Atlantis Beach Baptist College

Bullying Prevention Policy

Title of Policy/Procedure	**Bullying Prevention Policy**
Endorsed by	**Principal**
Reviewed	**October 2022**
Next review date	**October 2025**
To whom issued	**College staff and community**

Atlantis Beach Baptist College believes that no one deserves to be bullied - even if their behaviour is irritating or annoying. Retaliation is not acceptable behaviour at ABBC. Students are encouraged to deal with problems in other ways. Discussions on this topic in classrooms occur continually throughout the year. Positive change and resolution of disputes is the priority but bullying behaviour, whether physical or verbal, will not be tolerated.

If students or parents have concerns they are encouraged to contact the school, discussing issues with the child's classroom teacher in the first instance.

What is Bullying?
Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. Cyberbullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies.

Bullying can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and all forms of harassment including that based on sex, race, disability, homosexuality or transgender. Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved including bystanders.

Bullying may include:
- verbal abuse, including name calling, racist remarks, teasing, etc
- physical acts, including pushing, hitting, punching, hair pulling, scratching, spitting, etc
- racist comments, social exclusion, including ostracism, ignoring, alienating, etc
- psychological abuse, including acts that instil a sense of fear or anxiety
- gestural abuse, such as threatening or obscene gestures, staring, deliberately turning away to ignore someone
- sexual harassment, such as inappropriate touching, inappropriate sexual references, sexist comments and inappropriate joking etc
- cyber abuse to harass or intimidate others, such as the use of SMS, electronic mail and other electronic means, or social networking sites for example Facebook and Instagram.

Aims
In relation to bullying, the College aims to:
- provide a safe and supportive environment for all students
- provide an environment in which students feel they can report incidents of bullying
- provide support to students who are bullied
- provide a supportive environment, in which students engaging in bullying modify their behaviour
- apply appropriate sanctions, including, where necessary, removal from the College, of students who do not modify their bullying behaviour within a reasonable time frame
- deal with bullying in a timely and effective manner
- work closely with parents in both supporting victims and modifying the bullying behaviour of students who engage in bullying
- maintain a database of bullying incidents

How to recognise a student being bullied
Students who are being bullied or harassed may not talk about it with their teachers, friends or the Principal. They may be afraid that it will only make things worse or they may feel that it is wrong to 'tell tales'.

Parents and teachers have an important part to play in helping the school and the student deal with bullying. A change of behaviour in students may be an indicator that they are being bullied or they have some other concern.

Signs
The symptoms associated with bullying include, but are not limited to;
- not wanting to go to school, anger and tears
- depression, low self-esteem and a raft of psychosomatic symptoms such as headaches and stomach aches and bedwetting
- sleeplessness can also be symptoms of bullying, particularly in the young
- withdrawal and reluctance to 'join in' can be a warning sign, as can truancy, misbehaviour and aggressive behaviour
- cuts, bruising, torn clothing, requests for extra food or money
- a decline in academic performance can also be clues that a student may be suffering from bullying.

Cyber Bullying
Cyber bullying is causing hurt via modern technologies such as the Internet, and other forms of social media, and through the use of smart phones and other mobile devices. Cyber bullying is a growing problem in society. Modern technologies empower the individual, even the most unlikely of individuals, with an immense capacity to cause harm. It is also an attractive means of bullying for it can, under certain conditions, be carried out with relative anonymity.

Cyber bullying can be particularly damaging because of the capacity it has to humiliate, hurt and harm a person in front of a huge 'audience'. A dangerous feature of cyber bullying is that it can be done quickly and easily.

On an impulse, a person can create emotional havoc for another and do so before the voice of reason hints at the inappropriateness of the action. A further problem with cyber bullying is that the bully is often unaware of the extent of the harm they are causing because cyber bullying seldom occurs face-to-face. The feedback is muted by distance so that the bully is protected from an understanding of the hurt caused by their behaviour.

Cyber bullying represents unlawful activity that may result in police laying charges. Cyber bullying has been linked to depression, self-harm and even suicide.
It should also be noted that even if cyber bullying is engaged in while not at school, the matter will often be taken up by the school because the moral welfare of the students it impacts is of importance to Atlantis Beach Baptist College, as is anything that brings the school into disrepute or causes disharmony amongst students.

