Comet Bay College

Preventing and Managing Bullying Policy

2024

MORAL PURPOSE

At Comet Bay College we strive for excellence by nurturing individual abilities, providing meaningful learning opportunities and fostering positive respectful communities.

Every student, staff member, parent or carer has the right to feel safe and be safe in our schools. We all share a responsibility for providing a safe, supportive and productive environment, free from bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence.

Bullying is a universal issue for young people and school communities. Bullying is a learned behaviour that is unacceptable and can have long-term harmful impacts on students' school engagement, academic achievement, well-being, physical health and mental health. However, bullying behaviours can be changed. At Comet Bay College we are committed to creating a whole school community approach where we are all responsible to provide a safe, inclusive and supportive environment for our students to grow in harmony.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

The national definition of bullying for Australian schools is as follows:

Bullying is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening.

Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records).

Confirming whether the behaviours were intentional is not required to implement the strategies for responding effectively. Young people involved in bullying are not always fully aware of the impact of their actions on others. It is more important to act as a result of the effects on the targeted individual, immaterial of the determination of intent.

Bullying can include:
• Verbal bullying: The repeated use of words to hurt or humiliate another individual or group. Verbal bullying can include using put-downs, name-calling, and insulting someone about their physical characteristics or other attributes (including race, sexuality, gender, culture or religion etc).

• Social/relational bullying: Involves repeatedly ostracising others by ignoring someone or keeping them out of conversations, convincing others to dislike or exclude an individual or group, spreading rumours, and sharing information or images that will have a harmful effect on the other person.

• Physical bullying: Includes violent actions towards another person that could involve hitting, pinching, biting, pushing, pulling, shoving, damaging or stealing someone's belongings, and unwanted touching.

• Cyberbullying: Involves the use of technology to bully a person or group with the intent to hurt them socially, psychologically or even physically. Cyberbullying includes abusive texts and emails, hurtful messages, images or videos, imitating, excluding or humiliating others online, online gossip and chat.

• Bystanders: Bystanders are those who are aware of, or a witness to, the bullying situation. A supportive bystander will use words and/or actions to support someone who is being bullied by intervening, getting teacher support or comforting them. All members of a school community need to know how to support those who are being bullied and how to discourage bullying behaviours.

It is expected that all students at Comet Bay College would take positive action to support the person being bullied directly (for example, inviting the person being bullied to join their group, or letting them know what has happened was wrong) or indirectly (for example, asking an adult for help).

What is not bullying?

- **Mutual conflict** that involves a disagreement, but not an imbalance of power. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation
- **Single incidents** of verbal or physical aggression, or aggression directed towards many different people, is not bullying
- **Social dislike** is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others

POSSIBLE SIGNS A STUDENT MAY BE EXPERIENCING BULLYING

- Decreased interest in school
- Reluctance to attend school and /or absenteeism
- Complaints of headaches and stomach aches
- Request to change schools
- Lack of friends and socially withdrawn
- Unhappy, miserable, moody and/or irritable
- Reoccurring unexplained injuries
- Below average academic performance

