



Guildford Grammar School

FOUNDED 1896

POSITIVE PEER RELATIONS
SCHOOL POLICY ON BULLYING



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INTRODUCTION

This document 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 such unpleasant behaviour will not be tolerated.

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

January 2011



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 exclusions and/or police involvement.

RIGHTS

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

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. It can be planned and organised or it may be unintentional. Individuals or groups may be involved. 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.

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.

Children and adolescents who are being bullied usually feel frightened, unsafe, embarrassed and powerless. They also often feel confused and may not know what to do to stop the behaviour. The families of these students are also often angry and frustrated on their behalf. It can negatively impact their work, sleep and ability to concentrate.

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

PREVENTING BULLYING

All members of the Guildford Grammar School community are responsible for treating others with respect and taking steps to do what they can to prevent bullying. This requires:

STAFF:

- To role model in how to treat others with respect and maintain a safe physical and emotional educational environment for all
- Be aware of the possible signs and indicators of someone who is being bullied
- Be observant of signs of distress and suspected incidents of bullying
- Provide adequate supervision during duty
- Arrive at class on time and promptly between lessons

WHOLE SCHOOL:

- Annual awareness raising activities (e.g. 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).
- The Deputy Head of Preparatory School conducts annual forums with Years K-6 directly addressing bullying related issues including prevention strategies
- Implementing Positive Peer Relations program through the Year 7-9 mentor groups to promote prosocial behaviour
- Year 11 Peer Support Program for Year 7 students
- 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.



STUDENTS:

- Participate in annual awareness raising activities, the Positive Peer Relations program, and the Peer Support Program
- Take care of each other and treat each other with respect
- Refuse to be involved in any bullying or bystander behaviour.

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, damaged clothes or missing property 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 active interest in the friends of their child/adolescent
- Watch for signs of distress in their child/adolescent
- Telephone/make an appointment to see a staff member of the School to discuss concerns.

RESPONDING TO BULLYING

All members of the Guildford Grammar School community are responsible for reporting incidents where someone has been bullied and providing support for others when in need.

STAFF RESPONSE:

- Intervene immediately if any bullying behaviour is observed.
- Report suspected incidents and record these on SEQTA.
- Electronic copies of all reported and/or observed bullying incidents to be reviewed regularly by staff members to identify persistent bullies and/or targets. Such information is made available to all staff.
- Students identified as engaging in bullying behaviour may be referred to the Senior Master/Head of Senior School/Head of Preparatory School for disciplinary action.
- Staff will advise parents if their child has engaged in bullying behaviour after several warnings or after a serious incident. Staff will also advise parents if their child is identified as being a target of bullying behaviour.
- Students identified as engaging in bullying behaviour or a target of bullying behaviour may be referred to the School Counsellor for counselling/social skill development.
- Take steps to support the target and remove sources of distress without placing the target at further risk.
- All teaching staff will be trained in the Pikas Method of Shared Concern of responding to bullying incidents, and will then be expected to perform such meetings with students. Documentation of each session will be kept.



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.

THE SCHOOLS RESPONSE:

Simply punishing students engaging in bullying behaviour 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 target 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. Note that physical violence will be treated as a behaviour management issue and will be responded to according to the behaviour management plan.

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

STUDENTS:

- If you are being bullied talk it over with an older student, a Prefect, a House Captain or Peer Support Leader.



- If you or someone else is being bullied report it to your Mentor, Class Teacher, Head of House, Boarding Year Coordinator, School Chaplain, School Counsellor, or one of your favourite staff members.
- 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.
- Bullies 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.
- If you see someone being bullied, either support the target or get help – do not be a bystander. 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. **DO NOT STAND AROUND AND WATCH!**
- 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.

DON'T OBSERVE BULLYING

IF you see someone being bullied, either support the target or get help.

DO NOT STAND AROUND AND WATCH

PARENTS: IF YOUR SON/DAUGHTER IS BEING BULLIED

The targets of school bullying need the support of their families and friends, but advice offered to students should be appropriate.

- 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
- Teach and practice assertive responses which might include planned ignoring
- Talk with other parents and share ideas and experiences
- Avoid rushing in to confront parents of other students involved in the bullying incident
- Support you child in informing a staff member they trust e.g. their Mentor, Class Teacher, Housemaster, School Chaplain or School Counsellor.



- 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.

IF YOUR SON/DAUGHTER IS BULLYING OTHERS:

- Explain that bullying for any reason (e.g. out of revenge, irritation or fun) is not acceptable.
- Teach them the difference between assertive and aggressive behaviour.
- Offer to assist them in accessing support in improving their social behaviours.
- 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 'target'. This is a delicate situation and requires sensitive and empathic communication.

SILENCE AND SECRECY FEED BULLYING!

SUMMARY

Guildford Grammar School is committed to the creation and maintenance of a school that is physically and emotionally 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.

WE ALL 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.

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.



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.

