

# FSAC Ltd

## Board Policy No 5. Student Welfare

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# Student Anti Bullying Procedure No. 5.3

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The Springfield Anglican College  
2016

<b>Document Approval and Version Control</b>	
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Contact Officers: Position: Manager Human Resources Name: Craig Middleton	Next Review: 31.08.2017

**1. POLICY STATEMENT**

[Board Policy No. 5 – Student Welfare](#)

**2. PROCEDURE STATEMENT**

The following procedure outlines the process to be followed when dealing with student bullying. Parents, staff and students need to understand the difference between bullying and children’s normal behaviour which occurs as part of social skill development.

**Student Protection**

**Special Note:** This Policy should be read in concert with Policy No. 2 Student Protection in Anglican Schools policy and procedure. These Student Protection policy and procedures must be kept at the forefront when considering and implementing the contents of this policy and associated procedures. In the even that reasonable suspicions that harm, and/or sexual abuse has occurred or is likely to occur, the Student Protection Policy and Procedures must be followed.

**2.1. Scope**

Students and parents are encouraged to come forward with reports of bullying in the knowledge that the Colleges will take appropriate action to address occurrence of any unacceptable behaviour.

This procedure applies to all members of the Board, College Councils, staff and volunteers associated with the organisation.

**2.2. PRINCIPLES:**

- Bullying interferes with learning and will not be tolerated. *It is not an acceptable part of growing up;*
- Every student has the right to enjoy learning and leisure free from intimidation;
- Students should support each other by reporting all instances of bullying. Saying nothing implicates a bystander as condoning or being complicit in the bullying;
- Bullying is too important not to report;
- Reports of bullying will be taken seriously and appropriate action will be taken;
- Each member of the College communities shares the collective responsibility to ensure every member feels safe, supported and valued at all times; and
- Bullying in any form, is never acceptable.

**2.3. Affiliated Authorities**

- [Staff Code of Conduct](#)
- *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2001*
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*
- *Child Protection Act 1999*
- *Policy No. 2 Student Protection in Anglican Schools Policy and Procedure*
- Staff Handbook

[www.antibullying.net](http://www.antibullying.net)  
[www.michaelcarr-gregg.com.au/](http://www.michaelcarr-gregg.com.au/)  
[www.bullyingnoway.com.au/](http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au/)

### 3. SPECIFIC DEFINITIONS

Bullying is any **persistent** behaviour which harms other people who do not have the skills or resources to counter this behaviour. Bullying is:

- **Persistent physical aggression** – hitting, spitting, throwing stones, use of weapons; and/or;
- **Persistent verbal aggression** – name calling, rumour spreading, taunting, teasing; and/or
- **Persistent gesture aggression** – threatening and obscene gestures; and/or
- **Persistent extortion aggression** – stand over tactics and threats and may involve demands for money or property; and/or
- **Persistent exclusion aggression** – isolating others from the group.

Bullying occurs where there is an **imbalance in power between people**. This imbalance is sometimes very obvious, as when a person bullies a much smaller, weaker person, or when a group combines to terrorise an individual. But often it is much less obvious, as when the difference in power is psychological.

### 4. SIGNS OF BULLYING

Teachers, parents or students who observe a radical change in a student's behaviour should discuss this with him/her and possibly the Head of Primary or Dean of Students (Secondary Campus); as such changes may be symptomatic of bullying. Behaviours that might be observed are:

- 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;
- Crying at night, having nightmares;
- Asking for money or starting to steal (to pay the bully);
- Refusing to talk about what's wrong;
- Having unexplained bruises, cuts, scratches;
- Beginning to bully other children or siblings;
- Becoming aggressive and unreasonable.

### 5. WHAT BULLYING IS NOT

There are many negative behaviours which, although distressing to those involved, are not classified as bullying. These behaviours may be part of a child's normal social skill development. Young children have a low tolerance for difference and diversity until their social skills are fully developed.