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SCHOOL COMMUNITY MEMBERS

MEMBERS	RIGHTS	RESPONSIBILITIES
All students, teachers, parents, wider school community	• are safe and supported in the school environment • are included • are treated with respect	• positive role modelling and demonstrating respect for all people • participate and contribute to school positive behaviour programs • build positive relationships • demonstrate respect and tolerance towards others
School leadership	• is supported by the school community in developing the school's plan to prevent and effectively manage bullying • is supported by the school community in implementing the strategies and programs under the school's plan	• fosters a safe and supportive climate across the school • provides leadership in resourcing the school's plan • ensures plans are clear and publicly available to the school community • ensures the school community is informed of the plan • implements the plan • supports staff to implement the strategies and programs under the plan
Staff	• feel safe and supported in the workplace • are informed by school leadership of the school's plan for bullying • have access to professional learning in preventing and effectively managing bullying • have access to curriculum resources suitable for supporting students in building positive relationships, resiliency, safety and bullying prevention (including social/ emotional learning)	• promote and model positive relationships • participate in developing the school plan • identify and respond to bullying incidents • deliver the strategies and programs to students in responding to bullying effectively • promote effective bystander behaviour • promote social problem-solving • use appropriate terminology when referring to bullying and the students involved
Students	• have access to a curriculum that supports the building of resiliency and social skills • are informed by staff of the school's plan for bullying • are provided with support by staff to stop bullying	• understand and value the concepts of inclusion and tolerance • identify and respond effectively to bullying • are aware of themselves as bystanders • seek help for themselves and others as needed
Parents	• are treated with respect • are confident their children are provided with a safe and supportive school environment • are provided with access to information on the prevention and management of bullying by the principal • are informed by the principal of the school's plan and opportunities to participate	• support and encourage children to treat others with respect and tolerance • model appropriate behaviours and teach children appropriate social skills including conflict resolution • act in accordance with the school plan if they observe/ know about bullying • encourage children to report bullying incidents • work effectively with the school in responding to bullying
Wider community: including other professionals	• are strategically included in bullying prevention and management	• provide support and input into the school's approach to preventing and managing bullying • strengthen the school's anti-bullying messages

Source: Department of Education Western Australia 2021

WHOLE SCHOOL PREVENTION

At Comet Bay College we use the following strategies.

Whole School Prevention Strategies:

- A positive whole-school Managing Student Behaviour Policy based on the teaching and recognition of respectful and pro-social behaviour and a Policy for Managing and Responding to Bullying. Policies will be reviewed every two years, or if indicated sooner
- Whole School Implementation of the Friendly Schools Plus program (an evidence-based program designed to build social skills, creative supportive environments and reduce bullying in the school community)
- Implement a whole-school social competency development curriculum through REACH (including lessons from the Friendly Schools Plus Program)
- Implementation of WA PBS to provide teaching and recognition of respectful and pro-social behaviours
- Promote a school culture that seeks to be proactive and restore relationships affected by persistent or unresolved conflict
- Provision of Home Room to build connectedness with staff and students
- Role of Home Room Mentors is to provide a check-in with students who have been bullied
- Ongoing maintenance of a skilled and resourced Student Support team
- Provide professional learning for staff and parents in identifying, preventing and addressing bullying
- Recording bullying incidents via a 'pink slip' which is a centralised system for recording and data collection (see Appendix 1)
- Promote positive staff role modelling
- Participation of the whole school community (students and parents) regarding policies and programs
- Monitoring using data (e.g., SIS and Compass) to monitor incidences and patterns of bullying behaviour
- Implement a regular collaborative cycle of evaluation and review of the implemented strategies.

Classroom Prevention Strategies

- Develop supportive and inclusive classroom environments
- Implement effective classroom behaviour management approaches such as CMS that teach and encourage positive behaviours, and address negative behaviours effectively
- Implement teaching and learning to develop positive communication, empathy, tolerance, assertiveness, coping skills, and social problem-solving
- Promote the use of cooperative learning strategies
- Encourage and support help-seeking and effective bystander behaviour
- Utilise social problem-solving approaches to resolve peer-based conflicts
- Promote cyber safety and positive digital citizenship through targeted learning activities, curriculum and presentations.

Yard Prevention Strategies

- Coordinated highly visible (use of yellow vests) and active approach in yard supervision
- Provide a 'safe' area for transiting students (e.g., assigned Year 7 and 8 Quads)
- Provide developmentally appropriate unstructured activities/equipment (e.g., basketball hoops, etc.)
- Supervision adjustments as high-risk situations and settings are identified
- Organised activities during break times that encourage positive peer relationships and networks (e.g., House Competitions, WA PBS)
- Teaching, recognition and reinforcement of positive yard and pro-social behaviour
- Regular communication of whole school processes for responding to playground issues to staff, students and parents.

