

Section 10.2

Anti-Bullying Policy / “Hands Off” Policy

Rationale

St John Bosco College does not tolerate bullying. Within the College we seek to build a safe and caring Christian environment in which everyone has the right to feel safe and valued, where individual differences are accepted as everyone’s right. We all share in the responsibility of caring for others within and beyond the College Community.

Definitions

Bullying occurs when any member of the College is subjected to behaviour that is hurtful, threatening or frightening. Bullying usually involves an imbalance of power and by its nature can include verbal, physical, social and/or psychological harassment. Bullying can be carried out by an individual or a group.

Examples of bullying include:

- purposely leaving someone out of activities;
- spreading rumours;
- demand for money or possessions;
- damaging, removing or hiding belongings;
- physical violence or threats;
- putting down others and their achievements;
- name calling, teasing and ridiculing;
- writing offensive notes or graffiti about others;
- offensive text messages, emails;
- rude gestures;
- being attacked or ridiculed because of religion, race, sexuality or physical appearance.

Principles

We aim to provide a supportive environment that encourages positive relationships between all members of the school community by:

- informing students, parents and staff of the College’s Anti-bullying Policy;
- encouraging young people to learn the values of tolerance, honesty, self-discipline and co-operation within the community;
- creating a safe and happy environment for both students and staff;
- incorporating anti-bullying educational activities into pastoral programs;
- including anti-bullying activities across all KLAs ensuring a whole school approach;
- acting immediately upon any reported cases of bullying;
- encouraging staff and particularly students in leadership positions such as College Captains and members of the SLT to be role models.

Guidelines

At St John Bosco College we aim to prevent bullying by encouraging students to:

- be accepting of individual differences;
- be tolerant of individuals' strengths and weaknesses;
- deal with conflicts in a calm and respectful manner.

How to respond to bullying

Bullying is viewed as a serious breach of the College code of discipline. Any reports of bullying will be investigated thoroughly and appropriate actions will be taken. The College seeks to promote a culture in which students will be encouraged to:

- intervene if they observe an incident; take some positive action to stop the bullying,
- report the bullying incident to an adult as soon as possible,
- make it clear to their peers that bullying is not accepted.

The recipient of bullying will be encouraged to:

- not overreact to comments (if possible or appropriate);
- be assertive and ask the person concerned to stop;
- tell an **adult** – talk to your parents, teachers, Year Co-ordinator, or another responsible adult;
- report the bullying to your Pastoral Teacher, Year Coordinator, the Pastoral Care Coordinator, the Assistant Principal or the Principal.
- if the bullying continues, report the problem again;
- report instances of other people being bullied;
- respond to victims of bullying in a caring and supportive manner.

Pastoral Care

Students who are subjected to bullying:

- are treated with respect and concern;
- have access to the College Counsellor;
- are encouraged and will be offered assistance to develop strategies to better cope with and prevent being bullied.

Bullying and the College's Discipline Policy

St John Bosco College does not tolerate bullying. Disciplinary action may include:

- asking the student to examine his/her behaviour and make immediate changes;
- notifying parents;
- referring the student to a counsellor;
- initiating a Mediation Conference;
- the Year Co-ordinator initiating the College's Step-by-Step Anti-Bullying Consequence Plan;
- further disciplinary action (depending upon the seriousness of the situation);
- continuing to monitor the student's behaviour.

The College will deal seriously with students who retaliate against a person for reporting bullying.

What can parents do?

Parents play a key role in the support of both the victims and the perpetrators of bullying. The College must work in partnership with parents in the disciplinary process. Parents can assist in the following ways:

- let your child know that bullying in any form is never acceptable;
- listen to your child and take their feelings and fears seriously;
- reassure your child that being bullied is not their fault;
- inform the school of any incidents of bullying or encourage your child to inform the school.

What can students do?

All reports of bullying will be taken seriously and the College will adopt a range of responses depending on the nature of the bullying.

Bullying can be reported in any way that the student feels comfortable, including emailing a teacher or year coordinator.

