

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY – STUDENTS AND STAFF



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BOSTES	3.6.2

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1.0	17/08/11	Initial Draft Sample Document
1.1	Oct 11	Updated following initial feedback
1.2	Mar 15	updated

Policy

To minimize bullying at all levels of our community, and to have none of it wherever possible.

Principles

- That all staff act and teach, whenever appropriate, that bullying should not be tolerated with peers, parents or students, why it should not be tolerated, how to handle it and what consequences are likely to occur;
- The pro-active principles that we teach to prevent bullying are safety, acceptance and care;
- Any discipline will be in accordance with our discipline policy and procedures.

Rationale

Hunter Christian School does not tolerate bullying in any form. One of our Mission Statements speaks about "... a gifted Christian Staff committed to fostering a loving, safe and caring learning environment." In fact, all the members of our school community – staff, students and parents – must be committed to ensure such an environment is maintained that promotes personal growth and self-worth for all. To take on the challenge of '... equipping and empowering children to attain their full potential in Christ...', is to take on the responsibility of modelling and reinforcing Godly behaviour that serves others rather than taking advantage of them.

What is student bullying?

Bullying is an act of aggression causing fear, embarrassment, pain or discomfort to another -

- It can take a number of forms: physical, emotional, sexual, verbal, gesture, extortion and exclusion.
- It is an abuse of power.
- It can be planned, spontaneous or unintentional.
- Individuals or groups may be involved.

What are some examples of student bullying?

Bullying includes -

- Any form of physical violence such as hitting, pushing or spitting.
- Interfering with another's property by stealing, hiding, damaging or destroying it.
- Using offensive names, teasing or spreading rumours about others or their families.
- Using put-downs, belittling others' abilities and achievements.
- Writing offensive notes or graffiti about others.
- Making degrading comments about another's cultural, religious or social background.
- Hurtfully excluding others from a group.
- Sexual abuse, including inappropriate pictures, speech and / or touch.
- Ridiculing another's appearance.
- Forcing others to act against their will.

How are we affected by bullying?

If we are bullied -

- We may feel frightened, unsafe, embarrassed, angry or unfairly treated.
- Our work, sleep and ability to concentrate may suffer.
- Our relationships with our friends and family may deteriorate.
- We may feel confused and not know what to do about the problem.
- We may feel powerless to do anything about the problem.

What can we do to prevent bullying at Hunter Christian School?

As a school community, we will not allow cases of bullying to go unreported, but will speak up, even at risk to ourselves.

Students are required to:

- avoid being involved in any bullying situation;
- take preventative action to stop bullying, if this is appropriate;
- report any incident or suspected incident; and
- help break down the code of secrecy.

Staff are required to:

- be role models in word and action at all times;
- be observant for signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying;
- make efforts to remove occasions for bullying by pro-active management of students in the classroom and playground;
- arrive at class on time;
- take steps to help victims and remove sources of distress without placing the victim at further risk; and
- report suspected incidents to the Principal.
- Ensure appropriate support is available for the student bullied e.g. counselling

Parents are requested to:

- watch for signs of distress in their son / daughter e.g. unwillingness to attend school, a pattern of headaches, missing equipment, requests for extra money, damaged clothes or bruising;
- take an active interest in their son's / daughter's social life and acquaintances;
- advise your son / daughter to take the initiative and tell a staff member about a bullying incident;
- inform the school if bullying is suspected;
- keep a written record (who, what, when, where, why, how);
- discourage their son / daughter from retaliating;
- communicate to their son / daughter that parental involvement may be appropriate;
- be willing to attend interviews at school if their son / daughter is involved in any bullying incident; and
- inform the school of any cases of suspected bullying even if their own son / daughter is not involved.

What action will be taken if bullying occurs?

Hunter Christian School does not tolerate bullying in any form. The goal of any strategy will be to stop bullying once it has been reported. The relevant staff will choose strategies appropriate to the circumstance. These may include:

- Counselling - by selected staff or a qualified counsellor.
- Parent / Staff / Student interviews.
- Necessary contact and assistance with the Youth Liaison Officer *
- In-school discipline.
- Suspension.
- A student involved in repeated bullying risks expulsion.

WHEN STAFF, STUDENTS AND PARENTS WORK TOGETHER ON THIS PROBLEM, WE CREATE A SAFER AND MORE GODLY ENVIRONMENT AT HUNTER CHRISTIAN SCHOOL.

