

Anti-Bullying Policy

Introduction

The Headmaster, Deputy Headmaster, members of the School Executive and all staff are committed to doing everything they can to provide the boys of Toowoomba Grammar School with a safe, secure and nurturing environment in both the day school and boarding school and in all activities in which the school participates.

We acknowledge that every member of the school community has the right to experience respectful and positive relationships in a pleasant, safe and supportive environment. Bullying and harassment in the school in any form in relation to any member of the school community will be discouraged in the most active manner possible.

Sponsor¹

The sponsor of this document is the Headmaster.

Rights and responsibilities of students, staff and parents

Students, staff and parents have the right to:

- Learn and work in a positive environment
- Participate in all school activities without being ridiculed or “put-down”
- Be accepted despite differences in race, cultural background, age, religion, appearance or ability
- Safe access within the school grounds
- Be listened to and supported when involved in bullying incidents
- Be treated as a respected member of the Toowoomba Grammar School community

Students, staff and parents have the responsibility to:

- Abstain from bullying others in any way
- Actively discourage bullying when it occurs
- Report any bullying incidents of which they are aware
- Be familiar with and help promote the School’s anti-bullying policy and procedures

Possible Impact of Bullying

It is now known that bullying can have tragic consequences for some children and young people. The possible effects of being bullied may include:

- Mental Health – low self esteem, anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts

¹ The term “sponsor” is used with the intent of identifying positions to assist in developing and amending respective policies. It is not intended to imply any other legal responsibility.

- Physical Health – somatic complaints, poorer health, self harm
- Social Effects – loneliness, fewer friends, rejection by peers
- Other Effects – dislike of school, truancy, lower academic achievement
- Long-term Effects – Those who bully others frequently are more likely to be involved in criminal activity and violence as an adult. Those who are bullied frequently are more likely to develop interpersonal difficulties as an adult.

(Friendly Schools & Families Project, Child Health Promotion Research Unit, 2004)

What is bullying?

Definition

“Bullying is the deliberate hurting of another person by a more powerful person or group of persons. It can be physical, verbal or psychological. It is typically repeated but can be a single instance.” (Rigby 1996)

Types of bullying behaviours

Physical

Pushing, spitting, kicking, hitting, damaging or defacing property, stealing, hiding property, offensive hand or body gestures, unnecessary and unwelcome physical contact (patting, brushing up against a person), locking in a closed or confined space, threatening with a weapon, hurting another person.

Verbal

Mocking, making fun of someone, name calling/insults, sexual or suggestive remarks, teasing, intimidating or obscene phone calls/SMS/email. Imitating someone’s accent, gossiping, spreading rumours, humiliating, offensive jokes/ditties, threats of violence.

Other

Stalking/being followed, extortion, excluding a person, threatening to reveal personal information, giving dirty looks, putting offensive material on the internet/email, criticising or belittling a person because of his sexual preference, continually ignoring a person, not sharing information, playing a dirty trick, manipulating others to achieve rejection.

How do we prevent bullying?

“It is not one single ingenious thing that makes a difference, but the sum of many small moves” (Cross, 2004)

At Toowoomba Grammar School we:

- Have a whole school anti-bullying policy
- Provide specific anti-bullying curriculum in personal development lessons and mentor group programmes
- Embed bullying topics in other curriculum areas, such as Drama and English
- Provide specific programmes to promote pro-social behaviour
- Have active staff and student anti-bullying committees
- Raise awareness of bullying through newsletter articles, guest speakers and performers, parent information evenings and assemblies

- Identify site-specific bullying behaviours and locations through surveys/questionnaires
- Provide a variety of lunchtime activities for students
- Provide adequate supervision during breaks ensuring high visibility of duty staff
- Promote connectedness to the school through the fostering of school pride and recognition of school traditions
- Provide staff training on bullying issues
- Use camps, sport, outdoor education and other co-curricular activities to promote pro-social behaviours
- Have teachers and other staff members who model respect to students and to each other
- Have a diminished culture of “dobbing”; instead we foster the culture of “It’s O.K. to tell”
- Keep abreast of current research and best practice on bullying and harassment

How do we respond to bullying?

