BULLYING POLICY

Definition

The national definition of bullying for Australian schools is:

'Bullying is the ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening'.

Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records).

Bullying of any form or for any reason can have immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.

Types of Bullying

There are five broad categories of bullying.

Physical
Physical bullying may include but is not limited to:
- hitting
- tripping
- pushing
- damaging property bullying

Verbal bullying
Verbal bullying may include but is not limited to:
- name calling
- insults
- homophobic or racist remarks
- verbal abuse

Covert bullying
Covert 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.

Covert bullying may include but is not limited to:
- lying and spreading rumours
- playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
- provoking a food-allergic reaction
- mimicking - tone of voice or a specific student's accent
- encouraging others to socially exclude someone
- damaging someone's social reputation and social acceptance
- being a bystander and not reporting a bullying incident

Psychological bullying
Psychological bullying may include but is not limited to:
- threatening
- manipulating
- stalking someone

Cyber-bullying
Cyber bullying can involve the use of information and communication technologies such as email, text messages, social networking sites, chat rooms or video internet sites to bully verbally, socially or psychologically.

It can be particularly harmful because it can happen anywhere and at any time. Thus, young people who are the victims of cyber-bullying have no place where they feel safe.

Behaviours that do not constitute bullying

Behaviours that do not constitute bullying include:
- mutual arguments and disagreements (where there is no power imbalance)
- not liking someone or a single act of social rejection
- one-off acts of meanness or spite
- isolated incidents of aggression, intimidation or violence

Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying. Such occurrences may still be serious and require intervention or management, however they do not (as single incidents) meet the threshold of a behaviour that can be described as bullying.

Responsibilities

All incidents that directly impact the good order and management of a school will be managed in line with the school's Student Code of Conduct.

Principal responsibilities
At Gordonvale State High School the Principal has the responsibility to:
- ensure that their school's Student Code of Conduct clearly articulates the approach for responding to allegations of bullying and includes the bullying response flowchart.
- ensure the school community is aware of the school's approach for responding to and managing allegations of bullying.
- develop individual school-based policies regarding the use of mobile phones and other technology as part of the school's Student Code of Conduct.
- provide clear guidance to students and parents about the appropriate use of mobiles and other electronic devices — at school and outside of school.
- has the authority to take disciplinary action to address student behaviours (such as bullying) that occur outside of school hours or school grounds if the conduct adversely affects, or is likely to adversely affect, other students and/or the good order and management of the school.
- where appropriate, take statutory disciplinary action to address cyberbullying that occurs outside of school hours or school grounds that also negatively affects the good order and management of the school OR that is undertaken on or originating from school premises during school hours, or by means of use of school ICT, concerning other students, staff or members of the school community.
- use non-statutory options to deal with the matter.
- must if at any point a reasonable suspicion is formed that a student has been harmed or is at risk of harm, respond in accordance with the Student Protection Procedure.
- must regardless of whether or not the bullying is a matter that must be dealt with by the school Principal as per this document, support the wellbeing of any student who is displaying apparent negative effects from bullying by means of offering the appropriate support.
- share information appropriately and as necessary with staff about any incidents of alleged bullying.
- encourage and model appropriate behaviour from staff, parents and the school community.
- act to highlight or manage any concerns of bullying.

Staff responsibilities
At Gordonvale State High School staff have the responsibility to:
- promote positive student behaviours.
- follow appropriate processes outlined in the school's Student Code of Conduct and bullying response flowchart when responding to allegations and incidents of bullying.
- take immediate action to address the physical and emotional safety of the student, for example providing a safe place for the student, redirecting students engaging in bullying behaviours or interrupting and addressing verbal abuse in situations,

- support the wellbeing of any student who is displaying apparent negative effects from cyberbullying by discussing guidance officer support.
- do not open or search with the property of a student without the consent of the student or parent
- remove property from a student if it is necessary to promote the caring, safe and supportive learning environment of the school, to maintain and foster mutual respect between all state school staff, students and visitors in accordance with the Temporary Removal of Student Property Policy.
- take reasonable steps to prevent bullying and responds to complaints to help bring the bullying to an end.
- ensure records in OneSchool are maintained accurately in relation to any allegations of bullying.

