Anti-Bullying Policy

Related Policies and Documents and Acts

Student Management (Discipline) Policy
Education Act 1990 (NSW)
Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)
Education Act (2008) (ACT)
Children and Young People Act 2008 (ACT)

What is Bullying?

Bullying is the repeated and intentional behaviour of causing fear, distress or harm towards another person that involves an imbalance of power. It can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and harassment. In any bullying incident there are likely to be three parties involved: the bully, the person being bullied, and bystanders.

Bullying can take many forms including:

Physical bullying which involves physical actions such as hitting, pushing, obstructing or being used to hurt or intimidate someone. Damaging, stealing or hiding personal belongings is also a form of physical bullying.

Psychological bullying is when words or actions are used to cause psychological harm. Examples of psychological bullying include name calling, teasing or making fun of someone because of their actions, appearance, physical characteristics or cultural background.

Indirect bullying is when deliberate acts of exclusion or spreading of untrue stories are used to hurt or intimidate someone.

Cyber bullying is the ongoing abuse of power to threaten or harm another person using technology. Cyber bullying can occur in chat rooms, on social networking sites, through emails or on mobile phones.

What bullying is not:

There are many negative situations which, whilst being potentially distressing for students, are not bullying. These include:

- Mutual Conflict Situations which arise where there is disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Mutual conflict situations need to be closely monitored as they may evolve into a bullying situation; or

- One Off Acts (of aggression or meanness) including single incidents of loss of temper, shouting or swearing do not normally constitute bullying.

Signs of Bullying

Major behaviour changes in a student may be indicative of bullying. Such behavioural changes may include:

- Crying at night and having nightmares;
- Refusing to talk when asked "What's wrong?";
- Having unexplained bruises, cuts or scratches;
- An unwillingness or refusal to go to *school/college*;
- Feeling ill in the mornings;
- A decline in quality of school work;
- Becoming withdrawn and lacking confidence;
- Beginning to bully siblings; and
- Acting unreasonably.

Parents/carers are encouraged to recognise signs of bullying and notify a teacher or the Principal, if they suspect their child is a victim of bullying.

Our Policy

We recognise it is our duty to students to provide a safe and positive learning environment where individual differences and diversity is respected and accepted.

Bullying is not tolerated at CECG's Schools, Early Learning Centres and Offices.

It is our policy that:

Bullying be managed through a 'whole of school community' approach involving students, staff and parents/carers.

Bullying prevention strategies be implemented within the school on a continuous basis with a focus on teaching age appropriate skills and strategies to empower staff, students and parents/carers to recognise bullying and respond appropriately;

Bullying response strategies be tailored to the circumstances of each incident;

Students establish positive role models emphasising our no-bullying culture; and

Bullying prevention and intervention strategies are reviewed regularly.

Bullying Prevention Strategies

We recognise that the implementation of whole school prevention strategies are the most effective way of eliminating, or at least minimising incidents of bullying within our community.

The following initiatives can form part of our overall bullying prevention strategy and our strategy to create a 'no bullying' culture within our community.

- A structured curriculum and peer group support system, that provides age appropriate information and skills relating to bullying (including cyber bullying) and bullying prevention, to students over the course of the academic year;
- Education, training and professional development of staff in bullying prevention and response strategies;
- Regular provision of information to parents/carers, to raise awareness of bullying as a community issue to equip them to recognise signs of bullying, as well as to provide them with clear paths for raising any concerns they may have relating to bullying;
- Promotion of a supportive environment that encourages the development of positive relationships and communication ;
- Reporting of incidents of alleged bullying; and
- Records of reported bullying incidents are maintained and analysed, in order to identify persistent bullies and/or victims and to implement targeted prevention strategies where appropriate.

Reporting Bullying
Students and their parents/carers are sometimes reluctant to pursue bullying incidents, for fear that it will only make matters worse.

A key part of our bullying prevention and intervention strategy is to encourage reporting of bullying incidents as well providing assurance to students who experience bullying (and parents/carers) that:

- Bullying is not tolerated
- Their concerns will be taken seriously; and
- That we have a clear strategy for dealing with bullying issues.

Bullying incidents can be advised to us verbally (or in writing) through any of the following avenues:

- Informing a teacher;
- Informing the counsellor;
- Informing a student's year co-ordinator ; or
- Informing the Assistant Principal or the Principal.

Responding to Bullying

Bullying behaviours vary enormously in their extent and intent and, as a consequence, each incident needs to be dealt with on its facts.

In all circumstances we:

- Take time to properly investigate the facts;
- Take time to understand any concerns of individuals involved;
- Maintain records of reported bullying incidents; and
  Will escalate our response when dealing with persistent bullies and/or severe incidents.

Actions that may be taken when responding to bullying include:

- Notification of / Consultation with parents/carers;
- Offering counselling to persistent bullies/victims;
- Implementing effective follow up strategies; and
- Disciplinary action at the Principal's discretion.

Staff Responsibilities

All staff are responsible for
- Modelling appropriate behavior at all times;
- Dealing with all reported and observed incidents of bullying in accordance with this policy;
- Ensuring that any incident of bullying that they observe or is reported to them, is recorded;
- Being vigilant in monitoring students that have been identified as either persistent bullies or victims; and
- Acknowledge the right of parents/carers to speak with us if they believe their child is being bullied.

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