Anti-Bullying Policy

Updated November 2015

RATIONALE

There are specific protections provided in law for each and every member of a school community to experience a safe and supportive school environment. In a Catholic community, there are also important expectations on each person to seek to maintain positive relationships with one another and to resolve conflict in a respectful and dignified manner.

Everyone at Brigidine College has the right to enjoy an environment free from harassment or intimidation of any type. Bullying denies this right to people; as such, bullying has no place or justification at the College. Everyone in the College Community is therefore responsible to ensure a safe and happy environment is maintained.

Brigidine College Randwick does not tolerate bullying of any type. Within the College we seek to build a safe and caring Christian environment in which everyone has the right to feel safe and valued, where individual differences are accepted as everyone’s right. We all share in the responsibility of caring for others within and beyond the College community.

This policy provides a framework for the school community to work together to prevent and address issues of student bullying, in order to build respectful relationships that respond effectively and sensitively to the needs of each person.

The dignity of the human person is the foundation of all Catholic Social Teaching and is inherent to the ministry of Catholic education. Essential to the dignity of the person is the creation and maintenance of a respectful, safe and supportive learning environment that promotes student wellbeing and enables our school community to engage a diverse range of learners in an inclusive manner. Within this context it is vital that learning technologies are used ethically and responsibly, that communication is respectful, and that human dignity is highly valued.

A caring and supportive school culture that promotes positive relationships and reflects Gospel teachings is best equipped to prevent and respond to incidents of bullying, inappropriate use of technology and disrespectful behaviour at the College. Bullying and cyber-bullying disregard core values of the Catholic faith including dignity, respect, justice, equity, compassion, trust and courage. Bullying, including cyber-bullying, can adversely affect the wellbeing of students and is therefore unacceptable within our College Community.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Each person is created in the image and likeness of God.
- The dignity of every member of the school community is respected.
- Bullying in any form is unacceptable behaviour at Brigidine College Randwick.
- All partners in Catholic Education (Parents, Staff, CEO & Students) share a joint responsibility to identify and address bullying behaviour.
- Parents/caregivers have an integral role to play in the prevention and resolution of bullying.
- Explicit instruction on the school’s policy and procedures for dealing with incidents of bullying is essential.
- Effective record-keeping is a crucial and expected component of the school’s response to the issue of bullying.
- Where appropriate, the College will collaborate with outside agencies on matters concerning bullying, to the extent necessary and permitted by law to resolve the matter.
What is Bullying?

Bullying occurs when any member of the College is subjected to repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful, and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons.

Bullying can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and all forms of harassment including that based on sex, race, disability, sexual orientation or practice of religion. Bullying of any form, or for any reason, can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.

Bullying can happen anywhere: at school, travelling to and from school, in sporting teams, between neighbours, or in the workplace.

Cyberbullying refers to bullying that is carried out through information and communication technologies.

Types of Bullying

Overt Bullying

Overt bullying (sometimes referred to as face-to-face or direct bullying) involves physical actions such as:

Physical
- Hitting, pushing, kicking, spitting, tripping
- Rude gestures
- Damaging, removing or hiding belongings
- Physical violence or threats.

Verbal
- Being attacked or ridiculed because of varying opinions, beliefs, religion or race
- Name calling, teasing and ridiculing
- Putting down others and their achievements
- Spreading rumours
- Teasing, name calling, insulting, spreading rumours, making fun of someone because of their appearance, physical characteristics or cultural background.

Covert Bullying

Covert bullying (sometimes referred to as indirect bullying) is a subtle type of non-physical bullying which isn't easily seen by others and is conducted out of sight, and therefore often unacknowledged by teachers. Covert bullying behaviours mostly inflict harm by damaging another's social reputation, peer relationships and self-esteem.

Covert bullying can include repeatedly:

Non-Verbal
- Writing offensive notes or graffiti about others, using email or text messaging to hurt others, rude gestures
- Using hand gestures and weird or threatening looks
- Whispering, excluding, and turning your back on a person.
Emotional

- Purposely leaving someone out of activities
- Blackmailing, spreading rumours, threatening, stealing friends
- Breaking secrets, gossiping, criticising clothes and personalities
- Deliberately excluding others from a game or group, using put-downs, threatening to take others’ possessions, food or money, belittling others’ abilities and achievements, stealing, hiding or damaging another’s property.

