
Anti-Bullying Policy

Purpose:

This policy provides a framework for dealing with incidents of bullying in a just and consistent fashion. It is underpinned by the belief that all members of the school community have a right to learn and work in an environment free from intimidation, humiliation and hurt. The prevention of bullying and the restoration and promotion of positive relationships is a shared responsibility within the school. This policy is based on the Guiding Principles and Key Elements of the National Safe Schools Framework (revised 2011).

Scope:

This policy applies to staff, students and parents/caregivers of Good Shepherd Lutheran School. The policy applies during the course of a normal school day and during school activities outside of normal school hours.

Rationale:

Bullying and harassment are contrary to the Christian ethos of Good Shepherd Lutheran School, which emphasises care and respect of all members of the school (students, staff, parents and community). Bullying and harassment have immediate damaging effects on the personal well-being of the victim as well as on the social and educational fabric of the school. Review of the National Safe Schools Framework 2010 in collaboration with The National Safe Schools Framework Reference Group concluded that harassment, violence and bullying are less likely to occur in a caring, respectful and supportive teaching and learning community.

For these reasons Good Shepherd Lutheran School takes harassment and bullying very seriously and commits itself to programs and procedures designed to minimise their occurrence and deal effectively with them when they arise.

Definition/s:

Bullying is behaviour that can be defined as ‘repeated intimidation over time of a physical, verbal or psychological nature of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or a group of persons.’¹

- Bullying involves one or more people exerting power or dominance over another or others.
- Bullying behaviour is deliberate, unwelcome, uninvited and usually repeated.
- Bullying involves behaviour which is physical, verbal, psychological or social.
- Bullying includes a wide range of behaviours that causes another person to feel embarrassed, offended, hurt, humiliated, insulted, ridiculed, angry or afraid.
- Bullying can have a serious long-term effect on the health and wellbeing of people.

¹ Australia and New Zealand Journal of Law and Education, 1327-7634 Vol 7, No2, 2002, pp87-140

Power discrepancies include:

- Differences in physical size and strength.
- Strength of numbers.
- Relative popularity in the peer group.
- Command of language.
- Positional authority.

Cyber-bullying is the use of information and communication technologies to support repeated and deliberate hostile behaviour intended to harm others. It is sometimes used as an extension to other forms of bullying, and can result in the target of bullying experiencing social, psychological and academic difficulties.²

- This form of bullying may not necessarily be repeated, but because the message can be sent to multiple users, this ensures it has a large targeted audience and its intent is to deliberately intimidate a less powerful person.

Bullying is not:

One off acts of

- Aggression
- Nastiness
- Conflict
- Simple social rejection
- Assertive behaviour

Forms of Bullying

Physical: hitting, kicking, punching, pushing, shoving, poking, spitting, blocking, tripping, unwanted touching, taking or damaging something that belongs to someone else, forcing others to hand over food, money or belongings, forcing someone to do something they don't want to do;

Verbal: name calling, swearing, teasing, bossing, threatening, making fun of someone because of their appearance, physical characteristics or cultural background, making fun of someone's actions, spreading rumours/gossip, and discriminative comments, whispering, etc.;

Non-Verbal: circulating inappropriate notes, drawings, making offensive gestures, laughing at victim, engaging others in similar behaviour;

Property: damaging or taking belongings, extortion;

Sexual: explicit use of language, gestures or visuals which are offensive;

Cyber: online forums to threaten, gossip, sexting, sending of confidential emails/comments etc.

Expected Student Behaviour

It is expected that all students at Good Shepherd Lutheran School adhere to the following behaviour guidelines:

² <http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/Schools/Common%20cybersafety%20issues/Cyberbullying.aspx>, 27 June, 2011

- Students must show respect for others and themselves;
- Students must respect their own property and that of others;
- Students are to assist and encourage each other to perform to the best of their ability;
- Students must accept responsibility for their own behaviour;
- Students are to be aware that their behaviour occurs as a result of choices, conscious or unconscious; all behaviour has consequences, which affects future opportunities;
- Irresponsible behaviour requires a response, which protects the rights of students who want to learn; which supports the rights of teachers to teach; which offers the student involved a chance to learn how to make a more responsible choice in the future.
- If bullying behaviour is witnessed, students have the responsibility to respond according to the role of a bystander (as is taught throughout the school).