For issues of dealing with staff bullying or harassment, refer to the CEO “Countering Harassment” Policy at: www.ceosyd.catholic.edu.au

Contact information for our school:

1. College counsellor phone number: 95484000
2. Community Services Helpline: 133 627
3. Sutherland Police School Liaison Officers: 9542 0899
4. NSW Health 1800 022 222

Further information for students and parents can be accessed through:

www.netalert.com.au

www.cybersmartkids.com.au

www.kidshelp.com.au

www.bullyingnoway.com.au

Cyber safety

As we educate our students to be responsible citizens in a rapidly changing world, we believe it is important for them to learn how to use information communication technologies constructively and responsibly.

Access to ICT at Bosco is a privilege that students should not see as a right.

This privilege could be suspended at any time, and for a time period deemed appropriate by the College. The College takes a vigilant stance against cyber bullying.

“Cyber bullying involves the use of information and communication technologies such as email, mobile phone and paper text messages, instant messaging, defamatory personal websites and defamatory online personal polling websites, to support deliberate, repeated and hostile behaviour by an individual that is intended to harm others.” Bill Belsey

To be eligible for ICT use throughout each academic year, each student and parents/guardians must read and sign our ICT Acceptable User Agreement in our College Diary.

Step-by-Step Anti-Bullying Consequences Plan

Both the person being bullied and the person reported for bullying will be interviewed separately.

Step One: Warning by Year Co-ordinator

Any student involved is warned about their behaviour and has explained to them the consequences of it. This stage also allows any conflicts between students to be resolved. If the initial instance of bullying is of a serious nature, the Year Co-ordinator may decide to proceed immediately to Step Two. Parents must be informed.

Step Two: Student is placed on afternoon detention.

Once they have received **two** detentions for this behaviour, their parents are requested for a formal interview with the Assistant Principal. There is also the option for counselling.

Step Three: In-school suspension.

If bullying continues, the student will be placed on an in-school detention by the Assistant Principal, who will meet with the student's parents. The Pastoral Care Co-ordinator will arrange for **compulsory counselling**.

Step Four: Suspension.

If bullying continues, the bully will be formally suspended by the Principal. An interview between the Principal and the parents will take place.

Step Five: Further Sanctions

If bullying persists or is of an extremely serious nature, the Principal will discuss the student's enrolment status with the parents.

Hands Off Policy

In accordance with the Preventive System of Saint John Bosco, the founder of the Salesian Family, and with the College's Pastoral Care and Behavioural Management Policies and Procedures, unnecessary contact between students and their belongings is to be avoided at all times in order to uphold the dignity, wellbeing and safety of the students and staff of St John Bosco College, Engadine.

Unnecessary contact between students and their belongings in a school situation covers the following areas:

- Physical fights or altercations.
- Playful wrestling, pushing or grabbing.
- Contact of a physical or sexual nature.
- Extended displays of affection such as holding hands or embracing.
- Interfering with others property including; bags, equipment and other personal items.

The reasons for the "Hands Off Policy" are:

- The innate God-given dignity of the individual.
- All students have the right to be treated with care and respect by others.
- All students have the right to exist in a safe and secure environment, which is happy and peaceful.

- All students have the right to be protected from contact, harassment or intimidation of a physical or sexual nature.
- All students have the right to study in a school that safeguards their personal wellbeing, space, uniform and belongings from injury and damage.
- All staff members, visitors and “innocent bystanders” have the right to be protected from harm to personal wellbeing space and possessions, which may result from contact between students.
- The College itself has the right to be protected from damage to its furniture, equipment, property, and reputation.

According to this policy, in the event of unnecessary contact between students all members of the College staff have the responsibility and authority to say “Hands Off” to the student(s) involved. At this command, the student(s) involved will cease contact **IMMEDIATELY** and **UNQUESTIONINGLY**, because it is the accepted policy.

All students have an **OBLIGATION** to honour and uphold the abovementioned rights of other students at all times and to treat them and their property with care and respect, according to the Catholic and Salesian ethos of their College.

Breaking the hands-off policy can result in a range of consequences as listed in the College Pastoral Care Policy.

Reviewed Dec 2016 by M. Donnelly