

Helensvale State School



Preparing for the future

Anti-Bullying Policy

March 2010

Value Statement

Helensvale State School does not tolerate bullying in any form. All members of our school community are committed to ensuring a safe and supportive environment which promotes personal growth and a positive self esteem **for all**.

Definition of Bullying

'Bullying is a form of aggressive behaviour which is usually hurtful and deliberate: it is often persistent, sometimes continuing for weeks, months or even years and it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. Underlying most bullying behaviour is an abuse of power and a desire to intimidate and dominate.' (Sharp and Smith, 1994)

Rigby (1996) states that bullying contains seven features. These are:

1. An intention to be hurtful
2. This intention is carried out
3. The behaviour harms the target
4. The bully overwhelms the target with his or her power
5. There is often no justification for the action
6. The behaviour repeats itself again and again
7. The bully derives a sense of satisfaction from hurting the target

It is important to understand that bullying comes in many forms. If bullying behaviours can be identified, incidents can be reported more accurately.

Physical bullying – is fighting, kicking, punching, hitting, shoving, pinching, abusive gestures and moving in close on the target's personal space.

Verbal bullying – is when the bully uses words in a malicious way to cause distress to another and thus feels powerful. This includes teasing, swearing, using put-downs, spreading nasty rumours, using stand-over tactics and making repeated abusive phone calls.

Emotional Bullying includes

Extortion – is when the bully blackmails and threatens the target and forces the target to give them money.

Visual bullying – is when the bully passes insulting notes around, or puts notes into the target's bag or writes graffiti about the target.

Exclusion – is when the target is deliberately left out, ignored, not allowed to play, made to feel invisible, given the worst job in the group or when the group runs off and hides from them.

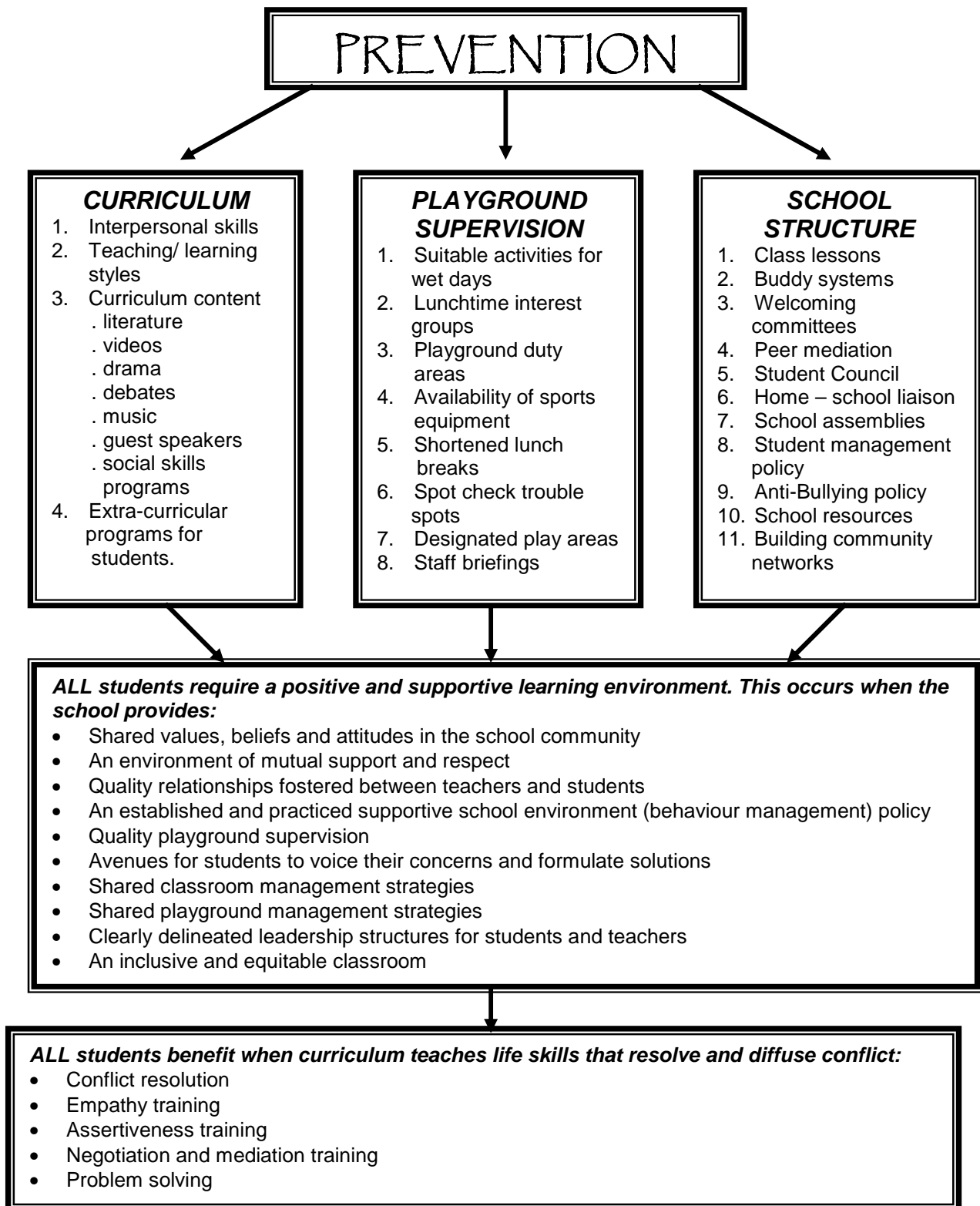
Sexual bullying – is when the target is the subject of obscene drawings, gestures, and rude jokes or brushing up against the target, touching when the target does not want to be touched and asking questions of a sexual nature to shame or embarrass.

