



Bullying Policy

Policy Name: Bullying Policy
Id & version: BM:11
Purpose: Outline of the Colleges stance and management on bullying.
Implementers: Principal
Scope: All Staff and Students
Owner: Peter Stone
Current Review: 24/02/2021 Authorised by: Peter Stone

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Next Review: August 2022

Concurrent Policies: Behaviour Management Policy, Workplace Bullying Policy, Behaviour Management Policy Student Code of Conduct, Staff Code of Conduct, Duty of Care, Child Safe Framework

1. Introduction

While bullying is not a new phenomenon in schools, the attitude to it has changed substantially in recent years.

A majority of schools have now become "bully free zones" and as a consequence there is a significant amount of information available to students, parents and schools on the subject.

The majority of this document focuses on bullying by students, however it should be noted that when adults bully students this is a form of child abuse.

In addition, bullying in the workplace is an issue attracting national attention. Such bullying can occur between peers as well as between 'supervisors' and their subordinates. Bullying in the workplace is covered in a separate policy.

2. Duty of Care

'Duty of Care' is a legal term that states that a school, its teachers and the school authority have a duty to provide reasonable care to all students at all times that the pupil is in its care.

'Duty of Care' extends to ensuring that Hope Christian College provides a safe, non-violent environment for all students by addressing bullying.

3. Definition of Bullying

Bullying takes many forms, but can be best categorised under the following headings:

Emotional

- excluding peers from groups;
- spreading rumours;
- stalking;
- interference with, or damage to personal property;

Verbal

- name-calling;
- constant teasing;
- insults;
- racist comments;
- sexist comments.

Physical

- hitting, punching or kicking the victim;
- taking or damaging the victim's property.

4. Common characteristics of bullies

- They are often attention seekers;
- They bully because they think they are popular and have the support of others;
- They do not accept responsibility for their behaviour;
- They have a need to feel in control and dominate peers;
- They will continue to bully if the victim and observing peer group do not complain;
- They show no remorse for hurting another child;
- They have higher than average aggressive behaviour patterns; and
- Often have parents who bully them and support their child's aggressive behaviour.

5. Common characteristics of a victim

Most children are approached by a bully at school. It is often the child's response that will determine if they will be bullied again. Children who are highly vulnerable often become victims.

Such children:

- Often have poor social skills and lack confidence;
- Believe the bullying is their fault and if this is the case they are unlikely to seek help;
- Are desperate to fit in;

In extreme cases, children who are repeatedly victimised see suicide as the only escape. For the majority of victims, the emotional scars of bullying can last a lifetime.

Elements of the Policy

This bullying prevention policy for Hope Christian College re-enforces and reflects the purpose and practices of the wider School Behaviour Management Plan.

- Staff at Hope Christian College need to be mindful and alert for signs of bullying. They need to be approachable to the students allowing access to those who need to talk to an adult.
- On admission and during parent student enrolment interviews, it is made clear that bullying is not acceptable at Hope Christian College and offenders place themselves at risk of expulsion.
- If a student is guilty of bullying he/she will be directed to the principal, who will deal with the matter further. The principal will point out the severity of the consequences of bullying and will have the parents present during the meeting. If the student re offends. He/ she will be suspended, depending on the severity, could be expelled. A third offence will result in expulsion.
- Staff need to be vigilant and consistent with their monitoring of any incidents.
- A written incident report must be given to the Principal when reporting an incident.
- Teachers are to use curriculum opportunities and outside organisations, such as Constable Care and the Protective Behaviours Curriculum, to further educate the students about bullying.
- Any incident of bullying is to be dealt with immediately. The bully being separated from his/her peers and sent to the Principals office. If the Principal is off campus for any reason the Deputy Principal will deal with the initial steps and hand the case over when the Principal returns.

School Environment

- Hope Christian College has a safe, welcoming violence free environment promoting:
- Positive behaviour that acknowledges rewards and is modelled by all members of the school community.
- Firm discipline that is fair and non-violent.
- A sense of belonging and empowerment of all members of the school community. Everyone has the right to be happy at Hope Christian College. No one has the right to make anyone unhappy.

Curriculum

- Through the use of the New National Curriculum, teachers must provide opportunities for students to:
- Understand the nature of bullying;
- Understand personal safety issues;
- Develop interpersonal, communication and problem solving skills, such as negotiation, mediation, conflict resolution and assertiveness.
- Develop self-confidence and enhance self-esteem; and
- Acquire the ability to understand, respect and care for others.

Code of Conduct:

- All students on enrolment have to sign the Code of Conduct for Hope Christian College; this code can be found in our enrolment documents. The Code of conduct applies to all members of the school's community and is clearly communicated to students, community and members of staff. The Code of conduct outlines acceptable and unacceptable behaviours.

Response Plan:

Hope Christian College should detail its response to incidents of bullying and take account of the following:

- The nature of the incident;
- Harm caused to victim and school community;
- Personal factors of individual involved;
- Involvement of parents/ care-givers;
- In criminal cases, involvement of external agents such as police etc.
- Support for victims, witnesses and school community;
- Consequences for the perpetrator;

After a 'critical incident'

Hope Christian College will follow the strategies listed below to ensure that we quickly resume normal operations.

- Assist the victim;
- Re-integrate and support the ongoing education of the perpetrator and victims with referral to the Chaplain.
- Ensure the wellbeing of the witnesses to the incident;
- Address the underlying problems that have contributed to the incident.

Outcomes of the Bullying Policy

- The implementation of this bullying policy will enable Hope Christian College to make clear statements about our expectations relating to acceptable behaviour and consequences of unacceptable behaviour to all members of our community;
- Through this policy we make a clear statement that we will not tolerate, or support in any way, acts of bullying;
- Hope Christian College will be a safe, welcoming environment.
- Staff will have the necessary skills and confidence to educate students about bullying and its prevention;
- Staff and students will have the support to manage conflict without resorting to violence;
- Students will recognise acceptable behaviour and be aware of the consequences of unacceptable behaviour.
- Students will feel empowered and encouraged to report instances of bullying.

Key to a Successful Policy: Parents and Students

Schools are prime locations for bullying and unfortunately in many instances teachers, peers and parents are unaware that someone has been victimised. In addition to our school board and staff that is committed to a zero tolerance bullying policy, the students and parents play a vital role to its success.

Statistics show that if a child does admit to being a victim, parents are usually the first person a child will tell. Parents are also in the best position to be able to know that something is wrong even if their child does not volunteer the information. Parents, therefore, play a vital role in helping pinpoint bullying problems.

The student community is also vital to the success of our policy. The students need to be involved from the initial stages of developing and maintaining a NO Tolerance Policy to bullying.

- Involve the students in drawing up 'classroom' bullying policies
- The students need to understand that it is their duty to report incidents and that it is not the same as 'dobbing' someone in.
- A peer mediation programme is to be encouraged as a victim is then more likely to seek help.