Responsibilities of:

School staff:

- Principal to ensure the implementation of the Anti-Bullying Policy and the Behaviour Management Policy and to support a consistent approach throughout the school towards all incidents of bullying.
- All staff to be responsible for creating and maintaining a caring, safe and orderly school community and learning environment which fosters positive relationships.
- School to work in partnership with community organisations and parents to extend support to students and families.
- Staff to comply with the 'Code of Conduct for Staff at GSLS'.
- Staff to have undergone training in Valuing Safe Communities.
- Staff to be active in the implementation of a school-wide Code of Conduct, specifying what is and is not appropriate behaviour in the classroom and around the school.
- Staff to model caring behaviour and tolerance towards students, parents, staff and community members.
- Staff to provide adequate playground and classroom supervision.
- Staff to support students with the skills for social inclusion. Staff to explicitly teach social and emotional skills (eg listening, negotiation, sharing, empathic responding.) This is actively supported through well-being and resilience programmes such as 'Bounce Back!'
- Staff to teach students about cyber safety including appropriate strategies for countering harassment, aggression, violence and bullying.
- Teaching of skills and understandings related to personal safety and protective behaviours.
- All staff to follow up on all incidents of bullying, recording details on the Incident Form and passing on the information to the Principal.
- Principal to record all incidents of bullying and action taken.
- Principal to follow up on all serious forms of bullying, including interviewing the victim and perpetrator, as well as informing their parents.
- Principal to follow through with consequences of bullying behaviour.
- Provide opportunities for student ownership and decision making (Restorative Practises).

Students:

- Contribute to the creation of a safe, caring and orderly community and learning environment.
- Take responsibility and be accountable for their own behaviour.
- Seek support in solving problems that they are unable to solve for themselves.
- To enact the role of a by-stander to assist in the prevention of bullying amongst peers.
- To practice the skills taught in the Social Skills Program – ensuring the right to keep others' safe.

Parents/Guardians:

- To support their child by using active listening skills.
- To speak to a staff member (class teacher first) if their child is being bullied or they suspect this may be the case.
- To support their child in developing self-management skills when dealing with conflict.
- Follow school grievance procedure to inform of any ongoing or serious bullying incidents.
- Work with the school to develop social skills and resilience with their child.
- Follow school protocol when dealing with issues relating to another student.
- Responsibly supervise their child when they are on the internet or using digital devices.
- Model caring behaviour and tolerance when interacting with students, staff, parents and community members at school.

Strategies Good Shepherd Lutheran School will use to Prevent Bullying Incidents

- Talk regularly and openly about bullying behaviour.
- Intentionally teach lessons which promote self-awareness, self-esteem, networking, tolerance, social skills, positive self talk, resilience and assertiveness by using a variety of appropriate programs.
- Emphasise the role of bystanders/onlookers as a powerful anti-bullying group.
- Support all people involved in the incidents of bullying and provide an environment to promote change.
- Promote anti-bullying through lessons, parent newsletters, displays etc.

Consequences for Breaches of Standards of Behaviour

All forms of bullying will be taken seriously. Consequences of bullying behaviour will be as outlined in the Behaviour Management Policy. The principles of Restorative Practices will be used in managing bullying behaviour, enabling both the perpetrator and victim an opportunity to understand the effect of their behaviour (empathy) and be a part of the restorative process. The Principal will reserve the right to discipline in a manner seeming fit for the offense. Where repeated occurrences of bullying occur, internal/external suspension may result; in extreme cases where no remorse is shown, exclusion/expulsion may result.

Procedure for Reporting Incidents of Bullying Behaviour

- Students need to initially approach their classroom teacher to discuss any concerns they may have regarding another student so that the teacher can address it on a pastoral care level.
- Serious cases of bullying behaviour witnessed by a staff member will be referred to the Principal via an Incident Report.
- All serious claims of bullying will be directly followed up by the Principal and classroom teacher/s, contacting the parents/guardians of all involved.
- In the case of a complaint made against a staff member, a formal investigation will be conducted.
- In line with the current Child Safe Policy, incidents will be treated in accordance with policy and logical consequences will be implemented.
- All reports of bullying will be recorded and filed with the Principal for future reference.
- All reports made will be treated with confidence, respecting the needs of the complainant.
- If parents are not satisfied with the resolution of the complaint, they may make a formal request to speak with the Chairperson of the school council.

References/Related Policies

Good Shepherd Lutheran School Behaviour Management Policy (2013)

Good Shepherd Lutheran School Anti – Bullying Policy (2007)

Our Saviour Lutheran School Anti – Bullying Policy (2012)

Centre For Restorative Justice Website: <http://www.restorativejustice.com.au/>

The National Safe Schools Framework

Australia and New Zealand Journal of Law and Education, 1327-7634 Vol 7, No2, 2002, pp87-140

<http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/Schools/Common%20cybersafety%20issues/Cyberbullying.aspx>, 27 June, 2011

Any person charged with the implementation of this Policy may, in circumstances which require consideration, waiver from the procedures so as to ensure the safety and well-being of all relevant persons at the time of implementation, whilst ensuring that the spirit of this Policy is not compromised.

This policy was last ratified by GSLS Council 13th August 2013