

Singleton Public School Anti- Bullying Strategy July 2008

Definition:

Bullying can be defined as intentional, repeated behaviour by an individual or group of individuals that causes distress, hurt or undue pressure. Bullying involves the abuse of power in relationships. Bullying can involve all forms of harassment (including sex, race, disability, homosexuality or transgender), humiliation, domination and intimidation of others. Bullying behaviour can be verbal, physical, social or psychological.

Rationale:

Singleton Public School has a zero-tolerance policy of bullying.

Our school community shares the responsibility of monitoring playground and social behaviours. Students, teachers and parents/caregivers alike need to be aware of the importance of reporting bullying and know that the report will be dealt with appropriately.

Bullying behaviour profoundly affects all areas of the recipient's life. Repeated exposure to such behaviours can result in far-reaching affects on social, emotional, physical and academic development and therefore needs to be dealt with quickly and efficiently.

A child behaving in a bullying fashion is often choosing these behaviours because of underlying issues in his/her life. These children have the right to expect our support as well as our discipline.

Pro-active Strategies:

The school chooses to behave pro-actively with regard to bullying behaviours, educating and empowering students to combat these behaviours before a pattern develops and encouraging an environment in which children choose positive behaviours.

We do this by:

- encouraging and developing resilience & assertiveness
- empowering bystanders to speak up through such programmes as 'cobber not a dobber'
- encouraging empathy
- raising students' awareness of their support network
- educating children to report bullying to an adult, regardless of who that adult may be
- modelling positive conflict resolution
- understanding quality friendships and playground behaviours
- developing an understanding of what bullying is in the school community
- defining, teaching and modelling our school's core values of Respect, Responsibility and Quality within our playground, classrooms and relationships.
- Offering teachers professional learning that keeps them in touch with current methods of combating negative behaviours

Reactive Strategies:

Any suspicion or report of bullying must be notified to the Principal or Deputy Principal as soon as possible. Upon receiving this information the Principal/Deputy Principal will immediately investigate the allegation. Information will be gathered from teachers, involved parties and parents/caregivers as necessary.

If the situation proves to be genuine, the following will happen:

- Parents/caregivers of both children will be notified
- The Principal/ Deputy Principal will meet with all parties individually and discuss the issues.
- The Principal/Deputy Principal will then meet down with all parties as a mediator to attempt to resolve the issues positively using Choice Theory Reality Therapy or Restorative Justice Principles.
- Referrals will be made to the school counsellor as necessary
- Negative behaviours will be handled in accordance with the school's discipline policy, and may result in suspension if required.
- Parents/caregivers will be notified of the outcome of mediation and kept informed as the process continues.
- The children involved will be educated to speak openly with the Principal/Deputy Principal if the behaviour continues or worsens.

If the situation reported is not bullying behaviour, but anti-social, inappropriate behaviour then the school discipline policy will be followed. These children will also be educated and encouraged to notify staff if the behaviour continues or worsens.

Follow-up:

Where bullying has been reported, investigated and proven the Principal/ Deputy will follow up after the resolution to ensure that the behaviour has not re-surfaced and to further encourage the students' trust. If referrals have been made to the School Counsellor, follow up will be provided as per normal protocol. Where the situation has been resolved it will be monitored to ensure that the behaviour does not reappear. Where the issue does not seem to have been resolved appropriate disciplinary action should/will be taken.