At Toowoomba Grammar School we:

- Investigate and address any reported bullying, never ignoring reported or observed incidents
- Provide counselling to boys involved in bullying incidents, both the boy who is bullying and the boy being bullied
- Liaise with parents of boys involved in bullying, both the boy who is bullying and the boy being bullied
- Use educative consequences to help boys involved with bullying learn alternative behaviours
- Use alternative consequences when lower level interventions fail to work
- Provide mediation for boys who are unable to work out their own differences
- Empower the student who has been bullied by providing strategies he can employ
- Acknowledge hurt no matter how trivial the incident may appear

How can we support this Policy?

What can students do to help?

- Actively participate in the student anti-bullying committee
- Work with all members of the school committee to promote the message that it’s “O.K. to tell”
- Participate in school anti-bullying programmes
- Follow policy procedures if they are involved in or witness a bullying incident

What can you do if you are being bullied?

If you can.....

- walk away → ignore, try to show no reaction (do something else or talk to friends)
- use “I” statements eg. “I don’t like it when you tease me” → make friends, try to avoid being isolated
- try to work it out: ask them why they are giving you a hard time → joke about it

→tell yourself you are not to blame, you don't deserve to be bullied

For all of these.....

- Stand up for yourself and act confidently → hold your head up
- look the other person in the eye → stand straight with shoulders back
- stand your ground when talking

And if things don't improve.....

→get help by speaking to someone you trust. This could be your parents, a friend, a teacher, your sports coach, your Mentor, School Prefect, or House Prefect, Housemaster, School Counsellor, Deputy Headmaster, or Headmaster.

What can parents do to help

- Liaise with school staff when their son is involved in a bullying incident
- Provide support to their son when he talks about bullying
- Encourage their son to report bullying incidents if he observes them

Supporting your son in dealing with bullying and harassment

- Pause to listen and understand – Your son needs to know you understand how he feels. Listen patiently, ask questions and try to understand how he feels without blaming or giving advice.
- Problem-solving – Help your son to think of different ways to solve the problem. Getting him to think of his own solutions first will help him become more confident at solving problems. If he gets stuck, give him some time to think. After he has had time to think, explain that you have some ideas if he would like some help.
- Making a Plan – Ask your son to choose an idea from those raised by your son or you. Respect your son's choice even if it is different to your own. Talk with your son about how you can help.
- Following-up – Check with your son about how his plan went and, if necessary, go through all the stages again to come up with a different plan. If the problem seems to be getting worse, or if you are concerned about your son's safety, you should speak with someone at the school (Housemaster, House Mentor, School Counsellor, Deputy Headmaster, Headmaster).

What can staff do to help?

- Create a classroom with a positive emotional environment
- Model respect to students, parents and other staff members
- Explicit teaching of friendship skills
- Use incidents as they occur to teach pro-social behaviour
- Not tolerate put-downs of students by other students
- Encourage the development of self-esteem in their students
- Never ignore observed or reported bullying incidents in the classroom or playground
- Listen to students. Never accuse a student of "dobbing" when reporting bullying
- Take part in professional development activities on bullying issues to be able to identify bullying behaviours and to respond appropriately

- Participate in the anti-bullying committee and the regular review of the anti-bullying policy

Concluding Statement

A stand alone anti-bullying policy is the single most effect action a school can take to deal with bullying (Petersen, 2001).

This collaboratively developed policy reflects a whole school approach that serves as a declaration of Toowoomba Grammar school to the commitment of action towards preventing and minimising bullying/

Bibliography

1. Cross, D. "Safe and Supportive Schools- Reducing Bullying", Bullying Colloquium, AISQ, Brisbane, August, 2004.
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5. Rigby, K. (1996). *Bullying in schools and what to do about it (No blame and shared concern, pp206-223)*. Melbourne: ACER.