Racial bullying – is when the target is labelled negatively as being different to others because of their race. Bullying can be physical, social or psychological.

Cyber bullying – is when the target receives nasty, offensive and unwanted emails or text messages aimed to embarrass hurt or threaten.

Prevention Strategies

Implementing prevention strategies throughout the school is essential if the need for intervention is to be reduced. There needs to be a whole-of-school move to break the bullying cycle by implementing strategies for prevention so that if a bullying incident does develop students, staff and parents are equipped to deal with it.



Reporting a bullying incident

Encouraging students to report incidents of bullying is vital, as bullying cannot be reduced without reporting. We need to make it easier for students to report by ensuring a whole of school knowledge and understanding of how to report, who to report to and when to report.

Many students remain quiet because of the stigma in our society about telling tales, fear of reprisal and many other reasons.

Mechanisms to ensure that students can report incidents of bullying in a safe and private manner need to be developed, while students need to be reassured that the information they have shared will not cause them to lose status in their peer group. It is vital that confidentiality be maintained.

A major step in reducing bullying is to create a 'telling culture'. In promoting a telling culture, it is imperative that teachers through their conversations guide students to make the distinction between *telling tales(dobbing)* and *responsible reporting*, for example:

"Telling tales or dobbing is when you can really handle the problem yourself but you want to get the other person into trouble. You exaggerate the problem."

"Responsible reporting is when the problem is too big for you to handle and you need an adult to help you."

A formal monitoring system needs to be established to ensure that all reported incidents of bullying can be followed up by the teacher/s involved or referred to the Behaviour Management Teacher for further investigation.

See Appendix A for reporting proformas.

Dealing with a bullying incident

It is important that all members of the school community know how to deal with bullying.

There is no simple quick fix solution when dealing with a bullying incident. If the school community has built a solid foundation of beneficial curriculum and effective leadership and management practices with the focus on prevention, intervention in many cases may not be necessary.

INTERVENTION



SOME students need a more specific vehicle for dealing with conflict and other difficulties related to bullying. These include:

- . No Blame Approach/ Method of Shared Concern
- . logical consequences
- . time out
- . individual student management plan
- . parent involvement

A FEW students require:

- . counselling
- . suspension
- . exclusion

No Blame Approach

Bullying is addressed by establishing a support group of bullies and/ or bystanders involved in a particular incident. A problem solving approach is used, which gives responsibility rather than blame to the group. The group reports back at regular meetings. Appendix B outlines the seven steps involved in the procedure.

