Bullying Policy

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22/02/2019	1.0		
27/11/2019	1.1		Aligned to 2020 Registration standards
27/05/2024	1.2		Reformatted in line with the "Board Requirements on Policy Development and Implementation" GV001-00-V2.0-B

History

This Policy replaces: Alternate *Bullying* entries
This Policy was cancelled and superseded by: N/A

Contents

Rationale

Bullying prevention plays a role in ensuring that all schools build a safe, positive and supportive school culture that fosters caring, positive and respectful relationships between all involved in the school community.

'Every school is expected to have a safe, supportive, respectful and positive learning environment free from bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence, so student wellbeing and academic outcomes are maximised.' [Department of Education WA](#).

Most of this document focuses on bullying behaviour exhibited by students towards other students. Claims of adults bullying students are treated as child abuse and fall under the SCEA *Staff Code of Conduct Policy* and SCEA *Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting Policy*.

Standard 12.1 of the *Guide to Registration Standards and Other requirements for Non-Government Schools,* January 2020, states

'All students receive positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour and are given opportunities to interact and develop respectful and positive relationships with each other and with staff members and volunteers.'

Swan Christian Education Association explicitly forbids the use of any form of child abuse, corporal punishment or other degrading punishment.' Please see below for a description of these terms, as defined in the Guide.

> **Matt 22:37-40** *"Jesus said to him," 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' "This is the first and great commandment." And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' "On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."*

> **Micah 6:8** *"He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?"*

Scope

This policy applies to all students enrolled at SCEA schools, and all employees whether full time, part time or casual at any level of seniority, including contractors as well as service providers.

Definitions

Bullying

Bullying is the <u>repeated and intentional</u> behaviour of causing fear, distress or harm towards another person, that <u>involves an imbalance of power</u>. It can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation, and harassment. 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

This 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

This 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

This is when deliberate acts of exclusion or spreading of untrue stories are used to hurt or intimidate someone.

Cyber bullying

This is the ongoing abuse of power to threaten, harm or hurt another person socially, physiologically or even physically, using technology. Cyber bullying can occur in chat rooms, on social networking sites, through emails or on mobile phones.

Parent bullying

This takes the form of shouting, rage, and anger, public reprimanding, humiliation and verbal threats of physical violence towards a school staff member when they demand things for their child or when they feel that the staff member is not acting in their child's best interest. This type of bullying also includes the making of abusive phone calls, sending threatening emails or text messages and posting inappropriate messages to social media websites. If this type of behavior is on-going, staff should seek intervention from the school principal.

SCEA recognises that when a partnership exists between parents and educators, this creates good outcomes for children. A parent bullying a staff member fractures this relationship. When this occurs the Principal will endeavour to work with the parent and staff member to resolve the incident(s) in appropriate ways that re-establish the original partnership. In extreme circumstances where this is not possible, following discussion between the staff member, the Principal, and the CEO there may be legal ramifications for the parent perpetrating the bullying behaviour.

Student bullying of a teacher

SCEA recognises that educators are in a student-teacher relationship with the students whom they teach. This relationship is damaged significantly if a student bullies a school staff member as it involves disrespect for the staff member. The Principal will seek to restore the relationship. This may involve an apology; face to face, written or in a public forum if the bullying has taken place in a public forum. In view of the seriousness of this behaviour breach, the consequences for the student may be a suspension for a period of days or even withdrawal of their studentship at the school in significant instances.

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.

Corporal Punishment

Any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light; typically involving hitting the child with the hand or with an implement; can also include, for example, forcing the child to stay in an uncomfortable position. It does not include the use of reasonable physical restraint to protect the child or others from harm: from UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 8 (2006), paragraphs 11 and 15: CRC/C/GC/8, 2 March 2007.

Degrading Punishment

Any punishment which is incompatible with respect for human dignity, including corporal punishment and non-physical punishment which belittles, humiliates, denigrates, scapegoats, threatens, scares or ridicules the child (from UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 8 (2006), paragraphs 11 and 16: CRC/C/GC/8, 2 March 2007).

A Child Safe Environment

Consistent with Standard 12.1(a), the arrangement of the premises and implementation of policies and procedures must enable the provision of a child safe environment which assists to deter inappropriate interactions and facilitate detection. The school must, therefore, aim to eliminate opportunities for grooming behaviour, bullying, and harassment, child abuse, assaults, and self-harm to occur undetected (Std 12.1a of the Guide to Registration Standards and Other requirements for Non-Government Schools, January 2020).

