POSITIVE PEER RELATIONS

ANTI-BULLYING GUIDELINES

INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND FAMILIES
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INTRODUCTION

This booklet explains the policy and procedures in place at Guildford Grammar School to reduce/eliminate bullying behaviour in the School. While bullying is not a new phenomenon, the attitude towards it at this school is clear and definitive. Guildford Grammar School is committed to dealing constructively with bullying and addressing the behaviour effectively.

It is a fundamental right of every young person to feel safe in the school environment. In an attempt to achieve this, Guildford Grammar School has developed policies, procedures and practices to ensure as much as possible that any child is emotionally and physically safe.

Guildford Grammar School reaffirms the right of each young person to feel safe and happy at school, and our community will do whatever it can to ensure this. Bullying does not have to be part of our lives. If students, parents, friends, and staff all work together we can do something about it.

If someone you care for is unhappy at school or is being bullied, please contact a staff member to discuss the situation, and ultimately reach a suitable resolution.

I commend this Guide to you and urge all parents and caregivers to discuss its contents with their sons and daughters.

Stephen Webber
HEADMASTER
RATIONALE
As an Anglican foundation Guildford Grammar School has a moral responsibility to its students, staff and parents to maintain a safe physical and emotional educational environment. The School recognises and promotes the innate worth of all people, most strikingly experienced and understood in the Incarnation; God dwelling in humanity as Jesus of Nazareth. The School requires all members of its community to live and work by a moral code informed by its Christian foundations and thus develop attitudes, behaviour and conduct based on mutual respect and concern for each of God’s people. Meanwhile, the School recognises and acknowledges its statutory obligations in these matters.

The School trusts that through ongoing programs of education and surveillance it can ensure a harmonious and respectful community will flourish. Where that is found not to be the case the School has in place policy and praxis which allow for correction, reparation and repentance. In the case of blatant and successive disregard for these moral and legal requirements the School may choose to invoke the sanction of exclusion.

WHAT IS BULLYING
Bullying is a product of social dynamics and can be defined as the repeated negative actions by individuals or groups against a target individual or group, which involves an imbalance of power. It can be direct or indirect including verbal, physical, social and relational. The impact of bullying is negative on student wellbeing and is treated seriously at this school. The School’s focus is to teach students the values of respect for each other, restore relationships and ensure that the School is a safe and supportive place for everyone.

Physical violence will be treated as a behaviour management issue and will be responded to according to the behaviour management plan.

Bullying can take many forms, but usually fits into the following three groups:

Physical:
- hitting, punching, pushing, tripping, or kicking
- taking or damaging another person’s property.

Verbal:
- name-calling
- constant teasing
- racist comments
- sexist comments
- demeaning, derogatory comments
- insults of the person or a relative.
Emotional:

- interference with, or damage to personal property
- excluding people from groups/games
- spreading rumours
- stalking
- cyber-bullying involves the intentional use of technology (email, mobile phone, text messaging) to create fear or distress in another person.

RESPECTING OTHERS

RIGHTS

Everyone at Guildford Grammar School has the RIGHT to feel safe and valued.

RESPONSIBILITY

All members of Guildford Grammar School are responsible for:

- treating all people with respect and fairness
- providing support for others in the School when in need
- reporting incidents where they or another school member has been bullied.

Nobody has the right to hurt other people at Guildford Grammar School by:

- teasing them repeatedly
- picking on them
- interfering with their property
- calling them hurtful or racist names
- hitting, punching or kicking them
- spreading rumours about them
- threatening them
- sending nasty notes about them or by doing anything else which is intended to be upsetting.

Bullies try to justify their actions by saying that it is their victim’s fault for being different. They may pick on someone who is tall or small, fat or thin, wears glasses, has a different accent, is from another culture or religion, is good at music, is shy or clever, good looking or disabled.
Any excuse will do...

If you are being bullied, tell yourself that it is
NOT YOUR FAULT
and that it is the bully who needs to change!

RESPONDING TO BULLYING

Children and adolescents who are being bullied usually feel powerless and unable to stop the behaviour. They may be angry, frightened or bewildered. The families of these students are also often angry and frustrated on their behalf. All these emotions are natural.

TALKING is one of the best ways to stop bullying.
At Guildford Grammar School teachers, students and parents must be prepared to talk so that everybody understands how others feel.