Method of Shared Concern

The Method of Shared Concern uses a non-confrontational counselling style, with the primary focus being to find a solution. The aim is to enable the target and the bully to function peacefully within the same school (not to develop a friendship). Appendix C outlines the three stages of this procedure.

Logical consequences

Students who bully need to be made aware that their behaviour is related to an outcome. It has consequences which will affect themselves and others.

Time out

Students who bully are removed from the playground/ class/ group. It is not to be seen as punitive, but as a time to reflect on their behaviour and offer a solution.

Individual Student Management Plan

An individual student management plan:

- Is an adjunct to a well developed student management policy
- Is the result of negotiation between teacher(s) and student
- Needs to be simple, measurable, reliable and set within a time frame

An individual student management plan must state:

- What is the behaviour goal for that student
- Where the behaviours have occurred and are occurring
- How to achieve this plan
- When to start the plan

Before implemented a plan, it is advised that the teacher monitors the negative behaviour and discusses this with the student in a non-judgemental manner, also that the teachers meets with the parents for discussion. The rationale behind an individual student management plan is that the student can grow in self reliance and self discipline through a process that:

- Is oriented to problem solving
- Explores alternatives
- Gives choice, developing the skills of decision making
- Requires commitment from the student and the teacher

The benefits of an individual student management plan are that it:

- Fosters creative thinking and problem solving
- Gives the student the opportunity to make a commitment
- Empowers the student to become responsible for his or her actions
- Gives the student the experience of making a choice, hence developing the process of deliberation, decision making and planning.

Appendix D has an example of a suitable proforma.

Parent involvement

The key to tackling school bullying is creating a partnership between teachers, administrators, parents, students and the broader community. Bullying cannot be stopped if the teacher, student or parent is working in isolation.

Building a partnership takes time, energy and integrity. Parents need to feel comfortable about working in partnership with the school in a variety of ways.

It is the school's role to invite and involve parents on both a formal and informal basis. Areas for involvement include:

- Assisting in the classroom
- Attending social functions
- Open days
- Attending excursions with students
- Parent committees
- Family evenings
- Newsletters
- Parent education programs

Such opportunities for parental involvement help parents to feel valued as members of the school community and also to feel heard and acknowledged, whether it be to positively affirm, constructively criticise or share concerns and fears relating to their child.

Rights and responsibilities of students, teachers and parents

ALL school community members have the right to feel safe and supported in our school environment.

As a school community we have the responsibility to ensure that cases of bullying do not go unreported and to speak up, even if it means stepping outside our comfort zone.

Staff have responsibility to:

- Be role models in word and action at all times
- Be observant of signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying
- Make efforts to remove occasions for bullying by active patrolling during playground duty
- Arrive to class and line up areas on time

- Take steps to help victims and remove sources of distress without placing the victim at further risk
- Report suspected incidents of bullying

Students have responsibility to:

- Refuse to be involved in any bullying situation
- Report any incident or suspected incident to help break the code of secrecy
- Take some form of affirmative action, if appropriate
- Speak out if they are being bullied

Bystander Code

- Don't join in
- Don't smile to show that you agree with the bully's behaviour
- Tell others you don't like the bullying behaviour
- Call a teacher for help immediately
- Go with the target to tell the teacher
- Show care for the target by standing near him or her
- Ask the bullied student to join in your game
- Ask the student if he or she feels okay
- Distract the student who is bullying



Parents have the responsibility to:

- To watch for signs of distress in their child
- Advise their child to tell a teacher of the incident immediately
- Inform the school if bullying is suspected
- Work with the school if their child is involved in bullying

Monitoring and evaluating the policy

Helensvale State School is committed to reviewing the policy annually, and to assess its effectiveness within the school community. Follow up surveys will be conducted with students, staff and parents to monitor changes in values and practices as a result of the policy.

