

Bullying Prevention Policy

Policy Statement

Kennedy Baptist College aims to create and maintain a safe, nurturing and engaging educational community where students can thrive academically, socially, emotionally, physically, and spiritually.

The College aims to proactively address bullying through prevention, support, and behaviour management strategies.

Rationale

In accordance with the *School Education Act 1999*, all staff working with students have a duty of care to take reasonable steps to prevent students from foreseeable harm. This includes taking reasonable steps to prevent foreseeable physical or psychological harm occurring because of bullying.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Aggression	Aggression is words or actions (both overt and covert) that are directed towards another and intended to harm, distress, coerce or cause fear.
Bullying	<p>Bullying is an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and / or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social, and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening.</p> <p>Bullying can happen in person or online, and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (e.g., through sharing of digital records).</p> <p>Bullying of any form or for any reason can have immediate, medium, and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.</p> <p><i>(National definition of bullying for Australian schools)</i></p>
Cyber bullying	Cyberbullying is an alternative label for online bullying, and describes bullying carried out through the internet and mobile devices.

Definitions continued.

Term	Definition
Digital Citizenship Agreement	A College agreement that sets out the expectations for students working, interacting, and keeping each other safe online.
Violence	Violence is the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against another person(s) that results in psychological harm, injury or in some cases death.

What is bullying?

Bullying is an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and / or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social, and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening.

Bullying is a complex issue and consequences for bullying when it does occur will depend on the type of bullying behaviour, validity of evidence of the bullying behaviour, occurrences, and / or opportunities for reconciliation.

There are many ways bullying can be described including: the type of behaviour, the setting, means, visibility, and the harm it causes.

Table 1. Types of Bullying

Types of Behaviour	Verbal bullying includes name calling or insulting someone about physical characteristics such as their weight or height, or other attributes including race, sexuality, culture, or religion.	Physical bullying includes hitting or otherwise hurting someone, shoving, or intimidating another person, or damaging or stealing their belongings.	Social bullying includes consistently excluding another person or sharing information or images that will have a harmful effect on the other person.
Setting	In person – verbal, physical and social bullying can happen in person.		Online – verbal and social bullying can happen online, as can threats of physical bullying. Specific features of online settings create additional concern for students, parents, and teachers because bullying someone online can potentially have an enormous audience.
Means	Direct bullying occurs between the people involved.	Indirect bullying mostly inflicts harm by damaging another’s social reputation, peer relationships and self-esteem.	
Visibility	Overt bullying involves physical actions such as punching or kicking or observable verbal actions such as name-calling and insulting even in jest.	Covert bullying can be almost impossible for people outside the interpersonal interaction to identify. Covert bullying can include repeatedly using hand gestures and weird or threatening looks, whispering, excluding, or turning your back on a person, restricting where a person can sit and who they can talk to. Covert social or verbal bullying can be subtle and even sometimes denied by a person who claims they were joking or “just having fun”.	
Harm	Physical harm caused by some types of bullying is well recognised.	Short term and long-term psychological harm can result from bullying. This includes harm to a person’s social standing or reducing a person’s willingness to socialise through bullying. Just the fear of bullying can create distress and harm.	

What is not bullying?

Conflict

Not all negative interactions between people are considered bullying. Conflict is a mutual disagreement, argument, or dispute between people where no one has a significant power advantage, and both feel equally aggrieved. Conflict resolution is a way to find a peaceful solution to a disagreement. When conflict arises, the best College will assist negotiation to resolve the disagreement. (*Reference Bullying, No Way! Website, 2023*).

One-off Incidents

One-off incidents involving social isolation, conflict, random acts of violence or aggression are not defined as bullying, however these incidents will be managed in accordance with the College's Discipline Policy.

Signs of Bullying

Each individual student who has been bullied will respond and act differently. A student's behaviour and moods can also change for a variety of reasons. Signs a teacher may notice that may indicate a student is experiencing bullying includes:

- Student is often alone or excluded from friendship groups at school.
- Student is a frequent target for teasing, mimicking, or ridicule at school.
- Change in the student's ability or willingness to speak up in class and appears insecure or frightened.
- Student becomes aggressive and unreasonable.
- Student starts getting into fights.
- Student refuses to talk about what is wrong.
- School grades begin to decline.

