



"A light beneath our feet"

POLICY NAME	Dealing with Bullying, Harrassment, Aggression and Violence
ORIGINALLY RELEASED	2002
REVIEW DATES	2008,2019, 2012, 2015

Rationale

St Anthony's School is committed to providing a safe and caring environment, which fosters respect for others and does not tolerate bullying. When bullying occurs it has a detrimental effect on the Spiritual, Physical, Emotional and Educational wellbeing of the child.

Definitions

Bullying comprises of behaviours that are intentional, persistent and intended to humiliate. Bullying often forces the person bullied, to feel disempowered and vulnerable to being isolated. Empowerment of each person to deal with and have control when placed in situations when bullying does occur, is vital in ensuring the bullying cycle is broken.

Terminology

Bullying: When an individual or group misuses power to target another individual or group to intentionally threaten or harm them on more than one occasion. This may involve verbal, physical, relational and psychological forms of bullying. Note that teasing or fighting between peers is not necessarily bullying.

Bystander: Bullying also involves children who may not be directly involved in the bullying nor are they directly bullied, who are referred to as "bystanders". A bystander is someone who sees the bullying or knows that it is happening to someone else.

Harassment: Offensive, humiliating, threatening, abusive or intimidating behaviour that is directed at individuals or group/s for either perceived or real attributes. It includes gender, religious, age, race, and sexuality based harassment.

Violence: Incidents where a person is intimidated, threatened, physically assaulted or when property is damaged deliberately. It is an extreme use of force often resulting in injury or destruction. Violence does not necessarily involve an imbalance of power and can be a one-off incident.

Principles

At St Anthony's School we believe that bullying falls under five broad categories.

PHYSICAL BULLYING: This includes repetitive low level hitting, kicking, pinching, pushing, tripping, "ganging up", unwanted physical or sexual touching, and damage to personal property. High levels of physical assault may be classified as violence.

EMOTIONAL BULLYING: This includes repeated stalking, threats or implied threats, unwanted email or text messaging, abusive websites, threatening gestures, manipulation, emotional black-mail, and threats to an individual's reputation and sense of safety.

VERBAL BULLYING: This involves the repeated use of words to hurt or humiliate another individual or group. Verbal bullying includes using put-downs, insulting language, name-calling, swearing, nasty notes and homophobic, racist or sexist comments.

RELATIONAL BULLYING: This usually involves repeatedly excluding others by leaving them out or convincing others to ostracize or reject another individual or group from their social connections, making up or spreading rumours and sharing or threatening to share others personal information.

CYBER BULLYING: This involves the use of information and communication technologies such as e-mail, text messages, instant messaging and websites to engage in the bullying of other individuals or groups. This technology provides an alternative means for verbal, relational and psychological forms of bullying.

At St Anthony's School we believe that our school must take an active role in minimizing bullying. We believe that we can do so by ensuring that we do the following. This should not be seen as a definite list but as a guideline to work from.

At St Anthony's School we...

- Openly talk about bullying – what it is, how it affects us, what we can do about it;
- Teach our children the skills which will build their self-esteem and empower them to take the responsibility for themselves and give them the opportunity to practise these skills;
- Formulate policy which clearly states what action we will take to deal with bullying behaviour;
- Keep adequate records of all bullying incidents;
- Work with parents of victim to assist in avoiding being bullied in future;
- Protect and support victim;
- Assist bully to change behaviour;
- Work with parents of bully to establish joint strategies for behaviour modification;
- Provide access to specialised counselling help for victim and bully.

At St Anthony's School we believe that the following principles should be applied to the three main groups involved either directly or indirectly by bullying in our school.

Staff must always

- Model appropriate behaviours at all times;
- Listen to and deal with all reported and observed incidences of bullying;
- (All responses must be responded to and recorded to on the School Bullying File).
- Protect the victim from further harm;
- Act to stop the bullying behaviour recurring;
- Ensure that children are supervised at all times;
- Report incidences of bullying to Principal, other members of the leadership team and relevant classroom staff.

