POINT CLARE PUBLIC SCHOOL

BULLYING POLICY- 2012

Point Clare Public School has amongst its aims the provision of an environment in which each student is personally involved, in which each can develop as a person of integrity, social conscience and courage. To this end, we aim to establish a community in which everybody feels valued and safe, and where individual differences are appreciated, understood and accepted. Every student has a right to enjoy his or her time at school.

Rationale

A safe and supportive school can be described in the following way;

In a safe and supportive school, the risk from all types of harm is minimised, diversity is valued and all members of the school community feel respected and included and can be confident that they will receive support in the face of any threats to their safety or wellbeing.

This community does not tolerate bullying or harassment. Respect for others is expected.

National Safe Schools Framework

The following guiding principles that represent fundamental beliefs, described in the National Safe Schools Framework, about safe, supportive and respectful school communities. These guiding principles emphasise the importance of student safety and wellbeing as a pre-requisite for effective learning in all school settings.

Australian schools:
- affirm the rights of all members of the school community to feel safe and be safe at school
- acknowledge that being safe and supported at school is essential for student wellbeing and effective learning
- accept responsibility for developing and sustaining safe and supportive learning and teaching communities that also fulfill the school’s child protection responsibilities
- encourage the active participation of all school community members in developing and maintaining a safe school community where diversity is valued
- actively support young people to develop understanding and skills to keep themselves and others safe
- commit to developing a safe school community through a whole-school and evidence-based approach

The nine elements of the National Safe Schools Framework
1. Leadership commitment to a safe school
2. A supportive and connected school culture
3. Policies and procedures
4. Professional learning
5. Positive behaviour management
6. Engagement, skill development and safe school curriculum
7. A focus on student wellbeing and student ownership
8. Early intervention and targeted support
9. Partnerships with families and community
Bullying:
Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying in Schools Policy (2011)

The NSW Department of Education and Communities rejects all forms of bullying. No student, employee, parent, caregiver or community member should experience bullying within the learning or working environments of the Department.

Bullying
Bullying is 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. Cyber bullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies.

Bullying can involve humiliation, derision, intimidation, intimidation and all forms of harassment including that based on sex, race, disability, homosexuality or transgender. Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long term affects on those involved including bystanders.

Conflict or fights between equals or single incidents are not defined as bullying.

Bullying behaviour can be:
- verbal eg name calling, teasing, abuse, putdowns, sarcasm, hurts, threats
- physical eg hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, splitting
- social eg ignoring, excluding, ostracising, isolating, making inappropriate gestures
- psychological eg spreading rumours, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions, malicious SMS and email messages, inappropriate use of cell phones.

The term “bullying” has a specific meaning. The school’s Anti-bullying Plan sets out the processes for preventing and responding to student bullying. The school has a range of policies and practices, including student welfare and discipline policies that apply to student behaviour generally.

Schools exist in a society where incidents of bullying behaviour may occur. Preventing and responding to bullying behaviour in learning and working environments is a shared responsibility of all school staff, students, parents, caregivers and members of the wider school community.

School staff have a responsibility to:
- respect and support students
- model and promote appropriate behaviour
- have knowledge of school and departmental policies relating to bullying behaviour
- respond in a timely manner to incidents of bullying according to the school’s Anti-bullying Plan.

In addition, teachers have a responsibility to:
- provide curriculum and pedagogy that supports students to develop an understanding of bullying and its impact on individuals and the broader community.

Students have a responsibility to:
- behave appropriately, respecting individual differences and diversity
- behave as responsible citizens
- follow the school Anti-bullying Plan
- behave as responsible bystanders
- report incidents of bullying according to their school Anti-bullying Plan.

Parents and caregivers have a responsibility to:
- support their children to become responsible citizens and to develop responsible online behaviour
- be aware of the school 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 school Anti-bullying Plan
- report incidents of school related bullying behaviour to the school
- work collaboratively with the school to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur.

