



The Springfield Anglican College

Student Anti-Bullying Procedure

Document Approval and Version Control

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1 Overarching policy

Board Policy No. 5 – Student Welfare Management Policy

2 Policy

The Springfield Anglican College Student Anti-Bullying Policy applies to this procedure.

3 Procedure statement

This procedure outlines the process to be followed in situations involving student bullying.

4 Special note

This procedure should be read together with the Protecting Children and Young People in Anglican Education Policy, Guidelines and Procedures which deal with matters of harm, sexual abuse or inappropriate behaviour and must be kept at the forefront when considering and implementing the contents of this procedure. In the event that reasonable suspicions exist that harm, and/or sexual abuse has occurred or is likely to occur, the Protecting Children and Young People in Anglican Education Policy, Guidelines and Procedures must be followed.

5 Scope

This procedure applies to all staff and students.

6 Bullying

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 Bullying can take many forms including:
 - (a) **Physical bullying** – which involves physical actions such as hitting, pushing, spitting, throwing items, use of weapons, obstructing or being used to hurt or intimidate someone. Damaging, stealing or hiding personal belongings is also a form of physical bullying.
 - (b) **Psychological bullying** – which is when words or actions are used to cause psychological harm. Examples of psychological bullying include using threatening and obscene gestures, standover tactics and threats (which may involve demands for money or property), name calling, taunting, teasing or making fun of someone because of their actions, appearance, physical characteristics or cultural background.

- (c) **Indirect bullying** – which is when deliberate acts of exclusion or spreading of untrue rumours or stories are used to hurt or intimidate someone.
- (d) **Cyber bullying** - which is the ongoing abuse of power to threaten or harm another person using technology. Cyber bullying can occur in chat rooms, on social networking sites, through emails or on mobile phones.

7 What is not bullying

7.1 There are many negative behaviours which, although distressing to those involved, are not classified as bullying. These behaviours often form 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. Sometimes these behaviours require teacher intervention and management.

7.2 Behaviour that is not classified as bullying includes:

- (a) **Mutual conflict situations:** which arise where there is disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. These situations need to be closely monitored as they may evolve into a bullying situation e.g. where one person becomes targeted repeatedly for 'retaliation' in a one-sided way.
- (b) **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.
- (c) **One-off acts:** of aggression, meanness or intimidation including single acts of loss of temper, shouting or swearing.

8 Tell-tale signs of bullying

Major behavioural changes in a student may be indicative of bullying and include:

- (a) crying at night and having nightmares;
- (b) refusing to talk when asked 'What's wrong';
- (c) having unexplained bruises, cuts or scratches;
- (d) an unwillingness or refusal to go to school;
- (e) feeling ill in the mornings;
- (f) a decline in the quality of school work;
- (g) becoming withdrawn and lacking confidence;
- (h) beginning to bully siblings or other children;

- (i) acting unreasonably;
- (k) becoming aggressive and unreasonable; and
- (l) asking for money or stealing money (to pay the bully).

9 Dealing with suspected bullying

If a parent/guardian suspects that their child is involved in bullying at the College, either as a victim or an aggressor they should:

- (a) encourage their child to talk to them about it;
- (b) avoid dismissing the matter by saying it is the child's responsibility to deal with it, either by standing up to the bully or ignoring it;
- (c) avoid being too over protective – the child should be encouraged to attend the College after the College has been notified of the situation;
- (d) listen carefully and sympathetically – try to get the relevant facts without interrogation;
- (e) encourage their child to tell someone at the College about it;
- (f) accurately report what has been happening to the College; and
- (g) be prepared to work with the College to resolve the issue.

10 Reporting bullying

Students and their parents/guardians are sometimes reluctant to report bullying incidents, for fear that it will only make matters worse. A key part of the College's bullying prevention and intervention strategy is to encourage reporting of bullying incidents. If a parent/guardian believes that their child is involved in bullying, either as a victim or as an aggressor, they should immediately notify the College by contacting the Head of Clan, Student Care Leadership Team member or Head of Primary or Head of Secondary.

11 College approach to bullying

11.1 Bullying behaviours vary enormously in their extent and intent and each incident needs to be dealt with on its own facts.

