

# **BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY**

Bullying is the abuse of power with the intention of causing distress to the other person(s), or for personal gain or gratification. Behaviours may include repeated behaviour that can be covert and subtle, and social, psychological, verbal, physical and or sexual in nature.

Toowoomba North State School will not tolerate bullying in any form. All members of our school community are committed to ensuring a safe and caring environment, which promotes personal growth and positive self-esteem for all. We take a whole-school approach using proactive strategies to discourage the occurrence of bullying and provide options for complaint management, while empowering students to be active in their pursuit of fairness for themselves and others.

Bullying / harassment is an act of aggression causing embarrassment, pain or discomfort to another:

It can take a number of forms:

- Physical, verbal, gestural, extortion or exclusion.
- It is an abuse of power
- It can be planned and organised or it may be unintentional
- Individuals or groups may be involved
- 'Cyber' bullying, where devices such as computers and phones are used to distress or harass others

## **SOME EXAMPLES: BULLYING / HARRASSMENT**

- Any form of physical violence
- Interfering with another's property
- Using offensive names, teasing or spreading rumours
- Using put-downs, belittling others achievements
- Writing offensive notes or graffiti about others
- Making degrading comments about another's culture, religious, racial or social background
- Excluding others from a group
- Making suggestive comments or ridiculing another's appearance
- Intimidating others
- Sex-based harassment, which may be insulting, offensive, demeaning, humiliating or intimidating. It can include belittling comments, ridicule, graffiti, name-calling, put-down jokes, physical violence, and exclusion from groups or activities.

## **TARGETS MAY**

- Feel frightened, unsafe, embarrassed, angry or unfairly treated
- Work, sleep and ability to concentrate may suffer
- Relationships with family and friends may deteriorate

- Feel confused and not know what to do about the problem

### **PREVENTATIVE ACTIONS**

At Toowoomba North State School our approach to bullying and harassment is preventative through providing a positive social context for student behaviour by giving consistent messages valuing diversity, supporting constructive relationships, discouraging violence and aggression and challenging the abuse of power.

The following list of staff and programs are some of the ways Toowoomba North State School endeavours to prevent bullying occurring:

- Class teachers
- Curriculum program
- Religious Instruction
- Guidance Officer
- Professional development on issues relating to bullying
- Acknowledgment of appropriate behaviour through awards / privileges for Gold / Silver Behaviour Level students
- Cooperative activities

### **STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Be role models in word and action at all times.
- Teach and reinforce skills, strategies and techniques to promote a safe and tolerant school environment.
- Be observant of signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying.
- Make efforts to remove occasions for bullying by actively patrolling during supervision duty.
- Arrive at class on time and move promptly between lessons.
- Help targets, and remove sources of distress without placing the target at further risk.
- Report suspected incidents to the appropriate staff member such as Class Teacher / Principal.
- Encourage students to speak out; take all reports seriously.
- Don't ignore an incident.
- Be supportive to the target but don't encourage dependency.
- Where appropriate, seek those involved to write an account of the incident.
- Organise a meeting between the target and the bully where appropriate.
- Refer all incidents for recording on the Conduct Database.
- Model supportive classroom management practices.
- Actively teach inclusivity, diversity, empowerment and justice.

### **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Refuse to be involved in any bullying situation.
- Take appropriate responsive action. E.g. "Stop that, I don't like it."
- Report ANY incidents or signs of distress to appropriate personnel.

- Let your parents / caregivers know.
- Acknowledge that any form of bullying is unacceptable.

#### **PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Do not encourage your child to retaliate.
- Watch for signs of distress in your child.
- Take an active interest in your child's social life and acquaintances.
- Advise your child to tell a staff member about any incident.
- Inform the school if you suspect bullying.
- Keep a written record (who, what, when, where, why, how)
- Consult with administration and / or teaching staff regarding concerns.
- Should not approach other people's children in the school grounds regarding behaviour incidents.
- Be willing to attend interviews at the school if your child is involved in any bullying incident.
- Be willing to inform the school of any cases of suspected bullying even if your own child is not directly affected

#### **PARENT REPORTING PROCEDURE**

- Parents / caregivers of primary school students should in the first instance inform the classroom teacher about any incident.
- If the situation is not resolved to your satisfaction the Principal should be informed.
- The Principal of the school will become involved if circumstances continue to be unresolved or if you believe the incident is ongoing or serious.

#### **STUDENT REPORTING PROCEDURE**

Students in the primary school should, in the first instance, report incidents of bullying to the teacher on playground duty or their classroom teacher. Unresolved or serious incidents should then be referred to the Principal.

#### **ROLE OF PRINCIPAL**

- Deal with any bullying which is serious, ongoing or unresolved.
- Maintain Conduct Database records.
- Counsel students where appropriate.
- Refer students to appropriate person for counselling.
- Contact parents / caregivers of both bully and target.
- Provide mediation for all parties.
- Report incidence to District Office / other agencies as appropriate.