Examples of Cyber bullying:
- sending hateful or threatening comments or pictures via mobile phone or the Internet, and by social networking sites such as Instagram and Facebook
- using modern technologies to engage in the social exclusion of someone and in hate group recruitment
- posting rude, explicit or embarrassing messages or pictures about someone on the Internet
- stealing someone's identity in order to harm them in some way
- putting pressure on a person to send revealing or compromising pictures of themselves
- covertly filming, recording or taking a picture of someone and posting the images on the Internet to cause hurt.
- 'outing' and disseminating confidential information about someone
- using aliases and pseudonyms in chat rooms and on social networking sites in order to harass and upset
- engaging in cyber-stalking and the invading of privacy
- referring to your school in a negative or disparaging way on the Internet.

Sexting
Sexting is taking sexually explicit photos, videos or messages and making them available for others to see without permission via a carriage service such as mobile phone or computer. Due to the fact that underage sexting offences are legally considered child pornography, we feel it is essential that today's youth are aware of the consequences and dangers associated with the risk of sexting.

Cyber Safety
Students can protect themselves from some forms of cyber harm by noting the following advice:
1. Never tell anyone, even your friends, your passwords, private details or access codes
2. When speaking to someone you do not know on the Internet, be aware they may not be who they say they are.
3. Be aware that there are predators who use the internet to lure young people into inappropriate sexual relationships. Others use tricks, such as pretending to be a bank, to get the victim to share their confidential financial details. This usually results in identity fraud and the stealing of money.
4. Never tell people you do not know well what your address is, or how they can meet up with you.
5. Always be careful what you say or what you show a person in confidence on the Internet, for it is never guaranteed to remain confidential. The information may be sent on to others
6. Know that the most frequent use of the Internet is for illegal activities such as scams, pornography and gambling.
7. Finally, if you find yourself the victim of cyber bullying, keep the evidence and report the bullying to an appropriate adult. It is generally best not to respond to the cyber bully, or give them any satisfaction they have caused you hurt. If you do respond to the bully, do not do so while hot with anger. This can result in mutual cyber bullying which means both parties become guilty of bullying.

Students need to remember that something sent electronically can never be entirely removed even with a press of the 'delete' button. The image may emerge at any stage in their future life and lead to serious consequences. Using pseudonyms, passwords and avatars does not protect the identity of a cyber-bully. Technologies exist to identify those who miss-use modern technologies to harm others.

How does Atlantis Beach Baptist College discourage bullying?
The school is committed to providing an educational environment in which students feel valued and secure.
To achieve this, the school will seek to create a school-wide culture that:
- allows students to flourish free from discrimination, harassment or any form of bullying
- does not tolerate, condone or trivialise bullying behaviours
- is aware of what constitutes bullying behaviour
- provides support to the victims of bullying
- takes bullying seriously so that they either stop their bullying or leave the school.

The methods used by the school to discourage bullying will vary from time-to-time, with new initiatives being introduced when thought appropriate. The measures that have been used to discourage bullying at the College include, but are not limited to:
- lessons on bullying and protective behaviours in Health Education classes
- active promotion of the Charter of Goodwill
- regular items in the College Newsletter and Student Notices
- inclusion of counter-bullying activities in camp programs
- employing a suitable range of sanctions to deal with and discourage bullies. These sanctions include suspension and expulsion
- placing anti-bullying policies in student organisers and on the school's website
- promoting a bully-free environment in assemblies
- promoting a bully-free environment in the staff handbook, in school policy documents and in occasional articles in publications such as College Newsletter.

- undertaking confidential Year-level surveys of student well-being and bullying behaviour and following up on identified bullies and victims
- conducting exit interviews
- ensuring effective pastoral support for students through the appointment of Year Mentors
- incorporating instruction about the school's anti-bullying stance in Linked-In classes in Years 7-10
- incorporating anti-bullying guidelines in the Primary school's code of behaviour for students and in their statement of students' rights and responsibilities incorporating anti-bullying guidelines
- Teachers to monitor the well-being of students at risk.
- training staff to detect bullying behaviours.
- encouraging staff to adopt classroom management techniques that discourage opportunities for bullying behaviours
- employing staff who model tolerance, empathy and acceptance of individual differences
- encouraging staff to take their supervision duties seriously so that there is a pervasive sense of staff presence when on duty
- reviewing the school's Bullying Prevention Policy from time-to-time, in order to ensure that it remains effective and relevant.