11.2 In responding to allegations of bullying the College:

11.2.1 takes all allegations of bullying seriously;

- 11.2.2 assures victims of bullying that they are not at fault and their confidentiality will be respected;
 - 11.2.3 takes the necessary time to properly investigate the facts, including discussing the incident with the victim, the alleged bully and any bystanders;
 - 11.2.4 takes the necessary time to understand any concerns of individuals involved;
 - 11.2.5 maintains records of reported bullying incidents; and
 - 11.2.6 escalates its response when dealing with persistent bullies and/or severe incidents.
- 11.3** Actions taken when responding to bullying may include:
- 11.3.1 offering counselling and other appropriate support to victims and/or alleged bullies;
 - 11.3.2 notifying and consulting with parents/guardians;
 - 11.3.3 appropriate disciplinary action at the Principal's discretion, including formal warning, suspension and enrolment cancellation for persistent bullies, or in cases of severe incidents.

12 Guidelines for dealing with bullying allegations

- 12.1** Bullying is a breach of the College's behaviour code.
- 12.2** Incidents of one-off aggression will be dealt with under the College's Behaviour Management Policy.
- 12.3** All incidents of bullying or suspected bullying (including reports received through Stymie) must be reported to the Head of the relevant campus, who is responsible for appointing a College staff member to investigate. Serious incidents of bullying must also be reported to the Principal.
- 12.4** The investigating College staff member (**ICSM**) is expected to take a calm, unemotional, problem solving approach throughout the investigation and will interview all parties involved, including any bystanders to ascertain the full nature and extent of the alleged bullying.
- 12.5** As part of the initial interview, the ICSM must:
 - (a) focus on strategies to assist both the victim and the bully;
 - (b) consider, based on the severity of the incident, whether parents (of the victim, bully or both) should be informed;
 - (c) consider whether the victim of the bullying requires counselling or other support to develop strategies to overcome the situation; and

(d) clearly articulate to the bully the consequences of ongoing bullying or reprisals for reporting the bullying behaviour (e.g. possible suspension or cancellation of enrolment);

12.6 The ICSM must keep written records of all interviews conducted and investigations carried out.

12.7 At the conclusion of the investigation, the ICSM must report their findings to the relevant Head of Campus who, in consultation with the Principal, is responsible for deciding upon the appropriate action to take in respect of the bullying incident.

12.8 Appropriate outcomes following an investigation include:

- (a) protection of the victim suffering the bullying;
- (b) stopping the bullying behaviour;
- (c) reforming the bully from continuing to engage in bullying behaviour;
- (d) the bully being made aware of how his/her behaviour is affecting the victim;
- (e) the bully apologising to the victim (a written apology may be appropriate);
- (f) where relevant, parental monitoring of the bully's use of the internet, emails and text messaging; and
- (g) appropriate sanctions for the bully.

13 Cyber bullying

The College has developed a Response Flowchart to Manage an Allegation of Cyberbullying (refer to appendix 1) that outlines how the College responds to incidents and reports of cyberbullying.

14 External bullying

14.1 The College is not responsible for bullying (including physical or electronic bullying) that occurs outside the College. Bullying occurring outside the College should be reported to the Police.

14.2 As bullying occurring outside the College can affect the academic progress and emotional wellbeing of a student, a report of any such bullying should be made to the Principal, so that the College can offer appropriate support to the student.

14.3 If the College becomes aware of external bullying of a student that is having an effect on the wellbeing of that student, the College may inform the student's parents and offer appropriate advice and support.

15 Bullying prevention strategies

The following initiatives form part of the College's overall bullying prevention strategy to create a 'no bullying' culture:

- (a) implementation of Stymie – which promotes student wellbeing and works with the College to enable students to make anonymous bullying notifications about themselves or their peers;
- (b) a structured curriculum and peer group support system, that provides age-appropriate information and skills relating to bullying (including cyber bullying) and bullying prevention, to students over the course of the academic year;
- (c) education, training and professional development of staff in bullying prevention and response strategies;
- (d) regular provision of information to parents/guardians, to raise awareness of bullying as a College community issue to equip them to recognise signs of bullying, as well as to provide them with clear paths for raising any concerns that they may have relating to bullying directly with the College;
- (e) promotion of a supportive environment that encourages the development of positive relationships and communications between staff, students and parents/guardians;
- (f) promotion of responsible bystander behaviour amongst students, staff and parents/guardians;
- (g) reporting of incidents of alleged bullying by students, bystanders, parents/guardians and staff are encouraged and made easy through the establishment of multiple reporting channels;
- (h) records of reported bullying incidents are maintained and reviewed, in order to identify persistent bullies and/or victims and to implement targeted prevention strategies where appropriate; and
- (i) promotion of student awareness and a 'no bullying' environment by participating in events such as the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence.

16 Procedure administration

This procedure will be reviewed 3 years from the date of the approval shown herein unless circumstances require that an earlier review be conducted.

Appendix 1

Response Flowchart to Manage an Allegation of Cyberbullying

