

SALAMAH COLLEGE



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

RATIONALE

Bullying is a damaging harm that can happen to a child's sense of well-being and self-worth. It is not a normal part of growing up, nor is it part of a "toughening up" process preparing a child for the adult world. Worse still, is the idea that "once a bully, always a bully".

AIM

The aim of this policy is to allow everyone to enjoy a safe, harassment-free school environment and to be treated with respect and equality.

WHOLE-SCHOOL COMMUNITY RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Students, staff, parents, caregivers and the wider community have the right to a safe and supportive learning environment in schools. For this to occur all school community members have a responsibility to prevent and respond to reports and observations of bullying. This policy should be read in conjunction with other key policies such as the School's Anti-bullying Plan; Duty of Care Policy; Workplace Health and Safety Policy; Internet Use, Email & Other Electronic Communications for Students Policy.

Rights and Responsibilities of School Community Members

All students, teachers, parents, wider school community - Rights

- Are safe and supported in the school environment; and
- Are treated with respect.

All students, teachers, parents, wider school community - Responsibilities

- Establish positive relationships; and
- Respect and accept individual differences.

Administrators - Rights

- Are supported in developing and implementing the school's anti-bullying plan to prevent and effectively manage bullying.

Administrators - Responsibilities

- Provide leadership in resourcing the school's prevention and effective management of bullying;
- Implement the school plan;
- Ensure parents are informed of the school's anti-bullying plan; and
- Support staff to implement the school's plan.

Staff - Rights

- Feel safe and supported in the workplace;
- Access to curriculum resources suitable for supporting students in building positive relationships, resiliency, safety and bullying prevention;
- Are informed of the school's anti-bullying plan;
- Are treated with respect in the workplace; and
- Access to professional learning in preventing and effectively managing bullying.

Staff - Responsibilities

- Promote and model positive relationships;
- Participate in implementing the school plan to counter bullying;
- Identify and respond to bullying incidents;
- Teach students how to treat others with care and respect;
- Teach students how to respond effectively to bullying;
- promote social problem solving with students; and
- Respect and accept individual differences.

Students - Rights

- Access to curriculum that supports the building of resiliency and problem solving strategies.
- Are informed of the school's anti-bullying plan; and
- If involved, are provided with support to stop bullying.

Students - Responsibilities

- Treat others with care and
- Respect; and
- Identify and respond effectively to bullying.

Parents/Caregiver - Rights

- Expect children to be safe and provided with a supportive school environment and treated with respect; and
- Are provided with access to information on the prevention and response strategies related to bullying. Support and encourage children to treat others with respect and act in accordance with the school plan if they observe bullying.

Parents/Caregiver - Responsibilities

- Encourage children to report bullying incidents; and
- Are aware of school plans and support school in effectively managing bullying.

Wider community: including other professionals - Rights.

- Strategic inclusion in prevention and bullying incident management.

Wider community: including other professionals - Responsibilities.

- Provide support and input into the school's approach to preventing and managing bullying.

DEFINITION

Bullying is usually the result of a stronger student or group of students exerting pressure on a child. It may take the following forms:

- **Verbal:** the child is called names, put down or threatened.
- **Physical:** the child is assaulted, hit, kicked, tripped or his or her property stolen.
- **Social:** the child is isolated, ignored, left out or rumours are circulated even online (Cyber-Bullying).
- **Psychological:** the child is followed, the target of dirty looks, or the victim of the silent treatment. It is important to remember that often the bully has support from other students, simply because the other children fear **repercussions for themselves**.
- **Cyber-bullying:** some individuals use the power of the internet for purposes such as posting quite personal information and for bullying and harassment. We can minimise the harm that such individuals do by teaching students how to use the internet safely and responsibly.

All incidents of Bullying at Salamah College are to be reported on the Bullying Harassment Reporting Form which will be stored in the Bullying Harassment Reporting File for record keeping and processing in accordance with this policy.

Research shows that:

- Generally, boys are bullied individually.
- Girls are bullied more often by groups
- Both boys and girls are subject to bullying

BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

Each staff member is required to:

- Be a role model in word and action at all times.
- Be observant of signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying.
- Make efforts to remove occasions for bullying by active patrolling during supervision duty.
- Arrive at class on time.
- Take steps to help targets and remove sources of distress without placing the target at further risk.
- Report suspected incidents to the appropriate staff member such as Class Teacher/Deputy Principal/Principal.
- Follow and teach the Social Skills Program and the Anti-Bullying Program and make them an integral part of the teaching cycle in class.

Students are required to:

- Refuse to be involved in any bullying situation.
- Take some form of appropriate preventative action.
- Report the incident or signs of distress.

Recommendations to parents:

- Watch for signs of distress in your child.
- Take an active interest in your child's social life and acquaintances.
- Advise your child to tell a staff member about any incident.

- Inform the school if you suspect bullying.
- Keep a written record (who, what, when, where, why, how).
- Do not encourage your child to retaliate.
- Communicate to your child that parental involvement, if necessary, is appropriate.
- Be willing to attend interviews at the school if your child is involved in any bullying incident.
- Be willing to inform the school of any cases of suspected bullying even if your own child is not directly affected.

PARENT/CAREGIVER REPORTING PROCEDURE

- Parents/caregivers should in the first instance inform the classroom teacher about any incident.
- If the situation is not resolved to the parent/caregiver's satisfaction the Principal or the Deputy Principal should be informed.
- The Principal of the school will become involved if circumstances continue to be unresolved.