PREVENTING BULLYING

- annual awareness raising activities (eg. discussion and distribution of policy/procedures at start of each school year, integration of anti-bullying concept into the curriculum, anti-bullying activities in mentor groups)
- displaying anti-bullying posters within areas of the School (esp. Houses)
- annual Peer Support Program for Year 7s (and 11s)
- maintaining a current policy and procedures manual, and ensuring that the School community is adhering to these
- providing a quiet place for introverted or sensitive students to spend lunch
- including social/emotional skill development activities in the curriculum
WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES

- Electronic copies of all reported and/or observed bullying incidents are maintained and reviewed regularly by staff members in order to identify persistent bullies and/or victims. Such information is made available to all staff.
- Students identified as recurrent bullies or victims are referred to the School Counsellor for counselling/social skill development and to Senior staff for appropriate action.
- Parents of persistent bullies will be advised of their child’s behaviour by letter after several warnings or after a serious incident.
- All teaching staff will be trained in the Pikas Shared Concern Method of responding to bullying incidents, and will then be expected to perform such meetings with students. Documentation of each session will be kept.

ADVICE FOR PARENTS

There is no sure way of knowing that a young person is being bullied. Signs such as unexplained illnesses or reluctance/refusal to go to school may indicate that bullying is occurring, although several other issues might also explain this behaviour. Parents can usually tell when their child is having difficulties. If you are concerned, discuss your worries openly and sensitively with your son or daughter.

Parents are encouraged to:

- take an interest in the friends of their child/adolescent
- telephone/make an appointment to see a staff member of the School to discuss concerns
- avoid rushing in to confront parents of other students involved in the bullying incident
- if your child begs you not to intervene, take into account what happened, their age and their personality. Reassure students that the School can deal with the incident sensitively.

The School can deal with the matter without breaking confidentiality, if necessary.

Send an email to discussyouroptions@ggs.wa.edu.au to explain the incident, when it occurred and who was involved. This is anonymous and confidentiality is assured. The email will go to a School Counsellor. Try to work with the School, but always talk with the young person about what you are doing and why.
The victims of school bullying need the support of their families and friends, but advice offered to students should be appropriate. Points to consider when supporting your child include:

- Telling a bullied child to hit back usually increases the problem.
- Saying "Stand up for yourself", "Walk away", "Laugh it off" or "Ignore it" may be difficult for the bullied student and may not solve the problem entirely.
- Children and adolescents may hide the fact that they are being bullied because they are frightened or ashamed of being a victim.
- Children and adolescents who bully others may hide this from their parents or present them with an incomplete version of the truth.
- If your adolescent/child is involved in bullying either as a victim or a bully, he/she needs your support and understanding.

**IF YOUR SON/DAUGHTER IS BEING BULLIED**

- Encourage your child to discuss the incident with you. It may be difficult so be patient.
- Try not to over react; listen calmly and work out the facts.
- Be sensitive in areas such as names the young person is called.
- Give assurances that you believe the situation can be changed.
- Reassure them that bullying happens to many people at some time and that it will eventually stop or be less traumatising.
- Advise them that it is not happening because there is something wrong with them.
- Help them use it as a learning experience, as a challenge to be met and overcome.
- Prepare the young person for possible teasing and taunting with nicknames.
- Explain that not reacting defensively to taunting/teasing may help reduce or stop it.
- Talk with other parents and share ideas and experiences.
IF YOUR SON/DAUGHTER IS BULLYING OTHERS:

- Explain that bullying for any reason (eg. out of revenge, irritation or fun) is not acceptable.
- Teach them the difference between assertive and aggressive behaviour.
- Advise them that consciously hurting or distressing another person suggests that they may have social/emotional problems and need help dealing with these.
- Explore the possibility that the young person is seeking attention or love. Determine whether any specific home or school situations are contributing to the young person feeling angry, alone, or lacking in confidence.
- Explore the need for development of self confidence and success in an area to improve their self esteem.
- Sensitive discussion may indicate that the bully has also been a victim. This is a delicate situation and requires sensitive and empathic communication.

SILENCE AND SECRECY FEED BULLYING!

Friends often know that someone is being bullied, but people who have been bullied often ask their friends not to say or do anything because they fear further harm.