Children must always

- Report if they are being bullied or they see someone else being bullied;
- Intervene appropriately if someone is being bullied or seek teacher assistance,
- Not bully others.
- Avoid becoming a bystander to bullying incidents.

Parents should always

- Watch for signs that their child may be being bullied;
- Listen sympathetically to reports of bullying;
- Speak to someone on staff at St Anthony's School if their child is being bullied, or they suspect that this is happening;
- Instruct their children to report if they are being bullied;
- Work with the school in seeking a solution.

WAYS IN WHICH WE DEVELOP A BULLY-FREE SCHOOL

1. Preventive approaches

- Establish a school culture that actively promotes non-violence;
- Provide a positive social context for student behaviour by giving consistent messages that value diversity, support constructive relationships, discourage violence and aggression and challenge the abuse of power;
- Ensure students actively participate in meaningful decision making;
- Recognise and celebrate diversity and promote justice and equality;
- Foster involvement of whole school community;
- Focus on socialisation through role models, leadership programs, peer support programs, co-operative learning;
- Develop effective behaviour management policies and programs;
- Social Skills and anti bullying behaviour is part of each class teaching classroom program.

2. Problem solving approaches

- Target support and social skills development for individuals and groups;
- Target individuals through counselling, self-esteem programs, conflict resolution;
- Instigate assertiveness training and peer mediation training;
- Provide structured programs that teach alternatives to aggressive behaviour.

3. Responsive approaches

- Practically deal with immediate and specific incidents of bullying and record all incidences.
- Apply negative consequences to the bully according to the school's behaviour management plan;
- Counsel and provide support network for victim;
- Restitution/apologise for harm done;
- Individual management plans, contracts and skills development for the bully;

PROCEDURES

Incidences of bullying can be reported to any teacher or the Principal by children and their parents. Any bullying incidents that are dealt with, must be recorded and these records are retained as per school policy. When a bullying incident is reported or observed we will use the following graded sanctions after the severity and seriousness of the incident has been assessed:

Least severe cases –

- Repetitive behaviour with the intention to annoy
- Isolated teasing incidents.

In these circumstances, all cases will be recorded by staff, with both parties being counselled.

Intermediate cases –

- All involve thoughtless periodic teasing, name calling and exclusion.
- Parties will be interviewed informally by a staff member;
- Explain inappropriateness and unacceptability of behaviour and encourage appropriate behaviour;
- Suggest ways victim may deal with situation;
- Monitor situation;
- Staff member document and record incidents in both bully and victim file.

Staff to be informed of the incident and it will be recorded and children will be monitored

Repeat/severe offences –

These are cruel, intense, extended, distressing actions that may involve serious physical assaults and/or psychological damage. It also includes the above cases that have had intervention and incidences have reoccurred during the term.

Offending child to be separated from group;

- Interview with leadership team member – offence stated and appropriate behaviour outlined;
- Interview with parents to devise action plan;
- Detention;
- Suspension from school – re-entry on an agreed behaviour contract;
- Repeat offenders will be offered counselling until problem solved;
- Police action, if deemed appropriate by the Principal.

Staff will be responsible for implementing the program and ensuring that incidences of bullying are dealt with in a manner consistent with the policy and as soon as possible after it is reported or observed.

Staff will implement continued reinforcement of anti bullying strategies in the classroom, including Recruiting the Bystanders and Helping the Victim programs.

It should be noted that..

- Parents of children who have been bullied will have notification (written or verbal).
- Parents of children who have bullied will have written notification.
- Children who do not respond appropriately to bullying situations (eg; bystander) will result in a detention warning for behaving irresponsibly.
- Bullying is a Level 2 or Level 3 offence under the Behaviour Management Policy. Detentions, suspensions and exclusion are all possible outcomes for ongoing bullying behaviour.