Cyber Bullying

Cyberbullying can be conducted in many ways, using different media including:

- The sending of abusive texts or emails
- Taking and sharing unflattering or private images, including naked or sexual images
- Posting unkind messages or inappropriate images on social networking sites
- Excluding individuals from online chats or other communication
- Assuming the identity of the victim online and representing them in a negative manner or manner that may damage their relationship with others
- Repeatedly, and for no strategic reason, attacking players in online gaming.

Like other forms of bullying such as verbal abuse, social exclusion and physical aggression, cyberbullying has the potential to result in the target of bullying developing social, psychological and educational issues.

While cyberbullying is similar to real life bullying it also differs in the following ways:

- It can be difficult to escape and invasive—it can occur 24/7 and a person can be targeted while at home
- It can involve harmful material being widely and rapidly disseminated to a large audience, for example, rumours and images can be posted on public forums or sent to many people at once
- It can provide the bully with a sense of relative anonymity and distance from the victim, so there is a lack of immediate feedback or consequences.

What Bullying is NOT

Behaviours that do not constitute bullying include:

- Mutual arguments and disagreements (where there is no power imbalance)
- Not liking someone or a single act of social rejection
- One-off acts of meanness or spite
- Isolated incidents of aggression, intimidation or violence.
Reporting Bullying at Brigidine College

Suspected bullying can be reported by any parent, teacher, student(s) or any member of staff. Depending on the nature of the incident, the following steps may be involved in dealing with an allegation of bullying:

1. Year Coordinator &/or Homeroom Teacher of both the student who is reporting being bullied and the student accused of bullying are informed via SENTRAL.

2. The student making the report is interviewed by her Year Coordinator and given reassurance that the matter will be investigated. This student may ask another teacher or student to be present to support her. The student involved may be referred to the School Psychologist.

3. Background information is collected from various sources and documented on the SENTRAL welfare reporting system under the one initial incident number.

4. It is made clear that any suggestion of retaliation by any party will be treated as harassment.

5. If the incident is found to warrant action, then the student accused of bullying is advised of the following:
   a. Her actions must stop and the student should reflect on what she can do to make the situation better. Reflection will take the form of but will not be limited to written apologies, reflective statements, discussions with Year Coordinator, Assistant Principal, College Psychologist
   b. Those who have been bullied do not want similar incidents to continue
   c. The person accused of bullying is to attend a follow-up meeting with the Year Coordinator for ongoing monitoring of the situation
   d. Parents/guardians are informed of the nature of the incident and the actions taken. Action taken will be at the discretion of the school and include, but not limited to moving homerooms, confiscation of Mobile phone whilst at school, confiscation and reimaging of laptops, detentions, removal from playground.
   e. The student/s involved may be referred to the School Psychologist.

6. If the bullying continues or is repeated, then some of the following more formal actions will take place:
   a. The Year Coordinator will convene a meeting of students affected and a support person (if requested). Parents/guardians are contacted to inform them of the process
   b. A formal meeting will be held where all involved are represented to discuss the allegations and the College’s Anti-Bullying Policy
   c. An Action Plan will be formulated and copies will be given to all parties
   d. In an agreed period of time, the group is brought together to review the incident
   e. Both the alleged victim and the alleged bully may be referred to Counselling or a conflict resolution process
   f. Any act of revenge or retaliation may result in suspension from the College and a subsequent review of the student’s enrolment at the College.

7. The Principal and Assistant Principal are to be kept informed at every step outlined above.

8. All meetings are to be documented on the SENTRAL welfare reporting system, marked Confidential at the advice of the Principal and or Assistant Principal.
RESOLVING CONCERNS & COMPLAINTS POLICY

Introduction

Sydney Archdiocesan Catholic Schools are committed to living the values of the Gospel. In the spirit of justice, love and reconciliation, we aim to:

- Develop a positive and collaborative relationship between home and school.
- Welcome and value diversity of opinion.
- Inform the staff of the changing needs of students and families.
- Have clear and open communication within the community.