IF YOU DO NOTHING

- It means that the bullying may continue and as the bully’s confidence grows, he/she may choose more victims.
- It may indicate to the bullies that you are not bothered by what they are doing.
- It is exactly what bullies want - this is what gives them power - that is why they go to so much trouble to try to stop you telling!

Don't tell your victimised friends to deal with the problem on their own - if that was possible they wouldn't be asking you for help.
BYSTANDERS – STUDENTS WHO STAND AROUND AND WATCH BULLYING BEHAVIOUR.

When a group of students stand around and watch the bullying, the bully often feels more powerful and successful – he/she has an audience watching them as another student is humiliated and hurt! If students see someone bullying and choose to watch instead of helping or getting help, they are also entering into the bullying experience.

If you see someone being bullied, either support the victim or get help. DO NOT STAND AROUND AND WATCH!

“DOBBERING”

Bullies also gain power by making sure others won’t tell on them. They refer to people who tell as “dobbers” and try to make these people feel foolish. But asking for help when someone is being hurt or upset is right! This is about protecting the safety of another person.
REPORTING THE INCIDENT

If someone in your family is being bullied you should contact the School. If you are being bullied, tell somebody! The best person to speak with is someone you already know and trust.

All staff members and student leaders at Guildford Grammar School are committed to stopping bullying.

You may choose to:

- talk it over with an older student, a Preparatory School Student Leader, a Prefect, a House Prefect or Peer Support Leader
- report it to your Mentor, Class Teacher, Head of House, School Chaplain, School Counsellor, or one of your favourite staff members
- Send an email to discusseyouroptions@ggs.wa.edu.au to explain the incident, when it occurred and who was involved. This is anonymous and confidentiality is assured. The email will go to a School Counsellor
- if the situation is extreme or you think little is being done or nothing has improved, you may choose to go directly to the Head of the Senior School, the Head of the Preparatory School, or the Headmaster
- if you find it difficult to talk with an adult, ask a friend to come with you
- or ask someone to talk to an adult on your behalf.
THE SCHOOL’S RESPONSE

Simply punishing bullies may help to deter some bullying behaviour but in other instances, it can make things worse. Disciplinary action also ignores the fact that bullies may have underlying problems or faulty reasons for their behaviour. Although this does not condone their inappropriate behaviour, it suggests that they may need help to deal with personal problems or fully understand the effects of their action.

At Guildford Grammar School we have decided in the first instance not to adversely punish the aggressor/s. Instead, we will initially work with the victim and the bully/bystanders to find ways to improve the situation. However, if the bullying behaviour persists, the student/s will be disciplined and may be asked to leave the School. A serious incident may also result in immediate suspension or expulsion, at the discretion of the Headmaster.

The initial strategy for dealing with bullying in the School will involve talking to all involved members. This technique is referred to as The Pikas Method of Shared Concern.

THE PIKAS METHOD OF SHARED CONCERN

This method involves:

1. gathering preliminary details to understand the problem
2. meeting each of the bullies/bystanders individually to discuss the situation and to develop constructive responses and a plan to change their behaviour
3. meeting the person being bullied or harassed
4. meeting bullies/bystanders individually to review progress of their agreement
5. following positive signs of change, hold a meeting with bullies/bystanders to reinforce the changes made and prepare for the next meeting
6. holding a final combined meeting of all students involved to confirm that the inappropriate behaviours have ceased.
SUMMARY

Guildford Grammar School is committed to the creation and maintenance of a school that is safe for everybody. Our priority is to respond to bullying at an early stage and we will not wait until it has escalated to a more serious level. One of the keys to stopping bullying is getting those involved to talk about what is happening, including:

- the students
- the parents and
- the school staff members

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO FEEL SAFE AND HAPPY AT GUILDFORD GRAMMAR SCHOOL

OUR PURPOSE

Inspiring students to achieve personal excellence and to be outstanding citizens who work to create a just, loving and peaceful society.

OUR VALUES

At Guildford Grammar School students and staff are guided by the following interlinked set of values:

- Excellence – being the best we can be
- Respect – showing appreciation and consideration for those around us
- Integrity – sticking to moral and ethical principles when others are not looking
- Spirituality – searching for meaning in our lives which transcends the body and mind
- Teamwork – working cooperatively to achieve common goals
- Compassion – showing sympathy and empathy for others

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- read about The Method of Shared Concern (Pikas 2002)
- talk to a classroom Teacher, Head of House or Head of Senior or Preparatory School.