

Nunawading Christian College

Bullying Prevention & Intervention Policy



Document Control

Revision Number	Implementation Date	Review Date	Description of Changes	Prepared By	Approved By
New Policy	January 2002	Dec 2005	Operational		School Council
1	February 2006	Feb 2009	Operational	D Cocks	School Council
2	February 2017	Jan 2018	Review period	Ben Thomas	School Council
3	January 2021	Jan 2023	Review	Ben Thomas	School Council



Rationale

Nunawading Christian College (Secondary) recognises its duty to students to provide a safe and positive learning environment where individual differences and diversity within the School are respected and accepted.

Bullying is not tolerated at Nunawading Christian College (Secondary). It is our policy that:

- Bullying be managed through a 'whole of school community' approach involving students, staff and parents/carers
- Bullying prevention strategies be implemented within the School on a continuous basis with a focus on teaching age-appropriate skills and strategies to empower staff, students and parents/carers to recognise bullying and respond appropriately
- Bullying response strategies be tailored to the circumstances of each incident
- Staff present as positive role models emphasising our no-bullying culture and
- Bullying prevention and intervention strategies are reviewed on an annual basis with reference to best practice.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is the repeated and intentional behaviour of causing fear, distress or harm towards another person that involves an imbalance of power. It can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and harassment. In any bullying incident there are likely to be three parties involved: the bully, the person being bullied, and bystanders.

Bullying can take many forms including:

- **Physical bullying**, which involves physical actions such as hitting, pushing or obstructing for the purpose of hurting or intimidating someone. Damaging, stealing or hiding personal belongings is also a form of physical bullying
- **Psychological bullying** is when words or actions are used to cause psychological harm. Examples of psychological bullying include name calling, teasing or making fun of someone because of their actions, appearance, physical characteristics or cultural background
- **Indirect bullying** is when deliberate acts of exclusion or spreading of untrue stories are used to hurt or intimidate someone
- **Cyber bullying** is the ongoing abuse of power to threaten or harm another person using digital technology. Cyber bullying can occur in chat rooms, on social networking sites, through emails or on mobile phones.



What Bullying is Not

There are many negative situations, which whilst being potentially distressing for students, are not bullying. These include:

- **Mutual Conflict Situations**, which arise where there is disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Mutual conflict situations need to be closely monitored as they may evolve into a bullying situation or
- **One Off Acts** (of aggression or meanness) including single incidents of loss of temper, shouting or swearing do not normally constitute bullying.

Signs of Bullying

Major behaviour changes in a student may be indicative of the effects of bullying. Such behavioural changes may include:

- Crying at night and having nightmares
- Refusing to talk when asked, "What's wrong?"
- Having unexplained bruises, cuts or scratches
- An unwillingness or refusal to go to school
- Feeling ill in the mornings
- A decline in quality of school work
- Becoming withdrawn and lacking confidence
- Beginning to bully siblings, and
- Acting unreasonably.

Parents/carers are encouraged to recognise signs of bullying and notify the School through a trusted staff member immediately (such as a class teacher, Mentor, School Counsellor, Head of Learning Area), if they suspect their child is a victim of bullying.

Bullying Prevention Strategies

Nunawading Christian College (Secondary) recognises that the implementation of whole school prevention strategies is the most effective way of eliminating, or at least minimising incidents of bullying within our community. The following initiatives form part of our overall bullying prevention strategy and our strategy to create a 'no bullying' culture within the School:

- A structured curriculum and peer group support system, that provides age-appropriate information and skills relating to bullying (**including cyberbullying**) and bullying prevention, to students over the course of the academic year



- Education, training and professional development of staff in bullying prevention and response strategies
- Regular provision of information to parents/carers, to raise awareness of bullying **(including cyberbullying)** as a school community issue to equip them to recognise signs of bullying, as well as to provide them with clear paths for raising any concerns they may have relating to bullying
- Promotion of a supportive environment that encourages the development of positive relationships and communication between staff, students and parents/ carers
- Promotion of responsible bystander behaviour amongst students, staff and parents/carers
- Reporting of incidents of alleged bullying by students, bystanders, parents/carers and staff is encouraged, and made easy through the establishment of multiple reporting channels (as specified below)
- Regular risk assessments of bullying within the School are undertaken by surveying students to identify bullying issues that may ordinarily go unnoticed by staff
- Records of reported bullying incidents are maintained on SEQTA and analysed, in order to identify persistent bullies and/or victims and to implement targeted prevention strategies where appropriate
- Anti-bullying posters are displayed strategically within the School.

