Anti-Bullying Policy

Statement on Bullying

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.

What is Bullying?

Bullying occurs when any member of the College is subjected to behaviour that is persistently hurtful, threatening, frightening or excluding someone by physical or non-physical means which can include verbal, physical, social and/or psychological harassment. Bullying can be carried out by an individual or a group.

Examples of bullying include:

**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;

**Non-Verbal**
- Writing offensive notes or graffiti about others, using email or text messaging to hurt others, rude gestures.

**Emotional**
- Purposely leaving someone out of activities;
- 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.

How to respond to Bullying
Bullying is viewed as a serious breach of the College code of discipline. Any reports of bullying will be investigated thoroughly and appropriate actions will be taken.

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.

**Responsibilities of the Recipient of the bullying**

- Not 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.

**Responsibilities of Students**

- Report instances of other people being bullied;
- Respond to victims of bullying in a caring and supportive manner.

**Responsibilities of Staff**

- Be positive role models in relationships with others.
- Treat all instances of bullying seriously and, if necessary, report it to the Home room Teacher, Year Coordinator, Assistant Principal or Principal.
- 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.

**The Role of the Parents**
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.

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

“HANDS OFF” POLICY

HANDS OFF POLICY
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.

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 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.

**Process for Dealing with 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 Home room Teacher of both the student who is reporting being bullied and the student accused of bullying are informed.
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.
3. Background information is collected from various sources and documented.
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
   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.
   e. The students involved may be referred to the School Counsellor.
6. If the bullying continues or is repeated then some of these 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.
Consequences for Bullying Behaviour

Brigidine College Randwick does not tolerate any form of bullying. Disciplinary actions may include:

- Asking the student to examine her behaviour and make immediate changes;
- Notifying parents;
- Referring the student to a counsellor;
- Initiating a Mediation Conference;
- The Year Co-ordinator, Assistant Principal or Principal assessing the situation and deciding upon further disciplinary action which can include Contract, Detention, Internal or External Suspension (depending upon the seriousness of the situation);
- Police Notification;
- DoCs Notification;
- Monitoring of the student’s behaviour by the teachers and the Year Co-ordinator;
- Reviewing the enrolment of the student at the College.

Contacts and Resources for Parents

- School Counsellor
- NSW Police Liaison Officer – Phone: 8338 7463
- Kids Helpline
  - Phone: 1800 551 800
- Community Services Helpline – Phone 133627
- National Coalition Against Bullying – [www.ncab.org.au](http://www.ncab.org.au)
- [www.thinkuknow.org.au](http://www.thinkuknow.org.au)
- [www.netalert.gov.au](http://www.netalert.gov.au)
- [www.headsspace.org.au](http://www.headsspace.org.au)