Instances of this type of behaviour may often require teacher intervention and management. The following situations are often confused with bullying:

**Mutual conflict:** In mutual conflict situations, there is an argument or disagreement between students, but not an imbalance of power. Mutual conflict may evolve into a bullying situation at some

point if it is not resolved; for example, when one person becomes targeted repeatedly for 'retaliation' in a one-sided way.

**Social rejection or dislike:** Unless the social rejection is directed towards someone specific and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others, it is not bullying.

**Single-episode acts of nastiness or meanness, or random acts of aggression or intimidation:** Single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If a student is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion, this does not constitute being bullied. This does not, however, lessen the seriousness of the incident or the subsequent consequences.

## 6. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Any victim of bullying is urged to feel empowered to seek help and, by collaboration with staff and others, confront the influence of any bully.

Additionally, students who bully have poor social skills and need proactive assistance in developing appropriate interpersonal skills and will be provided with an opportunity to do so.

The Colleges' bullying procedure is designed to support all parties. Teachers, parents, or students who are aware of bullying are urged to initiate action through the Colleges pastoral care system by contacting the relevant staff member.

**Please note** - due to the various and at times extenuating circumstances that are part of any behavioural incident, the following are to be read as guidelines only.

### 6.1. Response to Bullying

Bullying is viewed as a breach of the school's behaviour code. Any reports of bullying will be investigated and appropriate action will be taken. The response to bullying will provide:

- Guidance and other support for the victim
- Appropriate and consistent sanctions and support for the bully.
- Staff are expected to report suspected incidents of bullying of both the victim and the bully to the Head of Primary or the Dean of Students (Secondary Campus) in the first instance.

The Colleges seek to promote cultures in which the students are encouraged to:

- Take some positive action to stop the bullying if they observe an incident
- Report the bullying incident to a teacher as soon as possible
- Make it clear to their peers that bullying is not accepted.

Teachers will take a calm, unemotional, problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.

In any incident of bullying the teacher will speak separately to the students involved, in an attempt to get both sides of the story. All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and due regard to the

rights of all the students concerned. Students who are not directly involved may also provide useful information. The following general practices will be followed:

When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, when who and why, in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with the conflict in a non-exaggerated manner;

- Teachers who are investigating cases of bullying behaviour will keep a written record of their discussions with those involved;
- All initial cases of bullying will be dealt with by the respective classroom teacher, who will keep the Head of Primary or Dean of Students (Secondary Campus) informed. Written notes will be kept by the investigating teacher to assist further intervention, should it be required;
- Serious cases of bullying will be reported immediately to the Head of College in writing;
- Incidents of one-off aggression will be dealt with according to the College's Behaviour Management Policy;
- Interviews will be conducted to ascertain the specific nature of the bullying. Decisions will be made as to the level of severity of the incident and where the parents (of both parties) need to be informed. The interview will also focus on appropriate strategies to assist both the victim and the bully;
- The initial interview will include a clear statement on the consequences if the bullying continues, or if there are any reprisals as a result of reporting the incident;
- If the student continues to engage in bullying behaviour, parents will be contacted and an interview arranged with the Head of Primary or Dean of Students (Secondary Campus) and the relevant parties;
- The victim of bullying may need further support to develop strategies to overcome the situation. The classroom teacher will seek to involve parents in the development of an action plan to help the child if necessary. Should counselling be required, this will be negotiated with the Head of Primary or Dean of Students (Secondary Campus).

Any further recurrence of the bullying may result in an issue of warning re: suspension and could lead to the implementation of suspension procedures in accordance with College protocols. The Head of College has the right to cancel student enrolment if deemed appropriate action. This is a major sanction that is not undertaken lightly and is a "last resort" to ensure the safety of children in the Colleges' care.

## 6.2. Procedure

The following steps should be followed when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying:

### Step 1

If possible, information should be gathered about the allegation by the staff member who has been made aware of the concerns. The allegation may be obtained from either students, parents or other members of the College community. The information includes the names and grades of the students involved and the circumstances in which the alleged bullying has taken place. Evidence should be collected if available, e.g. notes, emails or text messages. This step should be done carefully as the child may not wish to open up with such information.