The goal of our Anti-Bullying Policy is to make the school a safe and happier place for everyone. Attainment of this goal is measured by:

- A reduction in the number of persons who are bullied by others
- A reduction in the severity of the bullying
- A reduction in the number of people who engage in bullying others
- An increase in the support that is provided to those who are bullied in any way.

Appendices



HELENSVALE STATE SCHOOL

BULLYING INCIDENT REPORT

(for completion by teacher)

Date of report:

Teacher completing report:

Signature:

DETAILS OF REPORT

1. Where incident occurs?

2. Who is involved?

3. How long has bullying been occurring?

4. What happened?

SOLUTIONS OFFERED BY STUDENTS

TEACHER FOLLOW UP

Teacher to follow up:

Review date:

People who need to be informed:

Comments:



HELENSVALE STATE SCHOOL

BULLYING: STUDENT REPORT FORM

Student's Name:

Date:

Teacher involved:

The teachers at our school will do their best to help you deal with bullying problems. Sharing your thoughts and feelings about the problem will help us find the best way to deal with it.



Who is involved?

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What happened?

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Where does it happen?

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How can we solve the problem?

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THE NO BLAME APPROACH

Step 1: Interview the target of the bullying

The teacher interviews the bullied student to find out about his or her feelings. The teacher does not need to know all about the incident but does need to know who is involved. Permission must be gained from the bullied student to tell the bullies how he or she is feeling about the incident. The target is reassured that the bullies will not be in trouble so there is no concern for reprisal.

Step 2: Convene a meeting with the students involved

An informal but powerful peer situation is being established. The main bullies, bystanders and colluders are included. This may be a small group of six students who meet together with the teacher separately from the target. The support group often needs reassurance at the beginning of the meeting that they are not in trouble. The teacher explains that they have been chosen as they can offer help in some way. This is what the group has in common.

An informal atmosphere is created by arranging seating in a circular fashion and, if possible, using a room that is neutral ground for those involved.

Step 3: Share with the group the target's feelings

The teacher shares indirectly how the bullied student is feeling, not apportioning blame with details of the actual incident. The teacher may have a poem, story, drawing or diary entry done by the target to illustrate how he or she feels. (Research indicates that effective education for bullies is empathy training.) The teacher's aim is to raise empathy within the group, asking questions such as: "Has anyone ever been bullied at school?"

The teacher listens to the students' responses, suggesting that the target must be feeling like that too. The teacher does not ask 'why' questions. In the end it serves only to waste time and distracts students from offering solutions.

Step 4: Hand over responsibility to the group

The teacher emphasises in a non-judgemental way that everyone has the right to feel safe and happy at school. The teacher reassures the group that they can support the target, thus handing over responsibility to them. The focus becomes the solution not the blame.

Step 5: Ask the group for their ideas and solutions

The teacher asks students to suggest ways that they could make the bullied student feel happier at school. The teacher then offers approving comments but does not extract a promise from the students regarding their solutions.

It is advised to ignore negative and resentful comments, and to focus on praising suggestions offered from the group. This often reassures the quieter students to make contributions or to reinforce someone else. Some teachers believe including a couple of responsible students (who may be in leadership roles) can help raise the social conscience of the group and the flow of the process.

Step 6: Let the students implement the plan

The teacher ends the meeting by giving the students the responsibility to solve the problem and together develop a plan. It is vital that the responsibility is passed on to the group, encouraging ownership in terms of implementing the plan. The teacher expresses confidence in the group and arranges a time and place to follow up and review the situation with each student individually.

Step 7: Follow up interviews with each student

As arranged, the teacher meets with each of the students a week later to review solutions. It is best to check in with the target first. The teacher ascertains whether the bullying has stopped. If so, each student is complimented and thanked. Reviews can be continued for as long as required. Usually two reviews are adequate.