In addition, staff members are active in identifying students who may possibly be the targets of bullying. The Principal and other designated staff offer students support, using techniques such as building resiliency and protective behaviours. The Principal will also be responsible for reviewing anti-bullying measures and making recommendations to amend these with the aim of reducing instances of bullying.

An *Annual Report on Bullying* will be prepared summarising the quantitative data drawn from records kept and surveys undertaken at the school and presented to the Board.

What should you do?

Reporting and responsibilities
If you observe a bullying incident or someone tells you that they have been bullied, you should firstly endeavour to support that person. Reassure the person that they do not *deserve* that type of treatment, and it is the *bully* who has issues for which they need help.

If you directly observe the bullying and you feel that you have the power to do so, intervene by asking the bully to stop and move the victim away from the bully. If the bully does not stop, immediately seek the help of a College Staff member. If the bullying is of a physical nature do not respond using physical force.

Encourage the person who was bullied to go with you to see someone about the bullying. The College would prefer that this was a College staff member, but talking to an older friend, a parent or family member is a good start.

Witnesses can make a real difference to the person being bullied. Witnesses can also help by:
- letting the bully know that it is unacceptable
- reporting the incident to someone you trust as soon as you can
- making an anonymous report that will advise of the trouble spot, the name of a bully or a victim
- reporting the instance to a staff member (eg Linked-In Teacher, Class Teacher, Chaplain, Principal). The staff member will discuss possible courses of action with you
- offering support and friendship to the victim. Encourage the victim to get help from staff, family, a Student Councillor or another student.

**There is no such thing as a bystander – if you do nothing,
you are part of the problem!**

If you are bullied
You can deal with the problem in the following ways:
- leave the area
- talk about it with an older friend or family member
- make an anonymous report that will advise of the trouble spot, the name of a bully or a victim
- report the instance to a staff member (eg Linked-In Teacher, Class Teacher, Chaplain, Principal). The staff member will discuss possible courses of action and will not confront the bully without your permission
- lodge a formal complaint with your Principal.

Never verbally or physically retaliate

Telling someone is not 'dobbing', it is REPORTING ABUSE

Responsibility of others
Teachers
All incidents of presumed bullying must be reported *immediately* to the Principal. It is preferable that the victim and bully are immediately taken to the Office and kept in separate areas – use the First Aid Room if necessary. Please ensure that both are adequately supervised before leaving them.

