

## Anti-bullying Policy

### Rationale

All schools in Queensland are committed to taking action to protect students from bullying and to respond appropriately when bullying does occur.

### School community beliefs about bullying

It is important that students, staff and parents/carers have a shared understanding of what bullying is, how it impacts on people and how bullying is responded to at Caningeraba State School.

#### Our commitment

- We strive to ensure every student is able to learn and work in an environment where they feel safe and are free from bullying and/or violence.
- We seek every opportunity to encourage school staff, parents and students to work together to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills that support learning, positive behaviour and constructive social relationships.
- We implement policies and strategies guided by current research on effective approaches to the prevention of bullying and violence.

We use our role in the community to raise awareness that bullying and violence of children and young people are issues for the whole community and require a community response.

## What is bullying?

In 2009, the Queensland Government engaged bullying expert Dr Ken Rigby to undertake a consultancy for the Department of Education and Training to provide current information about research and initiatives in the area of bullying in order to inform the future work in Queensland schools. Dr Rigby (Rigby, 2010) defines bullying in the following way:

*“Bullying is a systematic and repeated abuse of power. In general bullying may be defined as:*

- *dominating or hurting someone*
- *unfair action by the perpetrator(s) and an imbalance of power*
- *a lack of adequate defence by the target and feelings of oppression and humiliation.”*

Bullying can take many forms. The *National Centre Against Bullying* identifies five kinds of bullying:

## 1. Physical bullying

This is when a person (or group of people) uses physical actions to bully, such as hitting, poking, tripping or pushing.

Repeatedly and intentionally damaging someone's belongings is also physical bullying.

## 2. Verbal bullying

Repeated or systematic name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks and verbal abuse.

## 3. Covert bullying

Such as lying about someone, spreading rumours, playing a nasty joke that make the person feel humiliated or powerless, mimicking or deliberately excluding someone.

## 4. Psychological bullying

For example, threatening, manipulating or stalking someone.

## 5. Cyber bullying

Using technology, such as email, mobile phones, chat rooms, social networking sites to bully verbally, socially or psychologically.

The issue of cyber bullying has received a great deal of interest recently and has been the focus of a number of research and review processes, such as the *Australian Covert Bullying Prevalence Study* (Cross, D., Shaw, T., Hearn, L., Epstein, M., Monks, H., Lester, L., & Thomas, L., 2009) and the *Review of the National Safe Schools Framework* (McGrath, 2005).

In a report commissioned by the Victorian Department of Education and Training (Bernard & Milne, 2008) the main forms of cyber bullying are identified as:

- **Flaming:** online fights using electronic messages with angry or vulgar messages
- **Harassment:** repeatedly sending nasty, mean or insulting messages
- **Denigration:** Posting or sending gossip or rumours about a person to damage his/her reputation or friendships
- **Outing:** sharing someone's secrets or embarrassing information or images online
- **Exclusion:** Intentionally and cruelly excluding someone from an online group
- **Cyber stalking:** repeated, intense harassment and denigration that includes threats or creates significant fear.

Within the *Safe to Learn* (DCSF, 2007) resource it is identified that students can be bullied for a variety of reasons. Specific types of bullying may relate to:

- race, religion or culture
- appearance or health conditions
- sexual orientation
- home and family circumstances
- learning needs or disabilities
- gender or sexual bullying.

Just as bullying can take many different forms, it can also occur between students, staff and parents/carers. While these instances of bullying are serious and need to be addressed, the focus of this toolkit is on actions to address bullying among students.

## What behaviours are not bullying

While it is important to understand and define what bullying is, it is also important to be clear to the school community, what behaviours are NOT bullying. Dr Rigby (2010) identifies that for some people the term 'bullying' is a highly emotive term and its use may lead to an over-reaction.

The *National Centre Against Bullying* acknowledges that while the following behaviours are often upsetting to those involved, they do not constitute bullying:

- mutual arguments and disagreements (where there is no power imbalance)
- not liking someone or single acts of social rejection
- one-off acts of meanness or spite
- isolated incidents of aggression, intimidation or violence.

While these behaviours would not be considered bullying (because they do not involve deliberate and repeated harm and a power imbalance) they need to be addressed in the same way as other inappropriate student behaviours.