All members of the school community have a responsibility to:
- model and promote positive relationships that respect and accept individual differences and diversity within the school community
- support the school’s Anti-bullying Plan through words and actions
- work collaboratively with the school to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur.

At Point Clare Public School we value the following principles;

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Each member of the Point Clare community shares in the following rights and responsibilities:

To feel safe
To respect self
To learn and grow
To respect others
To be respected
To use commonsense
To be valued
To support others.

DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF ALL INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS TO BE FREE FROM BULLYING

- Everyone has the right to feel safe and be safe at school.
- Everyone has the right to be accepted and respected as they are.
- Everyone has the right to be happy about coming to school.
- Everyone has the right to have his or her concerns taken seriously and appropriate action taken.
- Everyone has the right to have his or her concerns dealt with in private.
- Everyone has the right to a quality educational program devoid of disruption.

AIMS

- To reinforce within the school community what bullying is and that it is unacceptable behaviour.
- To reduce the amount of bullying that occurs at Point Clare Public School.
• To assist students to resolve conflicts and differences without bullying.
• To encourage all members of the school community to be alert to signs and evidence of bullying, to have a responsibility to report it to teachers, parents and/or peers.
• To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up appropriately and that support is given to victims and the bullies.
• To seek parental and peer group support and co-operation at all times.
• To educate students, teachers and parents in anti-bullying actions.
• To foster a happy school climate where students feel safe and confident that teachers will listen and follow through concerns.

DEFINITION: WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is a form of aggressive behaviour, which is usually hurtful and deliberate; sometimes continuing for weeks, months or even years and it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. Underlying most forms of bullying behaviour is an abuse of power and a desire to intimidate and dominate. (Sharp & Smith, 1994)

There are seven key elements of Bullying:

1. An intention to be hurtful.
2. This intention is carried out.
3. The behaviour harms the target.
4. The bully overwhelms the target with his or her power.
5. There is no justification for the action.
6. Action/behaviour is repeated.
7. Bully gets satisfaction/enjoyment from hurting the target. (Rigby, 1996)

Some examples of bullying include:

• Hitting, pushing, kicking, spitting, pushing
• Teasing, mocking and using put-downs
• Using offensive names
• Making offensive comments about others or their families
• Gossip – spreading information (true or untrue)
• Hurtful looks
• Rude gestures
• Leaving someone out of a group to be mean to them
• Messing up someone’s game
• Hiding, damaging, stealing someone’s belongings
• Making up rumour/stories about someone
• Using threats to stop people going to the toilet or to take their money, food or other belongings
• Writing offensive notes about someone
• Bullying comes in many forms, including
• Name-calling, hurtful or racist names
• Threatening
• Sending hurtful notes
• Deliberately ignoring
• Sexual innuendo and harassment
• Writing graffiti about another
IMPLEMENTATION

Students, teachers, parents and the community will be aware of the school’s position on bullying which is **zero tolerance**.

Strategies are in place at Point Clare PS to teach skills and understandings that lead to eliminating bullying behaviours. These strategies are taught across Key Learning Areas, in Child Protection lessons and in the You Can Do It program.

The school will also adopt a four-point plan to anti-bullying, which includes:

- Primary Prevention
- Early Intervention
- Intervention
- Post Intervention

**Primary Prevention**

- Professional development for staff related to bullying and the strategies to counteract it.
- Community awareness and input relating to anti-bullying, its characteristics and the school's programs and response. (e.g. weekly newsletter, parent forums)
- Provide programs that promote resilience, life skills and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and communication skills. (e.g. Bullying- A Whole School Approach for P-6, Stop Think Do, Bully Buster Workshop, Friendly Kids/Friendly Classrooms, Buddy Programs)
- Provide elective and structured activities at some recess and lunch breaks (e.g., Art Club, dance, SRC activities, sports equipment)
- Staff supervision of set area in playground.
- Ensure students know and understand what behaviour is acceptable in the school. (i.e. consistent classroom/school rules displayed in the school)
- Maintain the Student Leadership Council and class meetings to help solve problems which arise regarding bully and the victim.