The school acknowledges that Parents/Caregivers can sometimes feel concerned about something that they believe is happening in their child’s school. The resolution of these concerns in every school community is vital to the wellbeing and success of that community.

It is recognised that parents and caregivers must have access to processes that allow them to resolve concerns in a supportive, conciliatory environment and for this reason the following model has been developed.

This section is intended to be read in conjunction with the “Pathway for Resolving Concerns and Complaints at School” within the “Resolving Concerns and Complaints at School Information for Parents and Caregivers” brochure (2010).

Scope of the Guidelines

These Guidelines apply to the concerns of parents and caregivers about:

- Children’s learning, behaviour and welfare
- School organisation and management
- Student health and safety issues

Certain matters concerning Child Protection or other areas covered by specific legislation will be referred immediately to the relevant external agency.

The rights & responsibilities of parents/ caregivers

Any parent or caregiver has the right to raise a concern and have it responded to promptly, fairly, without fear of repercussions and according to principles of procedural fairness. Most concerns will be able to be resolved informally.

Any parent/ caregiver have the right to confidentiality in regard to a concern that is raised at the school. However, if others need to be informed, this will be explained to the parent/caregiver raising the concern.

Parents/caregivers have a responsibility to raise their concerns at the earliest possible time so that they do not become overwhelming for either the child or the family. The greatest success in resolving concerns is when they are addressed as soon as they arise.

Parents/ caregivers have a responsibility to maintain confidentiality in the best interests of their child and to ensure a just outcome for any other person who may be involved.
General principles

Confidentiality will be respected and maintained by all parties. Concerns will be resolved according to the principles of procedural fairness as follows:

1. The person considering the concern will act impartially
2. Anyone involved in the matter has the right to be heard fully
3. All relevant information will be taken into account
4. Where a conflict of interest arises or is perceived to arise, an independent person may be involved with the consent of all parties.

Every endeavour will be made to address all concerns within reasonable timeframes and under mutual agreement. The resolution of concerns is most successful when prompt responses are obtained. However, Principals and school staff may not always be available to address concerns at the exact time they are raised, but will make an appointment to do so at the earliest mutually available time.

Any person raising or responding to a concern may have a support person present during meetings or interviews. The support person would act as an observer but may take a more active role with the mutual agreement of all parties. Support persons must maintain confidentiality and other principles set out in these Guidelines. The Principal is to be advised of the attendance of a support person before any meeting or interview. Similarly the Principal will advise of any other person he/she may invite to attend.

Accurate and appropriate notes will be kept with due regard to the confidentiality of the concerned parties.

Access to relevant records may be given to parties directly involved in the process or to others by mutual consent whilst adhering to the conditions of the Commonwealth Privacy Act.

The outcome of a complaint resolution process will be communicated to the Parent/Caregiver in writing and there may be an agreement to review its effectiveness within an agreed timeframe.

Anonymous complaints or allegations must be accepted and forwarded for investigation in the case of:

- Allegations of child abuse
- Allegations of misconduct of a sexual nature by a staff member against a student
- Alleged breaches of legislation, including the Crimes Act
- Other alleged behaviour which could lead to disciplinary action if substantiated.

The Principal has delegated authority to manage concerns and complaints at school. Where the matter involves Child Protection or other areas covered by specific legislation (such as matters being handled by Police or courts), the Principal is required to refer it to the Regional or Head Office. In all other matters, every attempt will be made to resolve the matter at the level of the Principal.

While it is understood that all concerns about a child’s education and well-being naturally cause anxiety for parents/caregivers, it is expected that complaints will be lodged in a manner that respects the dignity of the person receiving them. Similarly, staff is expected to receive the complaint with the same level of respect.

Principals and staff are within their rights to require that any meeting or discussion be discontinued if a complainant becomes abusive, uses profane or threatening language or attempts to physically intimidate a staff member. Should this occur the complainant will be required to leave the College.
The Process

See the "A Pathway for Resolving Concerns and Complaints at School".

Pathway for Resolving Complaints.

CEO Complaints Policy

Complaints Policy.pdf
Strategies for dealing with Bullying

Bullying is viewed as a serious breach of the College’s Discipline Code. Any reports of bullying will be investigated thoroughly and appropriate actions will be taken.