Appendix B: The No Blame Approach

METHOD OF SHARED CONCERN



The role of the teacher of the teacher is to:

- Find a quiet place away from the classroom so that the interview can be held in private
- Listen to each student without judgement or blame
- Refrain from 'trying to get to the bottom of it'
- Remain empathic during the interview, allowing students enough time to say what they need to
- Create a positive climate during the interview by arranging the chairs in a non-confrontational manner
- Steer students towards positive outcomes
- Document the incident and solutions offered
- Inform necessary parties, such as parents and other teachers
- Follow up and follow through

Stage 1 First meeting: Interviews with the bullies

Each bully is interviewed separately. The teacher commences with the ringleader as he or she carries the most power and control within the group.

When the student is seated and looking at the teacher, the issue is raised of the target having difficulty being at school. The teacher might start with a statement such as "Maggie is having a hard time at school lately" (indirect), said in assertive tone, or "I hear you've been nasty to Maggie. Tell me about it" (direct). This is said assertively but in a non-judgemental manner.

No matter in which way the bully responds, the teacher does not engage in blame or interrogation, or waste time asking the student "why" questions as often students do not know why they have engaged in negative behaviours. It is the teacher's role at this point to voice concern about Maggie. And it is at this point that there is usually an expression of concern and admission that he or she was involved in the situation.

Next the teacher asks the student, "I was wondering what you could do to help Maggie in this situation?"

It is important that the teacher waits for the student to come up with solutions, then gives encouragement and praise. The teacher comments by saying, "Great, you try that out for the week and we'll check out what's been happening when I see you on ... (date)."

In some cases students are reluctant to offer solutions and suggestions. The teacher may need to make suggestions with which the student feels comfortable, for example: "I've got an idea that may be useful, I'd like to tell you about it."

Dealing with difficulties

- If a student is unable to offer a solution, the teacher then offers a solution in a supportive manner.
- If a student does not want to take responsibility for the problem, the teacher continues to work on raising empathy without bringing blame to the

situation.

- If the student is unco-operative and silent, the teacher waits silently for the student to speak.
- If the student offers solutions that are ineffective, the teacher leads the student to see if the solutions offered would stop the bullying.

Interview with the target

After speaking with the bullies, the target is interviewed.

When the target feels comfortable, the teacher begins the interview with, "How have things been going? I hear some unpleasant things have been happening to you."

The target will generally discuss how he or she has been feeling and what has been taking place. This allows the teacher to ascertain the type of victim behaviour the target has been experiencing: the classic, provocative, passive or colluding (Lesson 1). Together the target and teacher can explore solutions and strategies and establish what action will be taken.

Remember – at this stage it is important to remain patient and supportive. For many students who have been targeted, it has taken considerable courage to finally tell. Their need to be heard and reassured that a resolution will take place is crucial.

Stage 2 Follow up meeting

At this stage the teacher meets with each student separately to find out how she or he has been going with their proposed course of action. If the bullying persists, the teacher continues to work with the students individually to further foster an understanding of the target's position and his or her feelings as well so that a suitable solution can be formulated. If it has stopped, the teacher reminds the students to continue in this manner and informs them individually that a group meeting will be held at a designated date.

Remember – congratulate students when they have followed through on their strategies and solutions.

Stage 3 Final meeting

This final meeting is important. The key purpose is to maintain the changes in behaviour that have occurred and allow students to behave congenially toward the target.

Preparation allows for better results, thus it is best to meet the bullying students first, allowing them to prepare what positive comments they can say to the target. The teacher then invites the target, supporting him or her as they all sit comfortably together.

The teacher briefly discusses how well the situation has improved and asks the students how they can maintain this situation, steering towards a positive agreement between both parties of how they can behave in the future.

Remember – the target can sit next to the teacher for moral support. Another meeting is arranged in six weeks to review the situation.

Individual Student Management Plan



My Record of Behaviour



Name:

Class: Date:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday

Coaching tips from my teacher

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😊😊😊 I am doing well

😐😐 I am doing OK

😞 I am not doing so well



My Rewards

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