Reporting Bullying

Students and their parents/carers are sometimes reluctant to pursue bullying incidents; for fear that it will only make matters worse. A key part of the Nunawading Christian College (Secondary) bullying prevention and intervention strategy is to encourage reporting of bullying incidents as well as providing assurance to students who experience bullying (and parents/carers) that:

- Bullying is not tolerated within the School
- Their concerns will be taken seriously and
- The School has a clear strategy for dealing with bullying issues.

Bullying incidents can be advised to the School verbally (or in writing) through any of the following avenues:

- Informing a trusted Class Teacher
- Informing the School Welfare Officer or Chaplain
- Informing the Year Level Coordinator, Behaviour Management Coordinator or
- informing the Head of Campus or the Principal.



Responding to Bullying

Bullying behaviours vary enormously in their extent and intent and, as a consequence, each incident needs to be dealt with on its facts.

In all circumstances the School:

- Takes bullying incidents seriously
- Provides assurance to the victim that they are not at fault and their confidentiality will be respected
- Takes time to properly investigate the facts including discussing the incident with the victim, the bully and any bystanders
- Takes time to understand any concerns of individuals involved
- Maintains records of reported bullying incidents and will escalate its response when dealing with persistent bullies and/or severe incidents.

The following approaches may be used to intervene in group or relational bullying situations. They are only appropriate during the initial stages. They are not appropriate for persistent or severe bullying incidents.

- Notification of/ consultation with parents/carers
- Offering counselling to persistent bullies/victims
- Implementing effective follow up strategies and
- Disciplinary action at the Principal's discretion including suspension and expulsion of persistent bullies, or in cases of severe incidents.

NCC takes issues of cyberbullying seriously.

- Students or parents are to report cyberbullying or upsetting hostile cyberspace behaviour, including deliberate exclusion, to any teacher, the Behaviour Management Coordinator or member of the school Child Safety Team.
- In case of serious threat or immediate danger, the Police will be involved
- The school will work with students and parents to prevent further cyber bullying. This may be done in a variety of ways: education around issues of cyberbullying, strategies given to prevent and handle this form of bullying, support given in form of counselling, mediation between students, etc.
- Parents/guardians will be informed and involved in the supportive process.

Advice to students:

- Inform a person you trust about cyberbullying immediately.



- Do not respond to further messages or posts from the bully and, where possible, block their mobile phone number or email address.
- If available, provide evidence of any cyberbullying (including screen shots)
- Seek support from an appropriate contact such as the School Welfare Officer who may refer to professional services.
- Never accept friends you do not know on social media.

School response:

- Where appropriate, mediate between victim and bully to reach an agreeable resolution
- Provide support and referral for counselling for victim AND bully
- Appropriate consequences for bullying include behavioural contracts, interview with parents, detention, suspension and in extreme cases, expulsion.
- Contact Police immediately in cases of possible serious threats to life or physical well-being.

Staff Responsibilities & Signage

All workers are responsible to:

- Model appropriate behaviour at all times;
- Deal with all reported and observed incidents of bullying in accordance with this policy
- Ensure that any incident of bullying that they observe or is reported to them, is recorded appropriately
- Be vigilant in monitoring students who have been identified as either persistent bullies or victims and
- Acknowledge the right of parents/carers to speak with a staff member of their choice if they believe their child is being bullied.

Anti-bullying posters may be posted in strategic locations in the School to promote appropriate behaviour and encourage students to respect individual differences and diversity.

Breach of Policy by Staff

Where a staff member breaches this policy Nunawading Christian College will take disciplinary action.



Sources

The Peninsula School Bullying Prevention & Intervention Policy as cited at
<http://www.tps.vic.edu.au/2016/PDF/Bullying-Prevention-and-Intervention-policy.pdf>

Department of Education and Training Bullying Prevention Policy guide as cited at:
www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/prinprevent.aspx