure that all parents are aware of their rights to advocacy and of avenues open to them in establishing an anti-bullying policy

School staff members will:
- develop and foster positive relationships with students and families
- communicate and interact effectively with students and engage in cooperative problem solving relationships to address issues of bullying
- participate in developing, implementing and reviewing the school's anti-bullying policy, curriculum and in-service offerings, and the procedures for managing incidents of bullying
- critically reflect on practices and develop the knowledge and skills needed to manage incidents of bullying successfully
- establish, maintain, make explicit and model the school's expectations relating to bullying
- participate in training and development related to decreasing bullying in schools
- support students to be effective bystanders
- ensure the concept of bullying is defined clearly and sensibly
- Collect relevant data using surveys and questionnaires
- Provide regular lessons in the classroom. How to prevent bullying should be a significant part of the students' social education curriculum. *See Appendix A*

Parents will:
- keep the school informed of concerns about behaviour, their children's health or other matters of relevance
- encourage their children to deal with bullying issues in accordance with the school policy
- communicate in a respectful manner with school staff about issues of concern soon after these concerns arise
- follow up on these concerns and, if necessary, contact the Regional Office if the concerns are not resolved following intervention by the principal

Students will support the school in maintaining a safe and supportive environment if they:
- are respectful towards other students, staff and members of the school community
- participate in sessions regarding the school's anti-bullying policy, the Keeping Safe Child Protection Curriculum, the Peer Mediation program, being an effective bystander, and other sessions regarding behavioural expectations
- communicate with an appropriate adult if bullied or harassed or if they are aware that someone else is being bullied or harassed
- learn to be an effective bystander, so that bullying and harassment are discouraged through peer influence

How to Recognise a Student Being Bullied:

Students who are being bullied or harassed may not talk about it with their teachers, friends or with the school's counsellors. They may be afraid that it will only make things worse or they may feel that it is wrong to 'tell tales'.

Some signs that a student is being bullied may be:
- a change in behaviour
- unexplained cuts, bruises or scratches
- damaged or ripped clothing
- vague headaches or stomach aches
- refusal to go to school
- asking for extra pocket money or food
- tearfulness, anxiety or difficulty sleeping
- 'hiding' information on mobile phones, emails or in comments on their social networking pages.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS: Disabilities, guardianship and more

Consideration will be given to students with a disability, gifted students, Special School students, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students in care (guardianship), and students who are same sex attracted, in managing incidents of bullying.

The school will include in education plans any issues related to bullying, harassment, violence, discrimination or child protection matters for students with a disability (Negotiated Education Plan), an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander student (Individual Learning Plan) and students under guardianship (Individual Education Plan).

As part of the enrolment process, the school will require parents and/or students to acknowledge/agree to the school's Student Code of Conduct.

ACTIONS: Responses to Incidents, Follow-up and Reporting to Parents

Some flexibility is needed in how incidents are tackled, depending on the nature, severity and extent of the bullying. Staff will seek to respond to school bullying in the most appropriate way. This may include the use of sanctions in extreme cases, but recognise that progress can often only be made using a problem-solving approach working with students.

In extreme cases, under the Regulations pursuant to the Education Act, a student can be suspended or excluded from attendance at school if they:

Act in a manner that threatens the safety or well being of a student or member of staff of, or other person associated with the school (including by sexually harassing, racially vilifying, verbally abusing or bullying that person).

Principals can use these Regulations for incidents that occur off-site and/or out of school hours if another student's safety or wellbeing has been threatened. Therefore, these Regulations can be used for incidents of cyber bullying or violence (see Circular to Principals May 2009).

The Principal (or delegate) will:
- follow-up with students who are victims or perpetrators of bullying to ensure they feel safe at school and remain connected to the school following an incident
- notify parents of the victim of violence at the earliest opportunity
- undertake to collaborate with parents in addressing the problem of bullying, especially in the resolution of cases in which action is to be taken by both the school and parents

Appendix A:

Teachers Responsibilities

Teachers are required to implement regular classroom lessons to reduce bully behaviour (as part of the weekly Wellbeing lessons). The following knowledge, skills and attitudes need to be introduced, practiced and reinforced so that the knowledge can be assimilated, student attitudes significantly influenced and the necessary skills developed as far as is possible.

Knowledge
What bullying is:
- The school anti-bullying policy
- Why it must be stopped – the harm it does
- The content of the school's anti-bullying policy

Attitudes:
- Being unprejudiced
- Being cooperative and empathic
- Resisting negative group pressure
- Self-acceptance, as an antidote to discouragement

Skills:
- Being assertive and not acting aggressively
- Resolving differences constructively, using conflict resolution techniques
- Helping others who are being bullied, as a good bystander
- Reacting appropriately if bullied

Appendix B:

Please refer to other relevant school documents, including the Procedures for Parents/ Caregivers to Raise Concerns

Reviewed 2015, Ratified