

Anti Bullying POLICY



Anti Bullying Policy

Rationale:

At Haddon PS we want to provide a positive school culture where bullying is not accepted and students and staff feel safe and connected.

Aim:

- To reinforce within the school community what bullying is and that bullying is an unacceptable behaviour
- To ensure that any reported incidents of bullying are followed up appropriately and that support is given to both the victim and the bully
- Reporting incidents of bullying is the responsibility of everyone within the school community
- To clearly communicate to all members of the school community the school's position on bullying

Implementation:

- All staff will have a copy of this document and be familiar with its contents
- All staff need to be aware of the whole school approach to bullying and their duty of care regarding protection of students from bullying.
- School expectations and classroom agreements/rules should be displayed in classrooms and other key locations
- Preventative measures to minimize bullying will be put into place
- A Method of Shared Concern will be used to work on bully/victim problems which may occur.

What is Bullying? Source: State of Victoria (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development)

Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, upset or create a risk to another person's health and safety - either psychologically or physically - or their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion.

Types of bullying

There are three broad categories of bullying.

- Direct physical bullying e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging their property. Direct verbal bullying e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.
- Indirect bullying - This form of bullying is harder to recognise and often carried out behind the bullied student's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Indirect bullying includes:
 - lying and spreading rumours
 - playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
 - mimicking
 - forcing others to act against their will
 - encouraging others to socially exclude someone
 - damaging someone's social reputation and social acceptance
 - cyber-bullying, which involves the use of email, text messages or chat rooms to humiliate and distress.

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 unpleasant situations that are often confused with bullying:

Mutual conflict - In mutual conflict situations, there is 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. 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 - Unless the social rejection is directed towards someone specific and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others, it is not bullying.

Single-episode acts of nastiness or meanness, or random acts of aggression or intimidation - Single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If a student is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied.

Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different students is not the same as bullying. However, since the school has a duty of care to provide a student with a safe and supportive school environment, single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression should not be ignored or condoned.

Source: State of Victoria Website (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development) 2007

Signs of Bullying: These behaviours **may** suggest that bullying is happening but there could also be other reasons for the student displaying these signs.

- Unexplained physical injuries e.g. bruises , scratches
- Clothes or belongings damaged
- Refusing to go to school
- Non specific pains, headaches
- Not wanting to go out at recess time
- Refusing to say what is wrong
- Easily upset
- Deterioration in school work
- Changes in behaviour - becomes withdrawn, mood changes, stops eating, irritability and temper outbursts, appearing tearful, distressed, unhappy, anxious
- Giving implausible excuses to explain above signs

A four phase approach to bullying will be adopted.

Phase 1 Primary Prevention:

- Professional Development for staff relating to bullying
- School Community awareness and input relating to bullying, its characteristics, its effects on victims and the school's programs and response
- Provision of programs that promote resilience, life and social skills. assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving
- Bullying surveys for both classroom and yard bullying to be administered twice yearly. Data in surveys will be carefully analysed and acted upon.
- Classroom teachers to negotiate their class rules (consistent with whole school expectations, procedures and consequences) at the start of the year with the students.
- At the start of the year and regularly throughout the year, classroom teachers will clarify with students the school policy on bullying, including cyber bullying.
- Students required to sign an acceptable network usage agreement at the start of each year. Cyber bullying will be specifically addressed in this agreement. There will be a junior and senior agreement. Processes to be in place to ensure tracking of student activity on the school's equipment and network
- Development of a school culture that includes anti bullying messages and the promotion of values (Healthy Relationships- Karen Brunskill)
- Provision of social skills programs to develop positive social relationships between students (You Can Do It, Friendly Kids Friendly Classrooms Helen Mc Grath)

Phase 2 Early Intervention:

- Ensure that students are aware that bullying incidents involving themselves or others must be reported. Regular reminders from principal and teachers reinforcing that bullying is not ok and should be reported.
- Regular monitoring of student activity on school computer network to help identify potential problems
- Parents encouraged to contact school if they become aware of a problem
- Parents of both the bully and the victim be contacted when there has been a bullying incident

Phase 3 Intervention:

Once reported bullying incidents or alleged bullying incidents will be fully investigated and documented. Bullies and victims will be offered counselling and support. The Shared Concern approach will be used to deal with any bully/victim problems which may occur. All staff will be made familiar with the approach to ensure that there is a common understanding of what is involved.