## What do we know about students who bully?

The research shows that students who bully are not necessarily the physically dominant student with self esteem issues. McNamara (1997) identifies students who bully as often:

- popular
- having good leadership skills
- not malicious in their intent
- thoughtless in their actions.

In the *Action Against Bullying Education Series*, Dr Michael Carr-Gregg identified other characteristics of bullies, for example they often have:

- high energy
- good verbal skills and an ability to talk themselves out of trouble
- a high estimation of their own ability
- an ability to manipulate individuals or groups
- an enjoyment of conflict and aggression
- a delight in getting their own way
- the appearance of being popular but often disliked.

## What roles can students play in bullying behaviour?

Not all students play a clear role as either the student who is bullying or the student who is being bullied. Students may take on different roles in different circumstances (for example a student who is being bullied in one context, may do the bullying in another or a student who acts as a bystander may intervene and act as a protector if the ring-leader is not around). The *Safe to Learn* (DCFS, 2007) publication identifies the different roles as:

- **Ring Leader:** students who through their social power can direct bullying activity.
- **Associates:** students who actively join in the bullying (sometimes because they are afraid of the ring-leader).
- **Reinforcers:** students who give positive feedback to the student doing the bullying, for example through comments, by smiling or laughing.
- **Outsiders/Bystanders:** students remain silent or watch and therefore appear to condone the bullying behaviour or who want to keep themselves safe by not drawing attention to themselves out of fear of the bully.

- **Defenders:** students who try to intervene to stop the bullying or comfort students who experience bullying.

## Educational Programs

*It is important that students, staff and parents/carers understand what bullying is, how it impacts on people and how bullying is responded to at Caningeraba State School. At Caningeraba State School we believe we need to educate students/staff/parents and community in the following that:*

### **Students who experience bullying report they**

- are heard
- know how to report bullying and get help
- are confident in the school's ability to deal with the bullying
- are helped to feel safe again
- are helped to rebuild confidence and resilience
- know how they can get support from others.

### **Students who bully**

- are held to account for their behaviour and the harm they have caused through appropriate disciplinary measures and learning programs
- are taught to behave in ways that do not cause harm in the future because they have developed their social and emotional skills and knowledge about the effects of their behaviour
- are supported to learn how they can take steps to repair the harm they have caused.

### **The school community**

- is aware of the activities and strategies the school uses to prevent and respond to bullying
- is engaged in developing and reviewing the actions taken by the school to address bullying
- celebrates the success of the school's approach to bullying and promoting safety

- understands the role they play and the actions they can take in preventing and responding to bullying.

### **School leaders, teachers and other school staff**

- develop whole school policies that meet the expectations of their school community and school sector
- promote a positive school culture where bullying is not tolerated and cannot flourish
- continually develop school practice based on knowledge and evidence of what works
- know how to respond to reports of bullying
- regularly review their actions to address bullying
- use teaching and learning opportunities to address bullying
- ensure supports are in place to prevent and respond to bullying
- have addressed environmental issues and promoted safe play and learning areas and are constantly vigilant in their supervision of students
- participate in relevant professional development, and are clear about their roles and responsibilities in preventing and responding to bullying
- gather useful information about the effectiveness of the actions to address bullying, and these data are used for monitoring and evaluation
- work in partnership with parents/carers, other schools and community partners to promote safe communities.

### **Parents/carers report they**

- know the school does not tolerate bullying
- are aware of procedures to use if they are concerned their child is being bullied or does not feel safe to learn, including the school's complaints procedure
- have confidence the school will take any complaint about bullying seriously, investigate/resolve as necessary and will deal with the bullying in a way that protects their child
- are aware of ways in which they can support the school's action against bullying
- know how they can support their child if affected by bullying.

- Professionally develop staff in the forms of bullying
- Professionally develop staff in dealing with bullying
- Educate students/staff/parents

## Prevention Programs

Effective social skills and positive relationships act to prevent bullying. At Caningeraba State School we promote effective social skills and positive relationships by:

- Promote our social/emotional program on assembly
- Social/Emotional program – done in class every week/2 weeks
- Parent information on bullying and cyber bullying in newsletters
- National Day of Action Against Bullying – whole school pledge against bullying and education on bystander behaviour, as well as celebration of Kindness Awards.
- National Cyber Security Week – whole school action
- Colour your World with Kindness – Student Council promotion
- Student Leaders speak on assemblies to promote effective communication, kindness, happiness, goal setting, gratitude etc – offering weekly challenges to students.
- Daily assemblies by Associate Principals to promote core school values of kindness, respect, compassion and integrity.