Types of Abuse

Physical Abuse

This occurs when a child has experienced severe and/or persistent ill-treatment. It can include, but is not limited to, cuts, bruises, burns, and fractures caused by a range of activities including beating, shaking, illicit administration of alcohol or other drugs, attempted suffocation, excessive discipline, physical punishment or other forms

Sexual Abuse

This covers a wide range of behaviour or activities that expose or subject a child to sexual activity that is exploitative and/or inappropriate to his/her age and developmental level. These behaviours include observation or involvement with inappropriate fondling of a child's body, making a child touch an adult's genitalia, showing pornographic material or sexual acts to a child, and sexual penetration of the child. Harm from sexual abuse may include significant emotional trauma, physical injury, infections, and impaired emotional and psychological development.

Emotional Abuse

This is a sustained, repetitive, inappropriate, ill-treatment of a child or young person through behaviours including threatening, belittling, teasing, humiliating, bullying, confusing, ignoring and inappropriate encouragement. Children who have been emotionally abused are likely to have a reduced capacity to experience a range of emotions, to express emotion appropriately and to modulate their emotional experience. Children who have been emotionally abused are likely to be fearful, withdrawn and/or resentful, distressed and despairing.

Included under emotional abuse is **psychological abuse**. This abuse damages a child's intellectual faculties and processes, including intelligence, memory, recognition, perception, attention, imagination and moral development. Children are likely to feel worthless, flawed, unloved, unwanted, endangered or only of value in meeting another's needs.

Neglect

This is the failure of a parent/caregiver to provide a child with the basic necessities of life. These include adequate supervision, adequate food or shelter, suitable clothing, effective medical, therapeutic or remedial care and emotional security. Neglect can be acute, chronic or episodic, and can result in detrimental effects on the child or young person's social psychological, educational or physical development and/or physical injury. Neglect should be considered in the context of physical, emotional or psychological abuse.

In a child protection context refers to deliberate actions undertaken to engage in sexual activity with a child. It differs from sexual abuse in that it is primarily a preparatory activity occurring before abuse occurs but is continued during and after the abuse to ensure the safety of the groomer.

Policy Statement

SCEA recognises its duty to students in providing a safe and positive learning environment where individual differences and diversity are accepted and respected.

SCEA has zero-tolerance of Bullying

Schools will:

1. Manage bullying between students through a whole-school approach involving students, staff and parents/guardians

2. Implement bullying-prevention strategies on a continuous basis with a focus on teaching age-appropriate skills and strategies to empower students to recognize bullying and respond appropriately

3. Tailor responses to bullying to the circumstances of each incident and/or pattern of student behavior

4. Review bullying prevention, occurrence and intervention data, and strategies annually.

Procedures and Guidelines

Education

In educational settings, it is important that both students and teachers understand what bullying is and can identify it when it occurs.

Many **students** believe that bullying is occurring when another student is being mean to them, teasing them or calling them names. They should be taught that bullying is not conflict or meanness. As stated above in the definition, bullying must include an element of power difference and be on-going or repetitive.

It is important that **parents** are made aware of these definitions so as not to use the word 'bullying' inappropriately, inadvertently resulting in the child believing they are being bullied when in fact they are not.

Examples of bullying behaviours between students include:

• Aggressive or frightening behaviour such as threats, harassment, swearing, shouting, intimidation or threatening violence

• Spreading misinformation, malicious rumours and/or false accusations about a person

• Rude, belittling or sarcastic comments e.g. "you're hopeless", "she's on her way out"

• Abusive, belittling or intimidating phone calls, emails, notes etc

• Baiting or unreasonable teasing e.g. singing derogatory songs and inserting the person's name, cruel nicknames

• Nasty practical jokes

• Publicly belittling someone's opinions, or dismissing that person's contribution without good reason, including in front of students and work colleagues

Bullying Prevention Strategies

SCEA recognises that the implementation of whole-school prevention strategies is 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 SCEA:

- a structured curriculum and peer group support system, that provides age-appropriate information and skills relating to bullying (including cyber bullying) 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

- regular provision of information to parents/guardians, to raise awareness of bullying as a SCEA 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 the principal

- promotion of a supportive environment that encourages the development of positive relationships and communication between staff, students and parents/guardians

- promotion of responsible bystander behaviour amongst students, staff, and parents/guardians reporting of incidents of alleged bullying by students, bystanders, parents/guardians and staff are encouraged and made easy through the establishment of multiple reporting channels

- regular risk assessments of bullying within the school are undertaken by 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 students' diaries

- education of staff, students and parents/guardians on health conditions to promote understanding and to reduce stigma and fear

- anti-bullying posters are displayed strategically within the school

- promotion of student awareness and a 'no-bullying' environment by participating in events such as the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence.

[Note For strategies aimed at specifically promoting cyber safety, see Appendices 1 and 2].

