BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY

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1.0 Bullying Prevention Policy

Quinns Baptist College aims to proactively tackle the bullying issue and aims to provide sound support structures for victims of bullying.

All staff of the College have a duty of care to students, ensuring a safe and non-threatening environment for all.

1.1 Definition of Bullying

Physical eg: hitting, punching, kicking the victim, taking or damaging the victim’s property.

Verbal eg: name calling, constant teasing, insults, racist comments, sexist comments.

Emotional eg: excluding peers from groups, spreading rumours, stalking, Interference with or damage to personal property.

Cyber eg: harassment, threats, insults, stalking, invasion of personal privacy via electronic media such as mobile phones, email and the internet.

1.2 Common Characteristics of Bullies

- Often attention seeking
- They bully because they think they are popular and have the support of others
- They do not accept responsibility for their behaviour
- They have a need to feel in common with their peers
- They will continue to bully if the victim and observing peer group do not complain
- They show no remorse for hurting another child
- They have higher than average aggressive behaviour patterns

1.3 Common Characteristics of a Victim

Most children are approached by a bully at school. It is often the child’s response that will determine if they will be bullied again. Children who are highly vulnerable often become victims.

Such children:
- Often have poor social skills and lack confidence
- Believe that bullying is their fault and if this is the case they are unlikely to seek help
- Are desperate to fit in

In desperate cases, children who are repeatedly victimised see suicide as the only escape. For the majority of victims, emotional scars last a lifetime.
1.4 Prevention Policy

Purpose of Prevention Policy:
- Prepare students to manage and resolve conflict in non-aggressive and non-violent ways
- Although bullying instances are comparatively rare in the College, to further reduce the incidence of bullying in the school
- Create an opportunity for students and staff to develop the skills necessary to handle these situations with the minimum of distress
- Assist the College community to manage frustration and conflict in non-violent ways

This is done through:

The Behaviour Management Policy
(See Quinns Baptist College Discipline Policy)

i. The policy is discussed with students and parents / guardians in their entry interview.
ii. The Bullying Policy is clearly outlined in the Student Diary.
iii. The Behaviour Management Policy is clearly reinforced with the students as they engage with it. This is also reinforced to parents of students who engage in bullying behaviours.
iv. Parents are contacted with concerns re. Student behaviour, whether victim or bully.
v. Reported incidents of bullying are followed up quickly and carefully.
vi. Victims of bullying are protected, cared for and followed up (Year Coordinator, Chaplain, or Deputy). At times the services of Professional organisations are utilized.
vii. Students who have displayed bullying behaviour are monitored.
viii. Incidents of bullying e.g. where a child’s immediate physical welfare is in jeopardy are dealt with immediately.

The College Environment

i. The College aims to be welcoming from the Front Office to the day-to-day classes. We aim to build trust between staff and students, mutual respect and a safe environment.
ii. Positive behaviours are modelled by all members of the College community.
iii. Positive behaviours are acknowledged and rewarded e.g. gold certificates, Letters, etc.
iv. Discipline system that is fair, firm and non-violent.
v. A sense of belonging and empowerment for all members of the school community.

Curriculum

The curriculum allows for opportunities to:
- Understand the nature of bullying
- Health Education Curriculum
- Incidental through thematic work
- Understand personal safety
- Introduce guest speakers
- Develop interpersonal communication and problem solving skills e.g. negotiation, mediation, conflict resolution and assertiveness
- Develop self-confidence and self-esteem
- Cross-curricular: each subject / department can promote this via a range of activities e.g. achieving success, praise
- Whole College approach to praise & encouragement
- Acquire the ability to understand, respect and care for others
- Ethos
Code of Behaviour
As outlined in the Discipline Policy and College Diary

Response to Bullying
i. On the report of an incidence of bullying the Year Coordinator/ Deputy / Principal will interview the victim in a safe setting away from bully and other students.

ii. The safety of the victim and his/her welfare is prime consideration at this stage. Where a child is distressed a staff member will remain with the student.

iii. Any witnesses are interviewed.

iv. The bully is interviewed and allowed to speak freely to give their view.

v. Where bullying is evident this will be discussed with the bully and a first warning given (verbal). The bully’s parents will be contacted, including further steps in the Discipline System. The bully is also warned regarding any revenge / having friends take revenge / further bullying of the victim.

- The victim is provided with feedback and including the warning for the bully and the implications should anything further arise. Ongoing support structures are offered e.g. from staff, counsellor, psychologist. The victim’s parents are contacted.
- In the case of a second instance the bully would be suspended for one day.
- In the case of a third instance in a year, the bully would leave the College.
- A record will be kept of all reported incidents on the relevant student’s file including details of harm to the victim, personal factors of the students involved, care / action taken on behalf of the College. And / or other agencies e.g. police, any underlying causes.
- Any repeated occurrences/similar instances must also be documented.
- Support for victim (and witnesses where applicable) is recorded.

1.5 Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying is when one student is targeted by another through the use of digital technology, mobile communication devices or through the internet. The aim of this targeting may be harassment, stalking, threats or other forms of intimidating behaviour.

Cyber bullying takes many forms and may involve the use of websites, mobile phones, chat rooms, social networking sites, email, SMS, and the uploading of pictures or videos.

No access to social network sites is allowed by students through the College Internet service.

Students who are subjected to Cyber Bullying are advised to:

1. Not respond to the comments made by a bully.
2. Screen Shot the comments and report to parents, the College, the website or the Police depending on the severity of the comments.
3. Deactivate access from the Bully.

It is important to remember to only put content on the internet that you are willing for anyone to see. Before submitting any comments, think if it is appropriate.
1.6 Off-Campus Bullying

Quinns Baptist College reserves the right to apply the College’s Bullying Policy if a student engages in bullying behaviour towards another student from the College outside of school. The College can impose formal sanctions when any act takes place off-campus that causes, or threatens to cause a substantial and material disruption, or interferes with the rights of a student to feel safe and secure. This includes bullying or intimidation at shopping centres and while travelling to and from school on public transport. These sanctions may include suspension or exclusion from the College even for a first offence depending on the severity and nature of the incident.
1.7 Process when bullying or harassment is reported

DIRECT REFERRAL TO THE PRINCIPAL OR DEPUTY WILL BE DEALT WITH THROUGH THE GENERAL PROCESS.
INvolvEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION WILL DEPEND ON:
1. THE DEGREE OF BULLYING/HARASSMENT – EACH CASE TO BE INDIVIDUALLY ASSESSED.
2. A PARENT REQUEST.