STUDENT REPORTING PROCEDURE

- Students in the primary school should report incidents of bullying to the teacher on playground duty or their classroom teacher.
- High school students should report incidents of bullying to a teacher; via the Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Form at the end of this policy; to the School Wellbeing committee; parent/caregiver; or external support agency.

SCHOOL'S PROCEDURES FOR INVESTIGATING, DEALING WITH, RECORDING AND MONITORING BULLYING

1. Bullying occurs in all schools and in all communities. All alleged bullying is taken seriously and dealt with in an appropriate and prompt manner.
2. The Anti-Bullying Coordinator is the Deputy Principal of the school, and this must be known to all parents, pupils, and members of staff along with the procedures for reporting bullying.
3. The Deputy Principal is responsible for recording and responding to bullying and along with the Principal.
4. The Principal is responsible for embedding anti-bullying in the policies and practices of the school.
5. The final responsibility for ensuring that bullying is consistently dealt with and allegations and actions correctly recorded rests with the Principal.
6. The Principal will ensure that the *Bullying Harassment Reporting Form* is filled out and kept on file.
7. Responsibilities for working with and supporting the victim and perpetrator will often be delegated to others.
8. The member of staff to whom the allegation is first reported, or who witnesses apparent bullying, must take it seriously. They must use their professional judgment in deciding on appropriate action to be taken. This will depend on the following factors:
 - Age of those involved.
 - Persistence, repetition, frequency of bullying
 - Level of premeditation or calculation
 - Numbers of individuals involved.
 - Knowledge of the individuals involved.

- Level of distress caused.
- Location and time of alleged bullying behaviour/s

9. All bullying - reported, observed or suspected - must be taken seriously. When a child or young person expresses the view that bullying has taken place, that view must be taken account of by school staff.

10. When it is clear that the allegation of bullying behaviour may have substance, contact should be made with the parents of children on both sides of the allegation to inform them:

- That an allegation has been made
- That it is under investigation and
- That they will be contacted upon completion of the investigation. Parents should be given an indication of how long an investigation is likely to take.
- In reported incidences which are managed immediately, contact with parents will be to inform them of both the allegation, the results of the investigation and actions taken, if any.

11. Delays in responding to an allegation of bullying should only occur when reported at the end of a school day. Any investigation should be commenced and completed in as short a time as possible after receipt of the allegation. Complex cases will inevitably take longer than more clear-cut and obvious incidences.

12. In order to support the investigation of alleged bullying, the following questions should be considered:

- Who was involved – is there or are there apparent victims? If so, who is it/are they?
- In what way did the victims (if such exist) suffer?
- How did the alleged bullying start?
- Was the observed/reported incident spontaneous or premeditated?
- What is alleged to have happened, from the perspective of all those involved?
- When did the alleged bullying take place?
- Where did the alleged bullying take place?
- Who witnessed the alleged bullying (students, parents, users, visitors, staff and other)?
- Who reported it? To whom and when?

- Is there any background or history to the alleged bullying?
- Is there any other reason for considering this to be bullying?
- Why does the reporter or investigator perceive this to have been bullying?
- To what extent did what happen affect others?
- What was the response of the victim(s), if such exist?
- What does/do the victim(s) wish to see resulting from the investigation?
- Have parents been contacted?

13. If the investigation shows a need for further action to be taken, parents will be informed on the approaches to be taken. The following measures may be considered:

- Explain that what happened will be recorded as bullying.
- Make it clear that the type of behaviour exhibited is totally unacceptable in all circumstances.
- Explain to perpetrator and the parents that his/her actions have an effect and a consequence and ask him/her to consider the results of action taken.
- Involve other members of staff to work with the perpetrator and victim as appropriate.
- Inform both sets of parents of the incident in writing and of any action taken, looking for their support.
- Meet with the parents of both victim and perpetrator to discuss the issues.

14. In all cases, the staff involved should take all appropriate measures to try to prevent the bullying from happening again. Restorative practices can be deployed in difficult cases where bullying behaviour persists despite interventions of other types. This can also include involving the School Community Support Members in mediating between families where conventional school-based intervention is not helping to stop the bullying.

15. Support for the victim is essential both immediately following the incident and during an agreed period of review. Peer support, staff support, parental support, and external support agencies can all play a vital role in reducing or eliminating long-term damage to the victim.

16. Consideration should be given to how best to discipline and also support the perpetrator. Disciplinary procedures against the perpetrator are intended to change or modify behaviour rather than label anyone as a bully. Such procedures may include:

- Positive behaviour strategies with agreed individual goals to be attained.
- Working with parents to increase a child or young person's - or indeed the family's - understanding of the consequences of continuing to behave inappropriately and to effect and sustain a change in behaviour
- Involvement of agencies such as educational psychologists, educational support workers or others
- Setting up social skills groups
- Establishing mentoring or 'buddying' systems for perpetrator as well as victim
- Daily behaviour monitoring
- Withdrawal of privileges
- Class, group or individual discussion with staff about the effects of bullying
- Peer mediation
- Restorative practices

17. Each report of bullying should be reviewed after an agreed period of time. At that point, staff should endeavour to meet with both perpetrator and victim to reassess the situation and the relationship between those involved unless it would be considered counter-productive, unhelpful or insensitive to do so. The manner in which such a review takes place will depend on the nature of the bullying and age of those involved (e.g., the extent to which parents are actively involved at the review stage).

In cases where a parent is dissatisfied with the outcome of an investigation or action taken by a school, he or she should contact the Principal in the first instance. If concerns persist, the parent may wish to refer the case to an external agency of their choice.