

Positive Relationships Policy:
Effective ways of managing bullying behaviour

POLICY STATEMENT

Bayview College is committed to ensuring that all staff, students and members of the School community are treated with dignity, courtesy and respect. This policy recognises that at times human behaviour is such that others are adversely affected. It seeks to develop clear procedures for dealing with these incidences and supporting the people involved.

BACKGROUND

Rationale

At Bayview College positive relationships are the foundation for the healthy functioning of our community. We are committed to both the prevention of bullying behaviour in our School, and timely intervention when reports of concerning behaviour are received.

Definitions

What is bullying?

Bullying is when an individual or a group of people with **more perceived power** than you **repeatedly** and **intentionally** use negative words and/or actions against you, which causes you distress and **risks your wellbeing**.

Bullying can generally be divided into five broad categories:

- **Physical bullying** e.g. hitting, poking, tripping, pushing or damaging someone's belongings.
- **Verbal bullying** e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks and verbal abuse.
- **Social (covert) bullying** e.g. lying, spreading rumours, playing a nasty joke, mimicking and deliberately excluding someone.
- **Psychological bullying** e.g. threatening, manipulation and stalking.
- **Cyberbullying** - using technology (e.g. email, mobile phones, chat rooms, and social networking sites) to bully verbally, socially or psychologically.

Bullying is not:

Mutual arguments and disagreements.

- Single episodes of social rejection or dislike.
- Single episode acts of nastiness or spite.
- Random acts of aggression or intimidation.

Policy Aims

The aims of the Bayview College Positive Relationships Policy include:

- Providing a safe, secure learning environment for our students.
- Countering views that bullying is an inevitable part of School life.
- Providing a safe and secure social environment for students within the School context (this includes: travelling to and from School; co-curricular activities; excursions and camps; and other School functions).
- Creating a supportive climate which encourages the breakdown of the code of secrecy that often protects the perpetrators.
- Providing appropriate counselling services for students involved in, or affected by, such behaviour.
- Providing a physical environment which engenders appropriate behavioural patterns.
- Moving beyond a crisis-management approach to a proactive environment that encourages resilient behaviour.

PROCEDURES

Primary prevention – Curriculum and Professional Learning

Bayview College endeavours to implement and maintain curriculum and pastoral care programs as appropriate for the differing needs of each age group. These developmentally appropriate pastoral care curriculum programs aim to develop resilience, social skills, conflict resolution and problem solving, reduce risk taking behaviours and promote help-seeking skills within each young woman. They are underpinned by the core School values of *Integrity, Compassion, Respect and Responsibility*. These programs all aim to raise awareness of the negative effects of poor peer relationships and bullying and examine in detail the School's relevant Policies and Procedures. Each of these programs draws on current best practice.

In addition, the School is committed to raising awareness of the *Positive Relationships Policy: Effective ways of managing bullying behaviour*, through promotional material, workshops and seminars for staff, parents and students.

Reporting

The School will deal with complaints with discretion. In some cases, the staff member who receives the report of bullying may be able to help resolve the situation; however, if the complainant is at risk of serious harm the staff member has a duty of care to act on the information.

Reports of harassment and bullying will be investigated in a timely manner and be fully documented, as the School has a legal obligation to ensure that all reasonable precautions are taken to prevent harassment and discrimination occurring in the School community and to act on any reports of such behaviour. The School will work with discretion to ensure that the complainant and others involved in the reporting and investigation processes do not suffer further disadvantage, retaliation, threats or victimisation.

Students who feel that they are being bullied or are concerned by the behaviour of other students are encouraged to take one or more of the following approaches to reporting their concerns:

- Speak directly to the person(s) causing the offence and inform them that it is unwelcome and that it should cease.
- Talk to a friend or family member, who is understanding, for support or advice.
- Inform a trusted staff member e.g. Care group Teacher, Year Level Co-ordinator, relevant Director of Student Wellbeing, or Chaplain.

Investigation

The following points outline the process used by the School to investigate the complainant's grievance:

- Treat all reports of harassment and bullying seriously, promptly and discreetly.
- Listen and document the concerns of the complainant and respond in a caring way to the concerns described.
- Investigate the incident using the agreed guidelines. This investigation will be carried out by the Year Level Co-ordinator or Deputy Principal.
- The investigation process may require other students/staff members to be interviewed.
- During the investigation, the complainant is encouraged to seek support from the School Counsellor.

Response

The following points outline the process used by the School to respond to the complainant's grievance:

- Behaviours that are determined to be outside of the Student Code of Conduct, will be responded to using the consequence guidelines outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.
- If appropriate, students will be encouraged to participate in Method of Shared Concern Conferences led by the YLC or Deputy. The Director Student Wellbeing may or may not be involved, depending on the circumstances, and whilst the details of the discussion remain confidential to those in the meeting, any additional details unearthed regarding behaviours outside the Student Code of Conduct will be passed on to the relevant staff member to address.
- All agreements made regarding ongoing behaviours will be documented and shared with relevant staff members and each student's parents. The behaviour and wellbeing of all students involved will be monitored on an ongoing basis by the YLC.
- Ongoing support and counselling will be offered to both the complainant and respondent as required.
- If behaviours reoccur, as per the Student Code of Conduct, the matter will be escalated to the next level, which may involve the Deputy Principal and/or the Principal.

INVESTIGATION GUIDELINES AND PROCESS

The teaching staff members of the Wellbeing Team charged with leading an investigation into bullying behaviour are required to complete and document thoroughly each of the following steps:

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- Step 1:** Interview complainant
Sample questions include:
1. How long has this type of behaviour been occurring?
 2. Where did it occur (date, time place?)
 3. Who was involved and what specifically did they do?
 4. Who may have witnessed this incident?
 5. Other information?
- Step 2:** Interview witnesses
- Step 3:** Interview respondent
- Step 4:** Interview respondent's witnesses
- Step 5:** Form an opinion of what occurred
- Step 6:** Respond according to the guidelines set out in the Student Code of Conduct (this may include Method of Shared Concern Conferences and/or the implementation of Disciplinary Consequences)
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Those staff members leading the investigation should consult with the Deputy Principal/Principal if appropriate and must be directly involved in Steps 5 and 6.

ASSOCIATED POLICIES

- Student Welfare Policy
- Student Code of Conduct
- Communications and Technology Policy