The Student Well Being Coordinator will conduct the Shared Concern sessions when bullying incidents have occurred.

The Shared Concerned Method

Step 1 Information gathering

A bully/victim problem is identified upon the basis of reliable information about who is involved including:

- a) the person or persons who are being bullied by another individual or group
- b) the person or persons who continually engage in carrying out bullying

Step 2 Interview with bullies

Each student identified as having taken part in the bullying or to have supported it in some way is interviewed alone starting with the ringleader (if known).

Step 3 Meeting with the Victim

The victim is seen after all the suspected bullies have been interviewed.

Step 4 Prepare for joint meeting of bully/bullies and victim

Further meetings with individual bullies are held and if good progress is apparent a whole group meeting is organized. It may then be possible to agree upon a meeting with the group and the victim.

Step 5 Group Meeting

If all has gone well this meeting will demonstrate that the bullying is well and truly over.

A detailed explanation of the Shared Concern Method is included in the appendix.

Phase 4 Post Violation:

Reinforcement of positive behaviours

On going skill development for both victim and bully e.g. teaching social problem solving strategies and mending of relationships

Support Structures- counselling

Ongoing monitoring of identified bullies

Appendix-

(Ken Rigby - source : www.education.unisa.edu.au/bullying/concern.html)

THE RATIONALE OF "SHARED CONCERN"

1. It is assumed that bullies typically (not always) are insensitive to the harm, or the extent of the harm, they are doing to the victim. This insensitivity is due to their involvement in a group

which seems to give legitimacy to their bullying activities and prevents them from feeling personally responsible for the outcomes.

2. What they appear to gain mostly through bullying is a **sense of being part of a group which is "having fun."**

3. Yet **as individuals**, bullies commonly feel uncomfortable about what is being done.

4. A hostile blaming attitude on the part of an authority figure is likely to increase the desire for them to continue bullying and unite the bullies more strongly.

5. Working with **individuals** by initially sharing with them one's concern for the victim **is likely to elicit a more positive response.**

6. Although the method involves a non-blaming approach, it does **not** in any way seek to excuse or condone bullying. It is in fact quite direct and confrontational. **It strongly invites and expects a responsible response.**

7. Having made a commitment to the interviewer, generally means that members of the bully group will not talk to each other about what has transpired. Group influence is thereby weakened.

8. Careful monitoring of what ensues after promises have been made is absolutely essential

9. Interviewing the victim first should be avoided, because if the bullies suspect that the victim has informed on them, he or she will be further endangered.

10. Victims are not always "innocent", and it is important to understand what they may be doing to provoke the bullying. One may need to work directly on changing the victim's provocative way of behaving.

11. Although the aim is to re-individualise bullies, the idea is **not** to "break up" groups (students have a right to enjoy being in a group) but eventually to change their attitudes and behaviour towards the victim and other potential victims.

12. It is important to see the whole group of "bullies" together after progress has been made towards improving the situation, to congratulate them on what they have been able to do, and to work through any residual problems with the victim present.

13. An important benefit from this approach is that it can lead to a "change of heart" on the part of bullies and **remove the need for constant surveillance.**

14. The use of punishment is often ineffective. It may breed resentment, increase group solidarity, jeopardise the victim further, and challenge bullies to practise ways of bullying that are hard to detect.

15. It **does** require some careful thought and planning on **how** to use the method with students. However, it **need not be time-consuming.** **Short interviews and meetings** only are often all that is needed.

16. There is now good research evidence that the method is effective in at least two cases in three (see Smith and Sharp, 1994). It has been used in many British, European and Australian schools with excellent results.

17. However, In severe cases of bullying **or** where individuals do not respond to shared concern, **further action** may be needed, including interviews with parents and even suspension.

THE METHOD

Briefly, the **Method of Shared Concern** involves the following stages:

A. **A bully/victim problem** is identified. For this one needs to have reliable information about who is involved, including

- (a) the person or persons who are being bullied by another individual or group
- (b) the person or persons who continually engage in carrying out the bullying.