Parents
If your child discloses that they have been bullied, support them by reassuring them that they do not *deserve* that type of treatment, and it is the *bully* who has issues for which they need help.
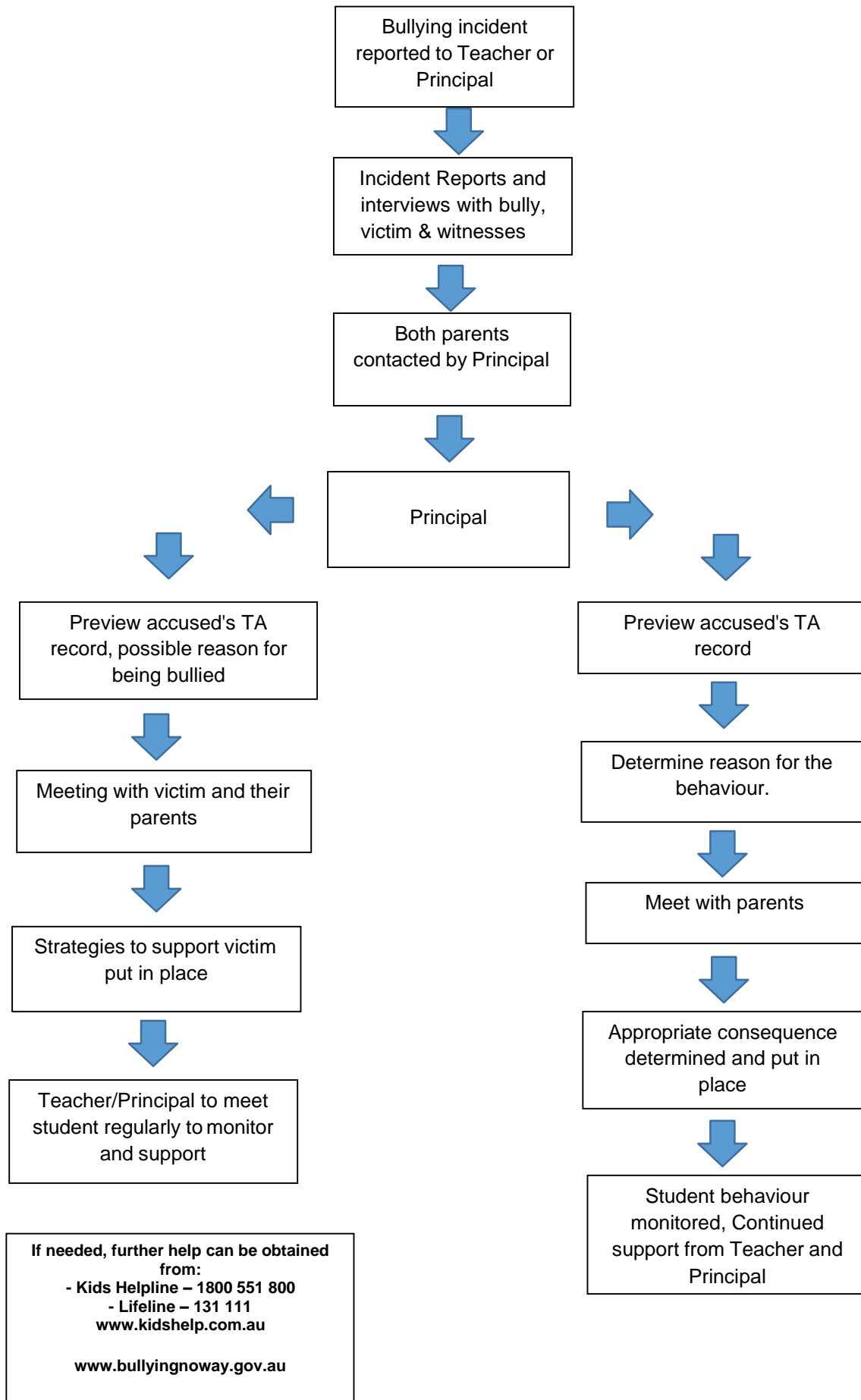
It is very important that you contact your Principal regarding the situation as soon as possible. They will be able to provide you with advice on what to do. In most instances, they will only take action against a perpetrator with the permission of either the victim or the victim's parents.

It is not advisable for a parent to make contact with the parents of a perpetrator, as this often results in extending the conflict to a family level. College staff will handle all cases of bullying thoughtfully, carefully and thoroughly, and parents are asked to allow the College the opportunity of resolving the issues using methods that have proven results.

What happens next?
1. All students involved including witnesses and bystanders to the event will be interviewed
2. Students will be asked to complete an Incident Report form outlining the details of what they observed
3. The victims will meet with the Principal to assess the feedback given on the Incident Report Forms
4. The Principal will look for a common thread
5. If there is still no clarity, on occasion further students will be interviewed
6. Parents of both students the victim and the bully will be called on the same day to inform that a situation has arisen between the students
7. Parents will be meet with individually to discuss the outcomes of the situation
8. Depending on the severity and pattern of behaviours exhibited a choice of sanction will be offered to the bully.
9. A support plan will be put in place for the victim
10. The victim will be followed up by the Principal
11. Both the victim and the bully will be supported by their Principal

Bullying Incident Follow up Flow Chart

Bullying incident reported to Teacher or Principal

Incident Reports and interviews with bully, victim & witnesses

Both parents contacted by Principal

Principal

Preview accused's TA record, possible reason for being bullied

Meeting with victim and their parents

Strategies to support victim put in place

Teacher/Principal to meet student regularly to monitor and support

Preview accused's TA record

Determine reason for the behaviour.

Meet with parents

Appropriate consequence determined and put in place

Student behaviour monitored, Continued support from Teacher and Principal

If needed, further help can be obtained from:
- Kids Helpline – 1800 551 800
- Lifeline – 131 111
www.kidshelp.com.au

www.bullyingnoway.gov.au

References

Dealing with Workplace Bullying: A Guide for Employers. [pamphlet] (2003) WorkSafe Western Australia Commission, West Perth

- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*

- *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) Act 1986*

- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*

- *Racial Hatred Act 1995*

- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*