TARGETED EARLY INTERVENTION

At Comet Bay College, we respond to bullying behaviours early and believe that it reduces the associated risk and potential long-term harm caused by bullying. It is vital that we restore relationships and teach appropriate ways to relate to others in their responses to bullying incidents.

Targeted early interventions strategies include:

- Raising awareness of and planning around specific forms of bullying, such as cyberbullying and discrimination based on race, sex, sexuality and or gender diversity
- Identifying and targeting early signs of problematic peer relationship issues within the school community
- Identifying individuals and groups at risk that require targeted programs
- Teaching effective bystander behaviour to targeted groups or for specific situations
- Teaching pro-social behaviour to identified students and groups
- Providing high supervision areas for students with higher support needs
- Providing effective options for individual students experiencing safety issues (e.g., Peer Mentors, Peer Interaction Agreements/Yard Agreements and Safety Plans)
- Providing access to support staff and case management processes for students at risk of being targeted or those who demonstrate bullying behaviour
- Promoting the inclusion of parents of students at risk in identifying and addressing bullying behaviours that may be occurring within the community.

PROCEDURES AND ACTIONS TO RESPOND

We provide consistent and clearly articulated procedures for responding to incidents of bullying which may include the following:

- Staff are provided with the support and training by school leadership to confidently manage bullying situations as they occur
- Provide parents with information including key contacts and how the school will respond to bullying incidents
- Staff, students and parents have processes for reporting incidents of bullying or when they become aware that a student needs support because of bullying (Pink Slip)
- Intervention practices that resolve conflicts, restore relationships, and promote tolerance and social problem-solving are used for responding to bullying incidents. Evidence suggests, a punitive approach alone can increase bullying behaviours
- Help all the students involved with the incident (e.g., the student being bullied; the student(s) who bullied others; bystanders) to discuss the incident such as using evidence-based practice
- Ensure staff members are aware of the processes for recording bullying incidences and monitoring the effectiveness of response strategies
- Students who are being bullied are provided with support by staff to promote recovery and resilience
- Ongoing Case management of students involved in persistent bullying

RESPONDING TO A BULLYING INCIDENT

Student does not report Bullying
-Risk that bullying may continue

Student reports Bullying to parent/carer
-Parent contacts relevant ADSS via email or phone
-Student can complete 'pink slip' from the school website

Student reports Bullying to Student Support
-Student will complete a 'pink slip' in Student Support

Student Reports Bullying to a classroom teacher
-Teachers to follow Co-Late model (Respect and Respond)
-Keep a record of incident and actions taken (enter incident on Compass)
-Contact parent guardian and advise of incident and plan to follow up
-Notify ADSS of concerns and actions take
-Refer ADSS if situation is not resolved

Associate Dean of Student Support (ADSS)
Response to a student being bullied/ Response to a student bullying others

-ADSS to follow the Co-Late model (See Appendix 3) to support the student/s
-Assess the level of risk. If high level of harm, consult with the Dean of Student Support or Associate Principal
-Take actions as agreed with the student for restorative practices: options can include options include Shared Concern Method and Motivational Interviewing. (See Appendix 4 and 5)
-Communicate with students/parents of intended actions by providing as much information about the actions you will be taking without violating the privacy of other students
-Implementation of appropriate consequences if school rules broken
-Implementation of documented plans: e.g., Peer Interaction Agreement, Individual Positive Behaviour Plan, Safety Support Plan (See Appendix 7 to 9)
-Discuss support options for the student's wellbeing (strategies can include restorative practice, Reset Room, leave passes, class changes, SAER programs, transitional timetable, referral to internal/external supports)
-Set a date to follow up with the student
-Keep a record of incidents and actions taken
-Contact parent/carer and advise of the incident and plan to follow up

Follow-up and Check-in
-Staff to follow up with the student after 1 week and set on-going monitoring for as long as necessary
-After each check-in, provide feedback to parents/carer and update records

