

WOONGOOLBA STATE SCHOOL

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY



**WOONGOOLBA STATE SCHOOL
STUDENT SUPPORT PLAN
ANTI-BULLYING PROGRAM**

1. RATIONALE

At Woongoolba our school community is committed to caring for the well being of our students.

We promote protective behaviours and our driving beliefs are:

- **everyone has the right to feel safe**
- **nothing is so bad that you cannot tell anyone**

AIM

We wish to empower victims and disempower bullies. We wish to educate all students about bullying. We endeavour to create a culture in which students feel able to talk about bullying, knowing that their concerns will be heard and that we will take action to ensure that all students feel safe at school and, therefore, are happy to come to school.

In formulating this policy, we have used valuable data gathered from the school opinion survey of 2007 and a school wide bullying survey conducted in May/June 2008. The following statements were clearly expressed from all members of the school community:

- Most students are not bullied and parents/students/staff are satisfied with the student safety and school climate however, some bullying is occurring at this school and this should be addressed.
- We want the bullying to stop
- We want the skills necessary to deal with bullying
- We want to take action when bullying occurs
- We want people for the students to talk to about their concerns

Our aim therefore, is to maintain the high standards of behaviour and support in our school but reduce the incidence of bullying. In the long term, we aim to have in place programs, procedures and practices which will prevent bullying occurring in the future.

By developing a culture of mutual respect and skilling our students through an integrated curriculum, we hope to foster a supportive school environment in which we empower students to take responsibility for themselves.

2. OUR DEFINITION OF BULLYING

The repeated oppression of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group of person

Elements of bullying:

- Wanting to hurt someone
- Acting on this desire
- The action is hurtful
- An imbalance of power – the bully is stronger than the victim – either physically or psychologically
- No reason for the action
- Is persistent – this is the element that causes so much damage long term
- The bully gets pleasure from hurting the victim

We consider the following behaviours to be bullying:

PHYSICAL:

- Hitting, kicking, punching
- Pushing, shoving, spitting
- Making rude gestures
- Taking or deliberately damaging something which belongs to someone else
- Forcing others to hand over food, money or something which belongs to them
- Making someone do something they don't want to

VERBAL:

- Name calling
- Teasing
- Threatening
- Intimidation
- Making fun of someone because of their appearance, physical characteristics or cultural background
- Making fun of someone's actions

ELECTRONIC:

- Participating in any of the above through the use of electronic ,means such as e-mails, web pages or mobile telephones.

INDIRECT:

- Excluding others from the game or group
- Spreading untrue stories about others

3. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

At Woongoolba school:

we have a commitment to:

- students – we focus on Diversity, Inclusiveness, Innovation and Creativity as strengths of our students.
- quality - the best teaching/learning practices are used through Respect and pursuing Excellence.
- accountability - we are prepared to accept personal accountability as a commitment to Professionalism.

We aim to create a safe, supportive environment in which effective teaching and learning in academic, social and emotional areas occurs.

Woongoolba State School embeds within its students a desire to be happy persons of worth, who will contribute to both the school and the community so that meaningful learning occurs.

WE ALL HAVE THESE RIGHTS - TO KEEP THESE RIGHTS WE ALL HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES – BEING FAIR IS LOOKING AFTER PEOPLE’S RIGHTS

We Will:

- Openly talk about bullying – what it is, how it affects us and what we can do about it
- Teach our children the skills which will build their self-esteem and empower them to take responsibility for themselves – and give them the opportunity to practise these skills
- Formulate a policy which clearly states what actions we will take to deal with bullying behaviour

Responsibilities of Staff:

- To model appropriate behaviours at all times
- To teach skills and strategies necessary to deal with bullying
- To reinforce these skills through class meetings which deal with incidental issues
- To deal with all reported and observed incidences of bullying as set out in our responsible thinking procedures
- To ensure that children are adequately supervised
- To report incidences of bullying to the principal if this is warranted
- To discuss the policy with new enrolments and ask for their support by signing the policy

Responsibilities of Children:

- To 'TELL' if they are being bullied or if they see someone else being bullied – both at school and on the way to and from school
- To help someone who is being bullied
- To work or play without threatening or bullying others

Responsibilities of Parents:

- To watch for signs that their child may be being bullied
- To speak to someone on staff if their child is being bullied, or they suspect that this is happening
- To instruct their children to 'TELL' if they are being bullied
- To reinforce appropriate behaviours with their children
- To become aware of and supportive of our behaviour management and bullying policy

4. STRATEGIES WE WILL USE TO PREVENT BULLYING

- Create awareness that we are a 'telling' school
- Develop safety zones around the campus
- Promote our beliefs through posters, parades, newsletters and forums
- Teach children the strategy of "High Five"
- Reporting bullying incidents to class teacher and/or Principal
- Provide proactive and preventive strategies eg. Games room, computer lab, organised outdoor games, playground leaders
- Train a group of children to be peer mediators
- Teach children skills to build self-esteem and empower each child with the confidence to confront these issues through such programs as: Stop! Think! Do!, Me and U, The Hidden Hurt, Bullying – an effective program, and other such programs.

5. REPORTING OF BULLYING

Incidences of bullying can be reported to any teacher by children or their parents. Any bullying incidences that are dealt with will be recorded and monitored through One School.

Methods of Reporting:

- Informal reporting through bully boxes placed in safety zones around the school – children disclose the bully, the victim and the type of bullying
- Peer mediators to report incidents of bullying through the bully box
- Staff to report bullying
- If the incident requires further investigation – staff may refer to the Principal

We Will Use The Following Strategies To Respond To Reported Incidents:

- Use the “High Five” strategy
- Children go to peer mediators in the playground
- Support the victim and acknowledge how he/she feels
- Time away for victim and bully
- Direct the victim to a safety zone
- Educate the bully through lunchtime intervention meetings and group meetings
- Plan making in office
- Track the incidents reported through the bully box
- For a serious incident or continued bullying, make an appointment/phone call to speak to the parents/carer, remind them of the policy and ask for their co-operation in stopping the child from bullying other children
- If none of these strategies succeed in stopping the child from being aggressive, he/she may be excluded either from the playground or suspended from school
- Individual lunchtime plans for students as the need arises

The staff will be committed to the policy. Teachers will ensure that incidences are dealt with in a manner consistent with the policy and as soon as possible after it is reported or observed. Students must accept responsibility for ‘telling’ and supporting the victim.

6. EVALUATING THE PROGRAM

The success of the program will be evaluated by:

- Repeating the survey in 6 months and then in 12 months and compare with data from the initial survey
- Use data from school opinion survey
- Parent forums
- Noting if there has been a reduction in bullying incidents and/or referrals
- Noting if there has been a change in our school culture
- Speaking to parents who have reported incidences of bullying to find out if the problem has been resolved
- Noting if there has been an increase in enrolments/retention of students due to improved school culture

7. REVIEW

We will regularly review the policy by:

- Initially review and reinforce this policy on weekly parades
- Regularly reinforce the policy in the newsletter for parents