Student responsibilities
At Gordonvale State High School students have the responsibility to:
- show respect to all members of the school community
- make a report immediately to a member of staff when they witness or are the target of bullying
- if they have concerns about bullying incidents that occur outside of school hours, including weekends or school holidays that they should immediately seek assistance through the Office of the eSafety Commissioner or the Queensland Police Service
- if they are suffering negative effects from cyberbullying that they can seek guidance support from the school or other support services such as headspace or Kids Helpline.
- become an active bystander and support for the target of bullying by:
  - speaking up and letting the person who is doing the bullying know that what they are doing is bullying
  - refusing to join in with the bullying and walk away
  - helping the student who is being bullied ask for help
  - encouraging appropriate and modified behaviour of the bully if they are your friend

Parent responsibilities:
At Gordonvale State High School parents have the responsibility to:
- encourage your student to not bully others
- encourage your student to record evidence of bullying and report it
- provide support and encourage your student to seek help
- work with the school to resolve the bullying issue

Bullying Response Flowchart

Please note these timelines may be adjusted depending on the unique circumstances and risk associated with each situation. This is at the professional judgement of the staff involved. Timeframes should be clearly discussed and agreed with student and family.

STEP 1
- Provide a safe, quiet space to talk
- Reassure the student that you will listen to them
- Let them share their experience and feelings without interruption
- If you hold immediate concerns for the student's safety, let the student know how you will address these. Immediate in this circumstance is where the staff member believes the student is likely to experience harm (from others or self) within the next 24 hours.

STEP 2
- Ask the student for examples they have of the alleged bullying (e.g. hand written notes or screenshots)
- Write a record of your communication with the student
- Check back with the student to ensure you have the facts correct
- Enter the record in OneSchool
- Notify parents/s that the issue of concern is being investigated

STEP 3
- Gather additional information from other students, staff or family
- Review any previous reports or records for students involved
- Make sure you can answer who, what, where, when and how
- Clarify information with student and check on their wellbeing

STEP 4
- Evaluate the information to determine if bullying has occurred or if another disciplinary matter is at issue
- Make a time to meet with the student to discuss next steps
- Ask the student what they believe will help address the situation
- Engage the student as part of the solution
- Provide the student and parent with information about student support network
- Agree to a plan of action and timeline for the student, parent and yourself

STEP 5
- Document the plan of action in OneSchool
- Complete all actions agreed with student and parent within agreed timeframes
- Monitor the student and check in regularly on their wellbeing
- Seek assistance from student support network if needed

STEP 6
- Meet with the student to review situation
- Discuss what has changed, improved or worsened
- Explore other options for strengthening student wellbeing or safety
- Report back to parent
- Record outcomes in OneSchool

STEP 7
- Continue to check in with student on a regular basis until concerns have been mitigated
- Record notes of follow-up meetings in OneSchool
- Refer matter to specialist staff within 48 hours if problems escalate
- Look for opportunities to improve school wellbeing for all students

Consultation

The Gordonvale State High School Bullying Policy was developed in consultation with the school community, including:
- Teaching and non-teaching staff
- Student Council
- P&C

Review

The Gordonvale State High School Bullying Policy will undergo annual minor updates to reflect changing circumstances, data and staff.

A fulsome review is conducted every four years in line with the scheduled review process for the School Planning, Reviewing and Reporting cycle.

Endorsement

The Gordonvale State High School Bullying Policy has been informed by:
- Department of Education: Fact Sheet – Bullying and school aged students
- Department of Education: Fact Sheet – Cyber bullying and school aged students

Heather Murry
Principal
Monday 15th February 2021

Dr Karen Ronlund
Principal
Monday 15th February 2021