



St Philip's Christian College Port Stephens Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy

As a Christian Education organisation, St Philip's Christian Education Foundation advocates for all students in our care to have the experience of personal freedom, the ability to feel safe and cared for in the environment which we are providing for learning. Bullying, in all its forms, is unacceptable at St Philip's Christian College Port Stephens.

Definitions

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 or harassment. It can take place at school or out of school, in person or online. 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 which 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 which is when deliberate acts of exclusion or spreading of untrue stories are used to hurt or intimidate someone.

Cyber bullying which 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 Isn't Bullying?

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.

- 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 behavioural 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.
- feeling ill in the mornings.
- a decline in quality of school work.
- becoming withdrawn and lacking confidence.
- beginning to bully siblings.
- acting unreasonably.

Families are encouraged to recognise signs of bullying and notify St Philip's Christian College Port Stephens through a trusted staff member immediately (such as a class teacher), if they suspect their child is a victim of bullying.

Outline to Policy

St Philip's Christian College Port Stephens recognises its duty to students to provide a safe and positive learning environment where individual differences and diversity within the College community are respected and accepted.

Bullying behaviour is taken seriously at St Philip's Christian College Port Stephens and any other St Philip’s entity under the St Philip’s Christian Education Foundation organisation.

It is our College and Foundation policy that:

- bullying be managed through a holistic involving students, staff and families.
- bullying prevention strategies are implemented within St Philip's Christian College Port Stephens on a continuous basis with a focus on teaching age-appropriate skills and strategies to empower staff, students and families to recognise bullying and respond appropriately.

- bullying response strategies are tailored to the circumstances of each incident
- staff establish positive role models emphasising our no-bullying culture
- bullying prevention and intervention strategies are reviewed on an annual basis

Bullying Prevention Strategies

St Philip's Christian College Port Stephens recognises that the implementation of whole community prevention strategies are the most effective way of eliminating, or at least minimising, incidents of bullying within our community.

The following initiatives form part of our overall bullying prevention strategy and our strategy to create a no-bullying culture within St Philip's Christian College Port Stephens:

- a structured curriculum and peer group support system, that provides age-appropriate information and social and emotional competencies relating to bullying (including cyberbullying) 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.
- appropriate sharing among staff of information about bullying incidents.
- provision of information to families, to raise awareness of bullying as a St Philip's Christian College Port Stephens 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 directly with St Philip's Christian College Port Stephens.
- promotion of a supportive environment that encourages the development of positive relationships and communication between staff, students and families.
- promotion of responsible bystander behaviour amongst students, staff and families.
- reporting of incidents of alleged bullying by students, bystanders, families and staff are encouraged, and made easy through the establishment of multiple reporting channels (as specified below).
- surveying students to identify bullying issues that may ordinarily go unnoticed by staff.
- 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.
- statements supporting bullying prevention are included in student communications.

- education of staff, students and families on health conditions to promote understanding and to reduce stigma and fear.
- anti-bullying posters are displayed strategically within the St Philip's Christian College Port Stephens.
- promotion of student awareness and a no-bullying environment by participating in events such as the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence.

Reporting Bullying

Students and their families are sometimes reluctant to pursue bullying incidents, for fear that it will only make matters worse.

A key part of St Philip's Christian College Port Stephens bullying prevention and intervention strategy is to encourage reporting of bullying incidents as well as providing assurance to students who experience bullying (and families) that:

- bullying is not tolerated within the St Philip's Christian College Port Stephens.
- their concerns will be taken seriously.
- St Philip's Christian College Port Stephens has a clear strategy for dealing with bullying issues.

Bullying incidents can be advised to:

- St Philip's Christian College Port Stephens verbally (or in writing) through the Head of School or by contacting the Executive Leadership Team on 02 4919 5400.
- The School Liaison Police/Youth Command Officer at Raymond Terrance Police Station 02 49837453.

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, St Philip's Christian College Port Stephens:

- takes bullying incidents seriously.
- provides assurance to the victim that they are not at fault.
- takes time to properly investigate the facts including discussing the incident with the victim, the bully and any bystanders.
- takes time to understand any concerns of individuals involved.
- maintains records of reported bullying incidents.

- will escalate its response when dealing with persistent bullies and/or severe incidents.

Actions that may be taken when responding to bullying include:

The “Method of Shared Concern” Approach (Pikas)

The “No Blame” Approach (Maines & Robinson)

These approaches may be used to intervene in group or relational bullying situations. They are only appropriate during the initial stages. They are not appropriate for persistent or severe bullying incidents.

- notification of/consultation with families.
- offering counselling to persistent bullies/victims.
- implementing effective follow up strategies.
- disciplinary action, at the Principal’s discretion, including suspension and expulsion of bullies, or in cases of severe incidents.
- bullying support services.

Staff Responsibilities

All staff are responsible to:

- model appropriate behaviour at all times.
- deal with all reported and observed incidents of bullying in accordance with this Policy.
- ensure that any incident of bullying that they observe or is reported to them, is recorded appropriately.
- be vigilant in monitoring students who have been identified as either bullies or victims.
- acknowledge the right of families to speak with St Philip's Christian College Port Stephens if they believe their child is being bullied.

Implementation

This Policy is implemented through a combination of:

- staff training.
- student and families education and information,
- effective incident reporting and recording procedures.

- effective management of bullying incidents when reported.
- the creation of a no-bullying culture within St Philip's Christian College Port Stephens.
- effective record keeping procedures.
- initiation of corrective actions where necessary.

Key References Table :

- *Child Guardian Act 2019 (NSW)*
- Registered and Accredited Individual Non-government Schools (NSW) Manual 2021 (3.6.2)
- Pikas, A (2002). New developments of the Shared Concern Method. *School Psychology International*, 23, 307–336.
- *Maines, B, and Robinson, G. (1994) The No Blame Approach to Bullying. Video and Workbook, Lame Duck Publishing.*

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