



Preventing and Responding to Incidents of Bullying

(including Cyber Bullying)

Purpose

Coolum State High School strives to create positive, predictable environments for all students at all times of the day. The disciplined and teaching environment that we are creating is essential to:

- achieving overall school improvement, including the effectiveness and efficiency of our student support procedures
- raising achievement and attendance
- promoting equality and diversity and
- ensuring the safety and well-being of all members of the school community.

There is no place for bullying in Coolum State High School. Those who are bullied and those who bully are at risk for behavioural, emotional and academic problems. These outcomes are in direct contradiction to our school community's goals and efforts for supporting all students.

Bullying behaviours that will not be tolerated at Coolum State High School include name-calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments, kicking, hitting, pushing, taking belongings, inappropriate text messaging, sending offensive or degrading images by phone or internet, producing offensive graffiti, gossiping, excluding people from groups, and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours.

Bullying may be related to:

- race, religion or culture
- disability
- appearance or health conditions
- sexual orientation
- sexist or sexual language
- children acting as carers or
- children in care.

At Coolum State High School there is broad agreement among students, staff and parents that bullying is observable and measurable behaviour. When considering whether or not bullying has occurred, we will therefore avoid speculation on the intent of the behaviour, the power of individuals involved, or the frequency of its occurrence. Whether bullying behaviour is observed between students of equal or unequal power, whether it occurs once or several times, and whether or not the persons involved cite intimidation, revenge, or self-defence as a motive, the behaviour will be responded to in similar fashion, that is, as categorically unacceptable in the school community.

Cyber Bullying

This is a method of bullying using technology, such as email, mobile phones, chat rooms and social networking sites to bully verbally, socially or psychologically. What is not bullying? It is important to be clear which behaviours are NOT bullying. The National Centre Against Bullying acknowledges that while the following behaviours are often upsetting to those involved, they do NOT constitute bullying:

- social bantering with minor insults and jokes
- mutual arguments and disagreements (where there is no power imbalance)
- not liking someone or a single act of social rejection
- one-off acts of meanness or spite
- isolated incidents of aggression, intimidation or violence. While these behaviours would not be considered bullying because they do not involve deliberate and repeated harm and a power imbalance, they need to be addressed in the same way as other inappropriate student behaviours.

Students are asked to consider the following questions

Are you currently receiving text messages, emails, msn messages, or reading blogs about you that were menacing, harassing or caused offence to you?

Do you have a print out of the messages?

Has this happened more than once?

Do you know exactly who this person is, and know where they go to school?

Would you like these messages to stop? If the answer is yes to each of these questions then students are asked to see their Head of Year, Head of Department or Year Level Deputy Principal.

Tips to Manage Cyberbullying

- Tell the HOY or Year Level Deputy Principal about the Cyberbullying.
- Ignore or block the Cyberbully.
- Printout and save messages and record the dates and times you got the messages.
- Use the report function within the App.
- Review your privacy settings.

Rationale

Many bullying behaviours are peer-maintained through the actions of bystanders. That is, peers react to bullying in ways that may increase the likelihood of it occurring again in the future. Reactions include joining in, laughing, or simply standing and watching, rather than intervening to help the person being bullied. Whilst our school would never encourage students to place themselves at risk, our anti-bullying procedures involve teaching the entire school a set of safe and effective responses to all problem behaviour, including bullying, in such a way that those who bully are not socially reinforced for demonstrating it.

The anti-bullying procedures at Coolum State High School are an addition to our schoolwide positive behaviour support processes. This means that all students are being explicitly taught the expected school behaviours and receiving high levels of social acknowledgement for doing so. Adding lessons on bullying and how to prevent and respond to it is a subset of procedures that our students are already accustomed to.

Prevention

Attempting to address specific problem behaviours will not be successful if the general level of disruptive behaviour in all areas of our school is not kept to a low level. Therefore, our schoolwide universal behaviour support practices will be maintained at all times. This will ensure that:

- Our universal behaviour support processes will always remain the primary strategy for preventing inappropriate behaviour, including preventing the subset of bullying behaviour
- All students know Coolum State High's values of Care, Respect, Excellence and have been taught the expected behaviours attached to each value in all areas of the school
- All students have been or are being taught the specific routines in the non-classroom areas, from exiting the classroom, conducting themselves in accordance with the school expectations in the playground and other areas, to re-entering their classrooms
- All students are receiving high levels of positive reinforcement for demonstrating expected behaviours, including those associated with following our routines, from all staff in the non-classroom areas of the school
- A high level of quality active supervision is a permanent staff routine in the non-classroom areas. This means that duty staff members are easily identifiable and are constantly moving, scanning and positively interacting as they move through the designated supervision sectors of the non-classroom areas.

Please note – Preventing and Responding to Incidents of Bullying Policy correct at the time of publishing