What works – Bullying prevention in schools

Effective practices

- Explicit teaching of school values and positive behaviour

- Fostering a positive school climate

- Integration of social-emotional learning

- Proactive support and teaching of practical strategies

- Whole school and multifaceted approaches

- Involving students and families in bullying prevention and policy

- Teaching bystander strategies

- Being prepared with effective responses

Positive teacher-student relationships

- Respect for students

- Shared understanding of bullying
- Appreciation for students' perspective about their social interactions
- Consistent, calm and respectful responses
- A focus on lasting, positive solutions

Positive family relationships

- Parenting that is calm and firm
- Proactive discussions at home about bullying
- Learning about effective responses
- A focus on lasting, positive outcomes
- Collaboration with the school

Sources can be found at:

https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/UnderstandingBullying/BullyingResearch/Pages/Research-for-schools.aspx

Reporting Bullying

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

A key part of SCEA's bullying prevention and intervention strategy is that schools encourage reporting of bullying incidents as well as providing assurance to students who experience bullying (and parents/guardians) that:

- bullying is not tolerated within SCEA or the school
- their concerns will be taken seriously
- the school has a clear strategy for dealing with bullying issues.

Students who believe they are being bullied should:

- inform a trusted teacher
- inform their year coordinator or deputy

Parents should consider following up on the matter if their child believes the bullying is

continuing.

Signs of Bullying

Some students do not report bullying for a variety of reasons; the main one being that they fear

reprisal or escalation of the bullying behaviour should it be learned that they have reported it.

Teachers should be alert to signs that bullying may be occurring for their students.

Behavioural changes in a student may be indicative of bullying. Such 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; higher levels of absenteeism

- a decline in quality of schoolwork

- changes in demeanour/ becoming withdrawn and lacking confidence

- unexpected changes in student's friendship groups

- beginning to bully siblings

- acting unreasonably or aggressively

- suicidal thoughts (should be reported immediately to school leaders/parents/guardians)

Signs can often be less obvious, including:

- the student is often alone or excluded from friendship groups at school

- the student is a frequent target for teasing, mimicking at school

- change in the student's ability or willingness to speak up in class and appears insecure

- or frightened

Parents/guardians are also encouraged to recognise signs of bullying and immediately notify a trusted staff member at the school if they suspect their child is a victim of bullying.

Signs at home might include:

- changes in sleep patterns

- frequent tears, anger, mood swings

- missing or damaged belongings or clothes

- doesn't want to go to school/feeling ill

- changes method or route to school; afraid of walking to school

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.

Teachers and school leaders should:

- provide assurance to the victim that they are not at fault and their confidentiality will be

- respected

- take time to properly investigate the facts including discussing the incident with the victim,

- the bully and any bystanders

- take time to understand any concerns of individuals involved

- maintain records of reported bullying incidents

- 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) located at

https://www.ncab.org.au/media/1370/methodofsharedconcern.pdf

The 'No Blame" Approach (Maines & Robinson), located at

https://ia601309.us.archive.org/27/items/ERIC_ED414028/ERIC_ED414028.pdf

Note that:

These approaches may be used to intervene in a group or relational bullying situations. They are

only appropriate during the initial stages. They are not appropriate for persistent or severe

bullying incidents. For these situations, schools should:

- notify and/or consult with parents/guardians
- offer counselling to persistent bullies/victims
- implement effective follow-up strategies
- undertake disciplinary action, following consultation with the CEO, including suspension and expulsion of persistent bullies, or in cases of severe incidents.

Staff Responsibilities

All staff, as part of their Code of Conduct, 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 that have been identified as either persistent bullies or
- victims
- acknowledge the right of parents/guardians to speak with the principal if they believe
- bullying of their child is persisting following their personal intervention.

Whole School Planning

A whole-school approach to tackling bullying is required at every school as part of managing student behaviour. Staff need to be alert to the signs of student bullying, as outlined above and immediate and consistent in their reporting and handling of bullying.

School leaders must ensure that staff have a consistent understanding of bullying and what it is, with an agreed whole-school approach to educating students and parents in identifying and intervening to ensure bullying does not occur and/or is eradicated promptly.

If a review of bullying data reveals bullying is or is potentially a serious issue the school, a whole-school approach to tackling this issue is required. Staff should work together as part of School Improvement processes to ensure consistent strategies are initiated and implemented.

Strategies might include the implementation of a specific program such as:

Aussie Optimism http://healthsciences.curtin.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2016/08/aussie-optimism-order-form_2016_020816-1.pdf

PATHS Curriculum (Kidsmatter) https://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/primary/programs/paths-curriculum

Targets for reducing occurrences should be determined so that improvements might be determined over time, and strategies changed if those implemented do not appear to be effective.