### Step 2

Following the investigation, the teacher will either work with the students involved to assist in resolution of the identified issues OR if after investigation it is considered an incident requiring further intervention, immediately inform the Head of Primary or Dean of Students (Secondary Campus) of the findings. If required, the Head of College will be notified. Written records and/or evidence of the alleged incident will be required.

### Step 3

In the majority of incidences where bullying behaviour has been identified, parents or guardians will be notified and informed of the information obtained. The staff member will, outline the considered outcome or in consultation with the parent/guardian and /or student develop a plan of action to support the students involved. The relationship between the students will be monitored for a time until the teacher and/or Head of Primary or Dean of Students (Secondary Campus) are satisfied that the issue is resolved.

### Step 4

If the bullying behaviour continues, Step 3 will be followed and consideration will be taken into further action if required. (Eg. Head of College informed, counselling support, behavioural support plan, suspension or cancellation of enrolment).

Where the victim has suffered trauma as a result of the bullying, the College will consult parents about offering support and counselling to the student.

## 6.3. Outcome

Where an incident of bullying has been reported and investigated, possible outcomes may include:

- the student suffering the bullying is protected
- the bully is made aware of how his or her behaviour is affecting the victim.
- the bully's behaviour is halted and steps are taken to reform the behaviour
- the bully apologises to the victim (a written apology may be appropriate)

- where relevant, the parents of the bully are asked to monitor the bully's use of the internet, emails and text messaging
- where appropriate and justified, the bully's enrolment is suspended or cancelled.

#### 6.4. **Bullying by Outsiders**

Bullying of a student by non-College persons outside the College grounds should be reported to the Police. A report should be made also to the Head of College or the Head of Primary, whichever is relevant, so that appropriate support can be offered to the student at the College.

The Colleges cannot be responsible for acts of bullying that occur outside the College, this is the domain of the parents. This includes physical as well as electronic forms of bullying. However, the College recognises that any bullying can affect the academic progress and the emotional wellbeing of a student.

If a student is subject to bullying outside the College, then they are encouraged to inform the College or request that their parents inform the College. The College will not take responsibility for those acts of bullying in terms of discipline but will note them, and if warranted, pass the information on to the applicable parents. It is the family's responsibility to discipline children out of College endorsed activities.

If the College becomes aware of bullying incidents that are occurring outside the College and they are having an effect on the wellbeing of the student, the College will inform the student's parents and offer advice.

#### 6.5. **Cyber Bullying**

The incidence of electronic bullying is ever increasing as students have greater access to mobile phones and the internet. This subtle form of bullying can be more vicious as it can be done in a cowardly manner without the victim knowing who sent them a message via a text message or using an internet program such as MSN.

Should an incident of bullying involving an electronic medium occur at College or outside of the College involving College students then the College will deal with the issue by following the anti-bullying procedure.

#### 6.6. **The Role of Parents**

If a parent believes their child is involved in bullying, either as a victim or as an aggressor, it is appropriate to communicate this information to the school by contacting the classroom teacher or relevant pastoral care staff member (Head of Primary or Dean of Students) as soon as possible.

##### **Advice for parents:**

If you suspect that your child is involved in bullying at school, either as a victim or as an aggressor, encourage them to talk to you about it.

- Never dismiss the matter by saying it is the child's responsibility to deal with it, either by standing up to the bully or ignoring it.

## **7. PROCEDURE ADMINISTRATION**

- Don't be too over-protective either. Your child should be encouraged to come to school after the school is made aware of the situation.
- Listen carefully and sympathetically. Try to get the relevant facts without interrogation.
- Encourage your child to tell someone at school about it.
- Describe accurately what has been happening to your child to your contact at the school.
- Be prepared to work with the school to resolve the issue/s.

In accordance with procedure development and review protocol this procedure will be recorded as an authorised procedure approved by the Executive Leadership Team and the Risk Management Working Group, at its meeting of the date shown on the front of this procedure document.

The procedure will be reviewed twelve months from the date of the approval shown herein.

Notwithstanding the scheduled review, should any circumstance change materially before the 12-month review period, the procedure will be immediately reviewed in order to maintain appropriate accuracy, relevance and authority.