Not Resolved

Dean of Student Support
-Liaise with ADSS based on supports put in place
-Set meeting with ADSS, parent/carers and student
-Further actions put in place
-Review after agreed time
-Keep Associate Principal up to date

Situation Resolved
-Staff to follow up with the student after one week and set ongoing monitoring (for as long as necessary)
-After each check-in, provide feedback to parents/carer and update records
-Parent or Student to notify ADSS if bullying resurfaces

Not Resolved

Executive
-Liaise with Dean of SS based on process thus far
-Set meeting with ADSS, parent/carers and student
-Further actions put in place
-Review after agreed time
-Keep Principal up to date

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS

What students can do:

- Remember this is not your fault

- Talk to someone you trust about it. Try to stay positive. Focus on things you do well

- Try and stand up for yourself in a positive way

- Try strategies such as:

    o   as acting unimpressed or pretending you don't care what they say or do

    o   Walk away and ignore the person completely

    o   Use humour

- Try and talk to the person you are having a problem with and come to an agreement with them if it is safe to do so

- Don't respond to online bullying

- Talk to your classroom teacher or an adult

- Come to Student Support and fill in a pink slip

- Talk to your Associate Dean of Student Support

- Create an action plan with your ADSS

What parents can do:

- Listen to your child and react in a calm and supportive manner

- Tell your child bullying is wrong and they have a right to feel safe and happy

- Encourage your child to explain what happened and how they feel about it

- Encourage having a wide range of friends

- Ensure they know what support services are available at school

- Support your child to plan safe actions they can take to improve the situation

- Help your child identify trusted people

- Encourage your child to keep a diary of the incidents that are occurring

- Make contact with the relevant Associate Dean of Student Support (record any evidence of the bullying, describe strategies your child has tried, ask for a support plan and set a follow-up date)

    o   If issues are not resolved, contact the Lower School (Year 7-9) or Senior School Dean of Student Support (Year 10-12)

If the bullying is online?

- Collect evidence (take screenshots with dates and times) before deleting messages

- Report to the relevant online service provider (e.g., Instagram)

- If the service provider does not take action after 48 hours, you can report to the e-Safety Commissioner

- Prevent further contact and use app functions to block communication (check out the e-safety guide Appendix 2) about how to block/report users on different apps

- Contact relevant ADSS regarding support at school

See helpful resources for students and parents in Appendix 2

APPENDIX 1: STUDENT INCIDENT STATEMENT 'PINK SLIP'

Student (first and last name): _____   **Year:** _____

Incident Date: _____   **Time:** _____   **Location:** _____

New or Ongoing: _____   **Teacher Notified:** _____

INCIDENT DETAILS

ACTION (Staff fill out)

FOLLOW UP (Staff fill out)

Student Signature: _____

Dean/ADSS Signature: _____

Resolution Date: _____

APPENDIX 2: HELPFUL RESOURCES FOR PARENTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- Friendly Schools Plus: website https://friendlyschools.com.au/

- E-Safety Commissioner: website https://www.esafety.gov.au/

- Beacon from Telethon Kids Institute website: https://beacon.telethonkids.org.au/
- Beacon Cyber Safety App for families

Scan to download

- Bullying No Way website: https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/
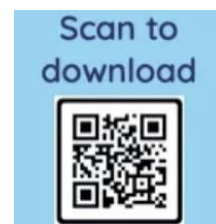
- Providing free, confidential legal information & help for young people under 25
- Youth Law Australia website: https://yla.org.au/

- Reach Out website: https://au.reachout.com/

- Kids helpline website: https://kidshelpline.com.au/
  - Helpline Phone Number. 1800 55 1800

- Headspace website: https://headspace.org.au/
  - Online counselling: https://headspace.org.au/online-and-phone-support/
  - Phone number 1800 650 890
- Centres- Rockingham (08) 6595 8888; Mandurah: (08) 9544 5900