Implementation

This policy is implemented through

- staff training, including at induction
- students and parent/guardian education and information
- effective incident reporting procedures
- Effective management of bullying incidents when reported
- The creation of a 'no-bullying' culture within schools and across SCEA
- Effective record-keeping procedures
- Initiation of corrective actions where necessary
- On-going review of bullying data

Breach of Policy

Where a staff member breaches this policy, SCEA will take disciplinary action, including in the case of serious breaches, summary dismissal.

Contact Person

Chief Education Officer

Appendix 1: Cyber Bullying Resources

Cyber Bullying Resources

1. Office of the eSafety Commissioner

The Office of the eSafety Commissioner co-ordinates and leads the online safety efforts of government, industry and the not-for-profit community.

It has a broad remit, which includes providing:

- a complaints service for young Australians who experience serious cyberbullying
- identifying and removing illegal online content
- tackling image-based abuse.

It also offers a range of school-based educational resources and programs to assist teachers to guide students in becoming responsible digital citizens. The Office also provides audience-specific content to help educate all Australians about online safety including young people, women, teachers, parents, seniors, and community groups. Cyberbullying resources

2. Stay Smart Online

Stay Smart Online provides simple, easy to understand advice on how to protect yourself online as well as up to date information on the latest online threats and how to respond.

3. Think U Know

ThinkUKnow is a free, evidence-based cyber safety program that provides presentations to Australian parents, carers, teachers, and students. It provides information on the technologies young people use, the challenges they may face, and importantly, how they can be overcome. This Website is run by the Federal Police.

4. Cyber Savvy

Professor Donna Cross (ECU) and her team created this web resource to help young people prevent and address problems associated with online behaviour, particularly image-sharing. It is based on over 10 years of research with over 40,000 Australian young people. It provides new insights into what young people, families and other adults can do to prevent problems that may arise from risky image-sharing.

Mental Health Resources

Sites offering a range of resources:

- www.moodgym.anu.edu.au
- www.beyondblue.org.au
- kidshelpline.com.au
- Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800

Further reading and research is available from the:

Qld Department of Education and Training's *Cyber Safety and Reputation Management Unit*

Qld Anti-cyberbullying Taskforce Report '*Adjust our Settings'*

Appendix 2: Cyber Safety Strategies

Cyber bullying is the ongoing abuse of power to threaten or harm another person through the use of Technology.

Common cyber safety **issues** include:

- Sexting is the sending or posting of provocative or sexual photos, messages or videos online

- Identity theft is the fraudulent assumption of a person's private information for their personal gain

- Students are exposed to these risks as they are often unaware of the safety issues surrounding their digital footprint

- Predatory behaviour where a student is targeted online by a stranger who attempts to arrange a face-to-face meeting, in an attempt to engage in inappropriate behaviour

Cyber safety issues most commonly occur through a student's use of their own technology devices (e.g. smart phone, tablet, laptop, home computer).

Cyber Safety Strategies

SCEA recognises that the implementation of whole SCEA cyber safety strategies is the most effective way of minimising risks related to our students engaging in online activity.

The following initiatives form part of our *advised* overall cyber safety strategy for schools:

- A structured curriculum and school-based peer group support system, developed and implemented by schools, that provides age-appropriate information and skills relating to cyber safety (including cyberbullying) to students over the course of the academic year

- Education, training and professional development of staff in cyber safety strategies

- Regular provision of information to parents/carers to raise awareness of cyber safety as a whole-of-SCEA issue. This will equip them to recognise signs of cyber safety risks, as well as to provide them with clear paths for raising any concerns they may have relating to cyber safety and/or cyberbullying directly with the System Office as needed, following raising issues with the school principal

- Promotion of a supportive environment that encourages the development of positive relationships and communication between staff, students and parents/carers

- Promotion of responsible bystander behaviour amongst students, staff and parents/carers (this may occur where a bystander observes inappropriate online behaviour either being perpetrated by, or targeted at, a student)

- Reporting of cyber safety incidents is encouraged and made easy through the establishment of multiple reporting channels, including the CEO and SCEA ICT Manager

- Schools are encouraged to have a Cybersafety team whose role is to:

  o review this policy annually and make suggestions for its improvement as a means to minimising risks to SCEA concerning cyber safety

  o maintain an up-to-date knowledge of cyber safety best practice

  o review and analyse data obtained at school level concerning cyberbullying to inform school planning processes

  o display cyber safety posters strategically around the school.

- The <u>cyber safety team</u> would comprise:
    - SCEA ICT Manager (leader and convenor of team meetings)
    - SCEA ICT team member based at the school
    - Head of Curriculum/Curriculum Deputy
    - Head of Student services/welfare
    - Student member
    - Parent member