Parents may be the first to notice the signs that their child may be being bullied. Signs for parents may include:

- Their child doesn't want to go to school.
- Their child changes their method or route to school or are frightened of walking to school.
- Changes in their child's sleeping pattern.
- Changes in their child's eating patterns.
- Frequent tears, anger, or mood swings.
- Unexplained bruises, cuts, or scratches.
- Missing or damaged belongings or clothes.

A referral to the College Psychologist, Counsellors, or Chaplain to determine the cause of the issues may take place. A student who bullies may:

- Repeatedly tease, imitate, or make fun of the same targets.
- Feel the need to dominate or control others.
- Show no compassion for someone experiencing bullying.
- Repeatedly exclude or ignore the same target.
- Whisper behind their backs on a frequent basis.

Students who frequently bully others are more likely to:

- Feel disconnected from school and dislike school.
- Demonstrate good leadership skills.
- Demonstrate good verbal skills and ability to talk themselves out of trouble.

Prevention Strategies

The College's strategies for preventing bullying includes:

1. Building a positive College culture

Leadership Commitment

The Pastoral Care Program at Kennedy Baptist College is the foundation for student safety and wellbeing at the College. The four (4) pillars of the Pastoral Care Program include: wellness, outreach program, leadership, and behaviour management. Both staff and student leadership are committed to building a positive school culture.

Rights and Responsibilities

All students and staff have the right to be treated with respect, courtesy, and kindness by all members of the College community. Everyone in the College community is responsible for treating others with respect, courtesy, and kindness and to uphold the College's ethos and values.

College Policies

Rights and responsibilities of all students and staff are supported in various policies of the College including the *Student Code of Conduct*, and the *Student Safety and Wellbeing Policy* which outlines the College's strategies for keeping its students safe and protecting their wellbeing. The *Discipline Policy* details how poor and unacceptable behaviour will be managed including bullying behaviour.

The College's policies:

- a. Are presented and discussed with students and parents / guardians in their entry interview.
- b. Are reinforced within year groups.

- c. Are clearly reinforced with the students as they engage with it. This is also reinforced to parents of students who engage in bullying behaviours.
- d. Include consequences for bullying behaviour including suspension and / or exclusion from the College.

Education and Curriculum

At the College students participate in social and emotional learning programs, such as the Protective Behaviours Program. These programs teach students:

- Resilience
- Confidence
- Getting along; and
- Organisation.

As part of this program, students are encouraged to deal with conflict in constructive ways, to communicate in more effective ways and to examine their thinking processes to find more rational ways of dealing with difficult situations or people.

There are numerous opportunities within the curriculum (e.g., health and physical education) for students to:

- Understand the nature of bullying.
- Understand personal safety.
- Develop interpersonal communication and problem-solving skills e.g., negotiation, mediation, conflict resolution and assertiveness.
- Develop self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Acquire the ability to understand, respect and care for others.

Student supervision

The College has a well-organised and responsive system of supervision in place during school hours, before and after school and on school excursions and camps. Staff actively monitor student activities around the College and set clear boundaries for students to work and play in.

Peer support programs

Students are provided with training that teaches them how to mentor and provide support for younger students. This gives students additional support if they are feeling vulnerable.

Upstanding behaviour

An upstander is someone who acts against bullying behaviour. When an upstander sees someone being bullied, they do something about it. They help to stop the bullying from happening, or they support the person who's being bullied. An upstander may:

- Let the person being bullied know that they are there for them.
- Shift the focus away from the bullying situation.
- Call the person out on their bullying behaviour.
- Leave the situation, and then act – if they don't feel safe to step in and stop the bullying while it's happening, the best thing to do may be to walk away and think about how to help.
- Ask for help.

2. Response

The College will respond to any reports of bullying by:

- Investigating the incident(s).
- Promoting the restoration of relationships and a positive learning environment.
- Providing ongoing support to the victim.
- Determining appropriate consequences.
- Providing ongoing monitoring of the circumstances and environment if required.

Resources

Websites relating to bullying which may provide useful information for staff, students, and parents:

- *Bullying. No way!*
- *eSafety Commissioner - Cyber bullying*
- *Kids Helpline*

Version Control					
Version	Date Published	Changes	Endorsed by the Board	Next Review	Author of version
1	01/01/2013				
2	27/06/2018		25/02/2021	03/2023	
3	17/03/2021		25/02/2023	03/2023	
4	20/07/2023	Amendments to the policy statement, rationale, definitions, types of bullying, signs of bullying, prevention strategies. Addition of "what is not bullying".	19/07/2023	02/2025	C Acciano