## Responses to bullying

Reports of bullying will be investigated and acted upon. Responses to bullying might include support for targets of bullying and perpetrators and/or disciplinary measures.

At Caningeraba State School we support targets and perpetrators by:

- Targets of bullying – support to develop resiliency skills, social strategies and ability to report in consultation with parents and support staff such as Chaplain and Guidance Officer.
- Support of Perpetrator – support to develop strategies to control emotions and modelling of appropriate social skills in consultation with parents and support staff.
- All students are taught how to respond to bullying through three steps by ignoring, telling a student to go away, advising a student that they will report and reporting. The power of bystander behaviour is also promoted, with students encouraged to support another child to walk away and report an incident.

At Caningeraba State School the consequences for bullying might include the following:

- Students are encouraged repeatedly on 11.20 assemblies and by classroom teachers to report all incidents of bullying.
- All reports of bullying are investigated.
- If a student is found to be bullying, he/she will receive consequences and parents will be contacted. This information is kept in the educational database of One School.

## Reporting and monitoring bullying

At Caningeraba State School reports of bullying are taken seriously. Students and parents/carers may report bullying in the following ways:

- Firstly, we encourage students to report bullying to their classroom teacher.
- Friendship boxes assist students in reporting.
- Sometimes students are encouraged to report directly to their Associate Principal.
- Parents can ring the school to speak to the Associate Principal or classroom teacher, However we do encourage students to take responsibility to report themselves. Therefore, we encourage parents to support their children to walk up to the classroom teacher or school office and make a report.

Reports of bullying will be collated and monitored to inform the school community about the extent of bullying and to identify particular areas of concern for future action.

## Some related resources

***School Wide Positive Behaviour Support***

[www.learningplace.com.au/deliver/content.asp?pid=24668](http://www.learningplace.com.au/deliver/content.asp?pid=24668)

***Alannah and Madeline Foundation***

<http://www.amf.org.au/AboutUs/>

***BOUNCE BACK!***

<http://www.bounceback.com.au/>

***FRIENDS for Life***

[www.friendsinfo.net/index.html](http://www.friendsinfo.net/index.html)

***Friendly Schools and Families Program***

<http://www.friendlyschools.com.au/about.php>

***Kids Helpline***

<http://www.kidshelp.com.au/>

***KidsMatter***

<http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au>

***MindMatters***

<http://www.mindmatters.edu.au/default.asp>

***ReachOut***

<http://au.reachout.com>

***National Centre Against Bullying***

<http://www.ncab.org.au/about/>

***National Safe Schools Framework***

[http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school\\_education/publications\\_resources/profiles/national\\_safe\\_schools\\_framework.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school_education/publications_resources/profiles/national_safe_schools_framework.htm)

***You Can Do It!***

[www.youcandoit.com.au](http://www.youcandoit.com.au)

Element	Not implemented	Being developed	Partially implemented	Fully implemented	Action required	Timeframe
1. A caring, respectful, inclusive and supportive school culture.						
2. A clear whole school definition of bullying.						
3. A clear anti-bullying policy developed in collaboration with staff, students and parents/carers, which addresses all forms of bullying (including cyber bullying).						
4. Procedural steps to appropriately respond to bullying incidents (for both the target and the bully) are clearly documented and clearly define the roles and responsibilities of staff, students and parents/carers.						
5. Teaching and learning programs promote Health and Physical Education and personal development and address all forms of bullying through the teaching of language skills, social skills, assertiveness, coping strategies, group mechanisms, motives for bullying and being effective bystanders.						

6. Professional development to assist school staff to understand the anti-bullying policy, implement teaching and learning programs, and to provide support for students.						
7. Students consulted regularly to monitor and determine the types of bullying behaviour and in what school and social contexts bullying occurs.						
8. Physical environments in the school and staff supervision practices that limit the incidences of bullying (including cyber bullying).						
9. Families supported and engaged through regular, clear communication and systematic parent awareness raising and skill building.						
10. Processes regularly reviewed and effectiveness of school policies, programs and procedures celebrated.						

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