Students attend school to participate in quality education that will help them to become self-directed, lifelong learners who can create a positive future for themselves and the school community.

Students, teachers, parents, caregivers and members of the wider school community have a shared responsibility to create and maintain a safe and happy environment, free from all forms of bullying.

All members of the College play a part in preventing bullying. We will endeavour to:

- Educate students regarding bullying - what it is, how it affects us and what we can do about it
- Educate staff regarding bullying and in implementing the College’s anti-bullying policy
- Treat all instances of bullying seriously.

The College seeks to promote a culture in which students will be encouraged to:

- Build positive relationships with others so that bullying does not occur
- Take positive actions to stop the bullying
- Refuse to be involved in any bullying
- Report the bullying incident to an adult as soon as possible
- Make it clear to their peers that bullying is not accepted
- Not delete messages from cyber bullies, keep these as evidence to show a parent, a guardian or an adult.

Students have a responsibility to:

- Behave appropriately, respecting individual differences and diversity in accordance with the College’s Behaviour Policy
- Report instances of other people being bullied
- Respond to victims of bullying in a caring and supportive manner
- Positively participate in all strategies that are part of the College’s Anti-bullying Plan
- Respond to incidents of bullying according to the College’s Anti-bullying Plan.

Parents and caregivers have a responsibility to:

Parents play a key role in the support of both the victims and the perpetrators of bullying. The College works in partnership with parents in the disciplinary process. Parents can assist in the following ways;

- Let your child know that bullying in any form is never acceptable
- Listen to your child and take her feelings and fears seriously
- Reassure your child that being bullied is not her fault
- Encourage your child to inform the school
- If necessary, inform your child’s Home room Teacher or Year Coordinator
- Take an active interest in your daughter’s social life and acquaintances
- Advise your daughter to speak to a trusted member of staff. If possible allow your daughter to report and deal with the problem herself as this often leads to the development of necessary social and communication skills in such situations
- It can be counter-productive for parents/guardians to contact parents/guardians of the student/s involved. Under no circumstance should parents/guardians contact the student/s involved
- Understand that the resolution of the situation may take time
- Encourage your daughter to speak openly with you and to look to positive strategies to deal with her feelings;
- Monitor your daughter’s progress and if concerned contact the College
- Support their children in all aspects of their learning
- Be aware of the College Anti-bullying Plan and assist their children in understanding bullying behaviour
- Support their children in developing positive responses to incidents of bullying consistent with the College’s Anti-Bullying Plan.
Teachers have a responsibility to:

- Respect and support students in all aspects of their learning
- Model behaviour that promotes respectful relationships
- Respond in an appropriate and timely manner to all incidents of bullying according to College anti-bullying response plan
- Educate students in ways to prevent bullying
- Understand that through punctuality to class, active supervision and challenging unacceptable behaviour, staff can play an active role in preventing bullying
- Be aware that the nature of bullying may change with maturity
- Respect the privacy of the individuals involved in bullying.

Responsibilities of the Recipient of the bullying

- Not to overreact to comments (if possible or appropriate)
- Be assertive and ask the person who is bullying you (or bullying someone else) that their actions are unwanted and must stop
- If you feel uncomfortable approaching the person responsible or the bullying does not stop, report the bullying to a teacher, Year Coordinator or Assistant Principal, whether it is happening to you or to someone else
- Report the bullying to an adult – talk to her parents, teachers, Home room Teacher, Year Co-ordinator, the Assistant Principal or the Principal.
Ongoing Education Plan

The College will ensure that there is ongoing education of students, staff and parents on the issues associated with bullying, including cyber-bullying, and that all key stakeholders are regularly reminded of the College’s Anti-Bullying procedures.

Staff

Staff will be provided with regular opportunities to take part in professional development around bullying, including cyber bullying throughout the school year either through staff meetings and/or professional development days. This will include updates and reminders of the College’s Anti-Bullying procedures and policy and ways of dealing both proactively and reactively to issues of bullying in the College. Strategies will include how to:

- Recognise and respond effectively to bullying including digital citizenship
- Deal positively with bullying including what not to do
- New staff will be given the College’s Anti-Bullying policy and will be taken through how to report incidents on the SENTRAL management system
- Prevention behaviour
- Responsibilities of staff, students and parents in creating a safe and supportive environment including using the academic curriculum to educate students on bullying
- Embed teaching and learning strategies on anti-bullying and the responsible use of technology into the pastoral care programme and academic curriculum (where applicable)

The College will regularly review their processes for identifying and responding to bullying.