The procedure for dealing with bullying

For one-on-one bullying:

1. All incidents to be reported to the Principal who may delegate to other staff the role of mediation
2. Victim interviewed and asked give details to the staff involved.
3. Alleged bully is interviewed and asked give details. A mediated meeting between victim and bully in which a shared understanding by both students is the goal (See Ken Rigby, Bullying in Schools). At this meeting the mediator secures an assurance from the bully that the incident(s) will not recur. The peacemaker process is a critical part of this endeavour.
4. Follow up counselling as required including assistance from the Police Liaison Officer.

For bullying by a group:

1. Steps 1 – 4 as above are followed
2. The victim meets with each bully individually and follows the process as outlined in Step 3 above.

Grievance Handling

All discrimination or harassment grievances must be handled:

- confidentially
- impartially
- promptly
- according to clearly defined policy and procedures that everyone knows about.

Anyone handling a grievance should always keep the above rules in mind. The following steps should be followed.

1. Get the full information from the complainant about their grievance and how they want it resolved – LISTEN to the person making the complaint.
2. Decide whether you are the appropriate person to continue handling the grievance. If you decide you are not, immediately refer the complainant to the person/persons he or she has complained about and get the other side of the story.
3. Decide whether the complaint is valid or not (this may involve talking with others or witnesses).
4. Decide how the complaint should be resolved (again, this may involve talking with others; e.g. management committee).
5. Act on your decision, letting both parties know what is going to happen and why, telling them about other/external avenues of complaint if they are not happy with your decision.
6. Monitor the outcome.

7. Report the matters to your superior.
8. Pray about the matter throughout the procedure.

*CONTACT INFORMATION: Youth Liaison Officer (Police) Darren Fleming 49266525

What is Workplace Bullying?

As a guide, workplace bullying is behaviour that is usually repeated, that is inappropriate, unreasonable and possibly aggressive and that creates a risk of physical and or psychological harm.

What is 'unreasonable' behaviour?

Unreasonable behaviour refers to behaviour that a reasonable person, having regards to all the circumstances, would find offensive, humiliating, intimidating, degrading or threatening.

Examples of workplace bullying:

Workplace bullying can be overt or covert, inflicted by one person or groups and may include one or more types of behaviour. Some types of bullying behaviour may seem trivial taken on their own, but when they are part of a repeated pattern they can seriously undermine confidence, self-esteem and health.

Bullying behaviour can be obvious and aggressive, including:

- behaviour or language that frightens, humiliates, belittles or degrades
- loud verbal criticism
- encouragement to other workers to participate in bullying behaviour
- malicious rumours, gossip or innuendo

Workplace bullying can also be subtle, including:

- deliberate exclusion of a worker from normal workplace activities
- interference with personal property or work equipment
- intimidation by inappropriate personal comment, belittling opinions or unjustified criticism
- offensive jokes, whether by spoken word or email

Behaviour that treats some people less favourably, or is disempowering is also bullying and includes

- assigning meaningless tasks to a worker that are unrelated to their job
- setting tasks that are unreasonably above or below an employee's ability
- deliberately changing work arrangements, such as rosters and leave, to inconvenience a particular worker or workers
- setting timelines that are very difficult to achieve
- deliberately denying access to information, consultation or other resources
- unreasonably blocking promotion, training, development or other work opportunities
- excessive and unreasonable work scrutiny
- removing areas of responsibility without cause

What bullying is NOT!

It can be a fine line between workplace bullying and behaviour that can upset or offend people, but the following situations should not be confused with bullying.

- differences of opinion, including parents advocating for their children
- poor or bad management practices on their own

- constructive and courteous feedback, counselling or advice about work-related behaviour and performance
- reasonable managerial actions taken in a fair and equitable way

What is reasonable managerial action?

Legitimate management decisions or actions that are undertaken in a reasonable way and with respect and courtesy are not bullying; they include:

- taking action to transfer an employee
- allocating work to an employee and setting reasonable goals, standards and deadlines
- making a decision not to select an employee for promotion
- warning employees about unsatisfactory performance
- making a complaint about a manager's or other employee's conduct, if the complaint is made in a proper and reasonable way
- disciplinary actions that are handled constructively, not in a humiliating or threatening fashion
- business processes such as implementing organizational change or downsizing of business

Process

It is important all staff understand that:

- reporting bullying is an appropriate response
- victimization of staff, parents or students who report bullying will not be tolerated
- prompt, confidential and impartial action will be taken in response to reports of bullying as part of the school's current grievance procedures