



Prevention and Response to Incidents of Bullying Policy (including cyberbullying)

Purpose

Highfields State Secondary College strives to create positive, predictable environments for all students at all times of the day. The disciplined and teaching environment that we are creating is essential to:

- achieving overall school improvement, including the effectiveness and efficiency of our student support procedures
- raising achievement and attendance
- promoting equality and diversity and
- ensuring the safety and well-being of all members of the school community.

There is no place for bullying in Highfields State Secondary College. Those who are bullied and those who bully are at risk of behavioural, emotional and academic problems. These outcomes are in direct contradiction to our school community's goals and efforts for supporting all students.

Bullying behaviours that will not be tolerated at Highfields State Secondary College include name-calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments, kicking, hitting, pushing, taking belongings, inappropriate text messaging, sending offensive or degrading images by phone or internet, producing offensive graffiti, gossiping, excluding people from groups, and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours.

Bullying may be related to:

- race, religion or culture;
- disability;
- appearance or health conditions;
- sexual orientation;
- sexist or sexual language;
- children acting as carers; or
- children in care.

At Highfields State Secondary College there is broad agreement among students, staff and parents that bullying is observable and measurable behaviour. When considering whether or not bullying has occurred, we will therefore avoid speculation on the intent of the behaviour, the power of individuals involved, or the frequency of its occurrence. Whether bullying behaviour is observed between students of equal or unequal power, whether it occurs once or several times, and whether or not the persons involved cite intimidation, revenge, or self-defence as a motive, the behaviour will be responded to in similar fashion, that is, as categorically unacceptable in the school community.

Rationale

Many bullying behaviours are peer-maintained through the actions of bystanders. That is, peers react to bullying in ways that may increase the likelihood of it occurring again in the future. Reactions include joining in, laughing, or simply standing and watching, rather than intervening to help the person being bullied. Whilst our school would never encourage students to place themselves at risk, our anti-bullying procedures involve teaching the entire school a set of safe and effective responses

to all problem behaviour, including bullying, in such a way that those who bully are not socially reinforced for demonstrating it.

The anti-bullying procedures at Highfields State Secondary College are an addition to our positive behaviour support processes. This means that all students are being explicitly taught the expected school behaviours and receiving high levels of social acknowledgement for doing so. Adding lessons on bullying and how to prevent and respond to it is a subset of procedures that our students are already accustomed to.

Prevention

Attempting to address specific problem behaviours will not be successful if the general level of disruptive behaviour in all areas of our school is not kept to a low level. Therefore, our positive behaviour support practices will be maintained at all times.

This will ensure that:

- Our behaviour support processes will always remain the primary strategy for preventing problem behaviour, including preventing the subset of bullying behaviour

All students know the five (5) school values:

- Kindness
- Persistence
- Resilience
- Respect
- Responsible

Students will be taught the expected behaviours attached to each value in all areas of the school through the school wellbeing program

- All students have been or are being taught the specific routines in the non-classroom areas, from exiting the classroom, conducting themselves in accordance with the school expectations in the playground and other areas, to re-entering their classrooms
- All students are receiving high levels of positive reinforcement for demonstrating expected behaviours, including those associated with following our routines, from all staff in the non-classroom areas of the school
- A high level of quality active supervision is a permanent staff routine in the non-classroom areas. This means that duty staff members are easily identifiable and are constantly moving, scanning and positively interacting as they move through the designated supervision sectors of the non-classroom areas.

The anti-bullying process consist of lessons taught by all teachers during the school's wellbeing program as informed by the five school values under the positive behaviour system. At all times simultaneous instruction is our goal, in order to maintain consistency of skill acquisition across the school.

Research indicates that a common outcome of anti-bullying programming is an improvement in understanding of bullying but little change in the frequency or nature of actual bullying behaviour. One of the reasons cited for this outcome is the lack of behavioural rehearsal in the programming. The anti-bullying process at Highfields State Secondary College takes care to combine knowledge with practice in a process of active learning, so that students understand by 'doing' as much as by 'knowing'.

Highfields State Secondary College records inappropriate behaviour and uses behavioural data for decision-making. This data is entered into our database on a daily basis and can be recalled as summary reports at any time. This facility allows the school to track the effectiveness of its anti-

bullying process, to make any necessary adjustments, and to identify specific bullying behaviours that may need to be revisited or revised in the instructional process.

Reporting:

Highfields State Secondary College understands the importance of students being able to report bullying incidents about themselves or others around them. Students have access to Stymie (www.stymie.com.au). This program allows bystanders to send anonymous notifications to the College, about someone who they believe is being bullied or harmed.

The notification interface allows bystanders to upload evidence like screen shots of Facebook discussions, Snapchats, text messages or instant message conversations and an outline of the incident(s). Highfields State Secondary College staff receive the Stymie Notifications in the form of an email alert. The notifications are encrypted, anonymous and confidential. Stymie does not store any information. Stymie complements Highfields State Secondary School's existing student well-being framework. Stymie was built in consideration of the Australian Safe Schools Framework and the recommendations from the Australian Covert Bullying Prevalence Study. All incidences reported are investigated and dealt with in accordance with the consequences of the Responsible Behaviour Plan for students.

Bus Travel:

Highfields State Secondary College staff work with outside providers such as Bus Queensland and Queensland Police with the aim to ensure safe travel to and from the college. Students have an obligation to follow a set of behavioural guidelines when travelling on school buses. Most students are well behaved, but a minority will misbehave. This can affect the ability of a driver to concentrate, and is a safety concern for Bus Operators. To address this, Department of Transport, Main Roads have developed the Code of Conduct for School Students Travelling on Buses which can be found at <http://busqld.com.au/school-services/school-codes-of-conduct/>.