Students

Students will engage, through the Pastoral Care programme and in the academic curriculum, in anti-bullying and awareness programmes that aim to provide students with strategies to:

- Deal positively with bullying including what not to do
- Prevent the behaviour
- Ensure their responsibility in creating a safe and supportive environment
- How to make a complaint about bullying
- Use technology safely and responsibly

New students to the College will be taken through the anti-bullying policy with their Year coordinator upon induction to the College and no later than one cycle after their arrival at the College. This includes the responsible use of technology policy upon receiving a laptop.

All Year 7 students and parents are expected to attend a one hour information session outlining the responsible use of technology during Term 1 of the year they begin at the College.

Parents

Parents will be informed on issues regarding bullying, including cyber bullying through the College newsletter and invitations to any presentations available at the College or other schools in the area.
Action Plan

An action plan will involve the following:

Consequences:

Bullying is about power and students naturally experiment with their power and may become involved in bullying. The important thing is to help them learn from the experience. Formative consequences not only provide a clear message that bullying is unacceptable, but also build awareness and skills to promote the students’ responsibility, and positive leadership (Pepler & Craig, 2000). Formative consequences provide support for students to learn the relationship skills and acquire the insights that they are lacking. In this way, the consequences for bullying can provide an opportunity to educate and support students who are in difficulty.

Possible consequences for identified bullying will include but are not limited to:

- Parents Notified
- Restorative justice processes – mediation
- Referral to the College Psychologist
- Detention
- Suspension – Internal or external
- Referral to an outside Psychologist
- Police notification
- FaCS (Family and Community Services) notification
- Removal from the playground
- Confiscated equipment – laptops, phones etc…
- Asking the student to examine her behaviour and make immediate changes
- Monitoring of the student’s behaviour by the teachers and the Year Coordinator
- Reviewing the enrolment of the student at the College
Notification

In the event of a serious breach of the Anti-Bullying policy, both the parents of the perpetrator and the victim will be notified by phone of the situation and asked to attend the College for an interview. An interview will take place with the Year Coordinator and/or the Assistant Principal, College Psychologist and Police (if necessary).

The College will deal seriously with students who retaliate against a person for reporting bullying.

“HANDS OFF” POLICY

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<td>The College has a strict “hands off” policy in regard to any intimidating and aggressive behaviour. Students in breach of this will be suspended from class.</td>
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At Brigidine College we believe that everyone has the right to feel safe and to be treated with respect. The Catholic ethos of the College places an emphasis on peaceful resolution of disagreements through non-violent means. We also seek to encourage socially acceptable standards of conduct and behaviour.

The “hands off” attitude must permeate throughout the total life of the school. It extends to all members of the staff and student body. Playground games that could lead to the breaking of the “Hands Off” policy are not permitted.

The following forms of behaviour are deemed breaches of the “Hands off” Policy:

**Physical Behaviour**
- Aggressive behaviour such as pushing, shoving, tripping, hitting, slapping and fighting
- Projecting or throwing an object at another person.

**Property**
- Taking or being in possession of another student’s property;
- Punishment will be determined by the nature of the offence.
Contacts and Resources for Parents

- College Psychologist – 9398 6710 / jacinta.lynch@syd.catholic.edu.au
- NSW Police Liaison Officer – Phone: 8338 7463
- Bullying. No Way – www.bullyingnoway.gov.au
- Kids Helpline
  - Phone: 1800 551 800
  - www.kidshelp.com.au
- Community Services Helpline – Phone 133627
- Cybersmart – www.cybersmart.gov.au
- National Coalition Against Bullying – www.ncab.org.au
- www.keepthemsafe.nsw.gov.au
- www.thinkuknow.org.au
- www.netalert.gov.au
- www.headsspace.org.au
- www.reachout.com.au

Year Coordinators

Year 7 – Ms Adriana Parsons  adriana.parsons@syd.catholic.edu.au
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