Information about **what is happening** and the **concern** felt by the victim is ideally obtained through **observations** and **reports**, rather than through talking directly with the victim. (This is to prevent repercussions on the victim for having "told")

B. A number of students are identified as having taken part in the bullying, or to have supported it in some way. Each one is seen **in turn**, starting (if known) with the likely ringleader.

In these meeting with individual students, it is important **not** to make any accusations. The meeting begins with the interviewer inviting the student to sit in a chair opposite (without an intervening desk) and waiting for eye contact before the interaction begins.

The interviewer starts by sharing a concern for the person who is being victimised. Once the feelings of the interviewer have been clearly - and sincerely - conveyed, the student is asked to say what he or she knows about the situation.

As soon as the student has acknowledged some awareness (not necessarily guilt) relating to what has been happening, the student is asked directly what he or she can do to help improve matters.

Note that the interviewer is not trying to "get to the bottom of the matter" and to apportion blame but to produce a constructive response and change the situation.

Commonly suggestions **are** elicited. But if they are not, the interviewer may make a suggestions, normally ones that are not so difficult for the bully to accept. The interviewer should express strong approval for **any** constructive proposals, but arrange for another meeting (at an agreed time) to find out what has actually been done. Close monitoring is essential.

At this meeting **no threats** are made nor any warnings given

The remaining students in the group are seen, again individually, and the procedure repeated.

EXAMPLE OF AN INTERACTION BETWEEN INTERVIEWER AND STUDENT (To get a feel for the Method act or role play the following with a partner)

PHASE ONE

Interviewer (Int) I hear that some students have been giving Tom a bad time recently ? What do you know about it ?

Student (S) (Long pause). It wasn't just me ! (There may be a flat denial of personal involvement - but the **Int** can still continue as follows)

Int. OK, but what can you tell me about it ? (**Int** is not trying to elicit a confession)

S. Well, some people have been calling him names - pushing him around a bit - just having fun really.

Int. I see. I am concerned that Tom's been pretty depressed, even staying home from school. It sounds like things are aren't so good for him right now.

S. I suppose so.

PHASE TWO

This can begin as soon as there is any acknowledgment that the situation - for Tom - is bad.

Int. I am wondering what you can do to make things a bit better for Tom.

S. Who me ?

Int. Yes, you

S (Long pause). Well, I suppose I could stop making fun of him - calling him names.

Int. (Enthusiastically - not grudgingly). That would be excellent. Try not to tease or upset him - and we will meet again next Tuesday at this time to see how things have gone.

S. Is that all ?

Int. Yes, that's it. See you next week.

Some variations

1 The suspected bully may deny knowledge of what has gone on. This may be due to genuine ignorance, or more likely (if sound preliminary work has been done) be a refusal to cooperate. One can only repeat one's concern - and say: "Well, it seems like you don't want to talk about it today. We can talk later." (The bully is not getting out of it).

2. The bully may deny **personal** involvement or say it was somebody else. One might say: "Well, you have some influence with X. I wonder if you could have a word with her. She would respect what you might say "

3. The student may seek to pressure **Int** to say why he or she has come to suspect him of doing such a thing. Here the **Int** needs to be careful to make it clear that the suspicion is **not** based on what the victim has said, but rather on reports from (unspecified) others, ideally, through personal observation. Don't get into an argument over this. Return to one's main theme: that is, the bad time being experienced by the victim and what can be done about it.

Further information about the Method of Shared Concern is to be found in these sources:

Pikas, A. (1989). The common concern method for the treatment of mobbing. In E. Roland and E. Munthe (eds), Bullying, an international perspective. London: Fulton.

Rigby, K. (1996) Bullying in Schools - and what to do about it. Camberwell, Melbourne. Australian Council for Educational Research, pp 209-220. [Also published in London: Jessica Kingsley (1997) and Toronto :Pembroke, 1998].

Smith, P.K. and Sharp, S. (Eds.) (1994). School Bullying:insights and perspectives, London: Routledge, pp 195-202.

Reviewed: November 2016

This Policy must meet Child safe standards and policy

PROTECT

Protecting children & young people
from abuse is our responsibility

