



Toowoomba  
Christian College  
— EST. 1979 —

# Dealing with Bullying Policy



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### 1 Preamble

The school's Behaviour Management Policy articulates what the school expects of its students and the way the school will address behaviour management problems. The school wants to help every student behave towards others in line with the standards of God's word. The school needs to challenge wrong behaviour and help students - both the offender and the offended, respond and find God's grace.

The school sees bullying as a serious matter that requires a particular intervention strategy.

Every student has the right to be safe at school, to be accepted for the way God has made them and to know that justice will be done.

Every student is also entitled to be forgiven. Every student has the right to a fresh start.

### 2 Definition

The definition of bullying in today's society is quite varied, as a quick internet search shows. According to the national definition of bullying for Australian schools

Bullying is an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm.

It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more persons. Bullying can happen in person or online, and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert).

Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.

### 3 What Bullying Is Not

Bullying should not be confused with teasing, rejection, random acts of violence or physicality and conflict. While children will often tease or fight, this bickering should not be confused with bullying.

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.

However, these conflicts still need to be addressed and resolved.

An argument or disagreement does not in itself constitute bullying. Social rejection is also not of itself bullying. If a student is verbally abused in a single episode this is not bullying.

### 4 Bullying

Bullying has three main features:

- It involves a misuse of power in a relationship
- It is ongoing and repeated
- It involves behaviours that can cause harm.

Bullying encompasses a range of unsolicited deliberate and repeated intimidatory behaviour, and a reasonable person would interpret the behaviour to be frightening and/or intimidating. Bullying is about lack of power as one person is powerless to stop the teasing or physical abuse. Bullying is the selective, uninvited, repetitive oppression of one person by another person or group.

### 5 Bullying At Toowoomba Christian College

Historically, the school has not had a culture of bullying behaviour. Usually, the differences that arise between students are resolved before they escalate to this stage.

Reasons for the low incidence would be the relatively small student numbers, the rapport the students have with the staff, the pastoral awareness and involvement of the staff and the response there has been to the Christian ethos of the school by most of the students.

### 6 Signs Of Bullying

These changes may be symptomatic of bullying. Behaviours that might be observed are:

- An unwillingness or refusal to go to school, feeling ill in the mornings
- Very few friends
- A decline in quality of schoolwork
- Loss of interest in sport and social activities
- Becoming withdrawn and lacking confidence
- Change in normal eating, sleeping or mood patterns
- Crying at night, having nightmares
- Asking for money or starting to steal, frequently lost possessions and/or money
- Refusing to talk about what's wrong
- Having unexplained bruises, cuts, scratches
- Beginning to bully other children or siblings
- Becoming aggressive and unreasonable.

### 7 Report Of Bullying

When a student or a parent informs a staff member that there is bullying or they have been bullied, they are to be informed that the school policy is that bullying issues in the first instance are to be dealt with by the Head of Primary or Secondary.

At this point, the person might want to re-word the claim and change the language. Staff should be willing to allow this to happen and deal with the issue themselves and investigate and deal with the issue.

If the student or parent continues to label the issue as bullying, the staff member is to inform the student or parent that the issue will be referred to the Head of Primary or Secondary who will be in contact as soon as practical. The staff member is not to proceed in dealing with the issue. If needed, the parent or student may be ushered up to Front Reception for the office to handle.

### 8 Training In Resisting Unwanted Behaviour

The Head of Primary and/or Secondary is to ensure that all students are told in assemblies at least twice a year how the school wants students to handle unwanted behaviour as outlined below.

When a student's behaviour has gone too far or is becoming annoying and they are not stopping, the offended student is to follow these 3 steps.

1. Tell the student to stop with the clear statement "Stop, I don't like it" with appropriate hand gestures and corresponding facial expressions.
2. If that does not stop the student, then say it again "Stop it, I really mean it" again with appropriate hand gestures and corresponding facial expressions.
3. If the student has not stopped as a result of this second step, they are to go straight to the teacher on duty and report what has happened, what was being said and what they have done about it.

The teacher on duty is to address the offending student and decide how best to address the failure of the student to not follow these clear school guidelines.

### 9 Action To Be Taken About Bullying

#### 9.1 Student:

If a student is the subject of bullying, they are to tell a staff member or go and see the Head of Primary or Secondary. If a student is aware that another student is being bullied, then they are to report the issue to a staff member or to the Head of Primary or Secondary.

#### 9.2 Parent:

If a parent becomes aware that their son or daughter feels that they are a subject of bullying, they are to tell the Head of Primary or Secondary.

If a parent is aware that another parent feels that their student is being bullied, then that parent should encourage the parent to see the Head of Primary or Secondary.

#### 9.3 Staff:

If a staff member becomes aware of a student who is being bullied by one or more students, then that teacher is not to investigate but to report the issue to the Head of Primary or Secondary.

### 9.4 Head Of Primary Or Secondary:

The Head of Primary or Secondary will conduct an initial interview with the necessary people to determine whether a case of bullying does exist or whether the matter falls under another category of the School's Behaviour Management Policy.

If a genuine case of bullying exists, the matter will be referred to the Principal who will proceed with the rest of this policy.

## 10 Process The Principal Is To Follow

- a. If the Principal feels there is a genuine case of bullying, he will conduct a more detailed inquiry, interviewing the people necessary to get a full picture of the problem as soon as is practical
- b. The Principal will assure the 'bullied' student that bullying will not be tolerated in the school, and that the matter will be addressed
- c. The Principal will address any likely areas of repercussions for the student
- d. The Principal will make the bully aware of their actions and start them on the 'path of discipline' as outlined in the Behaviour Management Policy
- e. The Principal will inform the bully of what will happen to them if they continue this behaviour
- f. The Principal will make both sets of parents aware of what has been uncovered, the action the school has taken and the expected outcomes from that action
- g. The Principal will inform the appropriate staff to ensure that there is monitoring of the situation
- h. The Principal will give strategies to the bullied about how to handle any future issues
- i. The Principal will follow up with the parties concerned to see that all is still well.

## 11 Conclusion

All students have the right to be and feel safe at this school.

It is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure all students are aware of this right and the appropriate steps they need to take if they no longer feel safe.

It is the parents' responsibility to inform the Head of Primary or Secondary if they feel that their son or daughter is being bullied by other students.

The school will take quick action to address any complaint of bullying.