**Early Intervention**

- Students are to be encouraged to report bullying incidents involving themselves or others.
- Teachers to regularly remind students to report incidents. Reporting is not dobbing.
- Parents are encouraged to contact the school if they become aware of a problem.
- Students are recognised for positive behaviours
- Teachers use a class and playground management plan if an incident of bullying occurs.

**Intervention**

- Once identified, the bully, victim and witnesses are spoken with, all incidents or allegations of bullying will be fully investigated.
- Consideration as to why the bullying occurred will be investigated. (e.g. The bigger picture or contributing factors)
- Both bully and victim are to be offered basic assistance and support (i.e. outside school resources through counselling may be utilised if deemed necessary)
- A meeting of relevant persons are to be convened following identification of on-going bullying behaviour. (Principal, class teacher, parents, students, other) All issues relevant to the behaviour of the student are considered.
Post Intervention

- Point Clare Public School's Discipline Policy outlines appropriate procedures of the consequences for inappropriate behaviour in the classroom and in the playground.
- Possible consequences may involve:
  
  I. Warning  
  II. Removal to the class supervisor or principal  
  III. Parental contact  
  IV. Negotiated contract  
  V. On-going monitoring  
  VI. Timeout from the class/yard  
  VII. Mediation sessions with the victim to reconcile differences  
  VIII. Referral to external agencies  
  IX. Class/group changes  
  X. Behaviour guidance programs (e.g. anger management, social skills)  
  XI. Detention  
  XII. Suspension (in extreme cases)

Resources:
ADVICE TO BE GIVEN TO STUDENTS WHO ARE BEING BULLIED

The student should be encouraged to –

- Tell the bully to stop. State quite clearly that the behaviour is unwelcome and offensive
- Seek help. Talk about the experience to someone who is trustworthy (Student Counsellor, parent, peer).
- Report the bullying to a member of staff and feel confident that any incident can be resolved satisfactorily

Other 'self protective' strategies that might be suggested include:

- Staying away from the bully, or places where bullying occurs.
- Be with friendly, supportive friends.

ADVICE TO BE GIVEN TO STUDENTS WHO KNOW SOMEONE ELSE IS BEING BULLIED

Students should be made aware that early intervention can defuse conflict situations before bullying sets in or gets out of hand.
Therefore, the following suggestions should be made:

- If possible, intervene as the bullying occurs by telling the bully to stop. This is very useful if the onlooking student has influence with the bully.
- Refuse to join in with the bullying.
- Support students who are being bullied – just standing by them can be enough.
- Tell an adult if you are concerned about the bullying.
- It is every student's right and responsibility to report bullying whether it happens to oneself or to someone else.

THE ROLE OF PARENTS

The following suggestions are made to parents through print materials and at Parent Information meetings.

Take an active interest
  - in your child's social life
  - in what is happening at school
Encourage your child
  - to bring friends home
  - to accept and tolerate differences in others
Build your child's self-confidence
  - by recognising and affirming his/her positive qualities
  - by valuing him/her for who he/she is.
Discuss with your child
  - the school's expectations about behaviour
  - ways to respond if his rights are infringed
Encourage constructive responses
  - physical bullying or persistent teasing should be reported
  - hitting back or retaliating with name-calling won't solve the problem
Set an example
  - be firm, but not aggressive in setting behaviour limits
  - be positive in things you say and do
Be alert for signs of distress
  - unwillingness to attend school
  - dropping off in academic performance
  - damaged clothing and frequent loss of personal property
  - loss of confidence and uncharacteristic mood changes
  - withdrawal from social activities.
ACT
  - If your child is being bullied at school, report it to a teacher, or the Principal. Your report will be followed up.