



Snowy Mountains
Christian School

Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedure

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1.0 Purpose

At SMCS there is an expectation of respect for all others, whether they are students, staff, parents or visitors. We expect every member of our Community, from the oldest to the youngest and all our staff, to both give and receive care and respect.

SMCS rejects all forms of bullying behaviour including online (or cyber) bullying and seeks to provide safe, inclusive, and respectful learning communities that promote student wellbeing.

This policy sets out the requirements and responding to bullying at SMCS. Bullying is not tolerated at SMCS and this policy covers all staff, students, parents and wider school community within the teaching and learning environment at SMCS and sets out the procedures for prevention and response to any bullying at SMCS.

2.0 Definitions

Bullying is an act or acts of aggression – physical or verbal – with the intent to cause embarrassment, pain or discomfort to another. Bullying usually involves an abuse of power – it can be planned, spontaneous or unintentional. It results in the diminishment of another person.

Bullying takes many forms, all of which will cause distress. Examples of bullying include and are not limited to:

Physical: fighting, pushing, shoving, intimidating gestures, invasion of personal space

Group: ganging up against, isolating or rejecting from the group

Verbal: mocking, name calling, putting someone down, offensive language

Victimisation: picking on, excluding, threatening to “get”, stand over tactics

Sexual: unwanted sexual invitation or inferences, touching or brushing against in a sexual manner, writing or drawing or commenting about someone’s body sexually, sexually oriented jokes or name calling and comments about someone’s private life

Discrimination: of any kind on the basis of race, gender, religion or sexuality.

Cyber Bullying: material posted (in any form – photos, print) on a website or sent on the internet/mobile phone that which identifies, bullies, embarrasses or harasses individual students (staff or others in the School). This applies to both school and out of school.

Behaviours that **do not** constitute bullying include:

- 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

3.0 Context

Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. Cyber bullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies.

Bullying can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and all forms of harassment including that based on sex, race, disability, homosexuality or transgender. Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved including bystanders.

Conflict or fights between equals or single incidents are not defined as bullying.

Schools exist in a society where incidents of bullying behaviour may occur. Preventing and responding to bullying behaviour in learning and working environments is a shared responsibility of all staff, students, parents, caregivers and members of the wider school community. All members of the school community contribute to the prevention of bullying by modelling and promoting appropriate behaviour and respectful relationships.

Bullying cannot be tolerated because:

- Bullying is not accepted in NSW schools
- Bullying is not Christlike behaviour
- Bullying does not build a positive and caring community
- Bullying is the opposite to the attitudes and values found in the Bible

Romans 12:9-21 clearly explains how we should treat one another:

For example "Be good friends who love deeply...bless your enemies...get along with each other...make friends with nobodies...don't let evil get the best of you; get the best of evil by doing good." (The Message)

4.0 Policy

SMCS rejects all forms of bullying. No student, employee, parent, caregiver, or community member should experience bullying within the learning or working environment of SMCS.

We seek within school to build a safe, supportive, positive and caring Christian environment in which we acknowledge that each human being is unique and created by God and therefore of immense value.

Psalm 139:13-14

¹³ *For you created my inmost being;*

you knit me together in my mother's womb.

¹⁴ *I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;*

your works are wonderful,

I know that full well.

This policy is a reflection of SMCS Core Values:

1. Love
2. Respect
3. Truth
4. Integrity

Bullying is in contradiction to the values stated above and as such is not tolerated at SMCS.

When bullying happens, the whole school community is damaged.

5.0 Procedures

A school culture, which promotes respect for others through teaching and demonstration in all areas of school life, will help to effectively implement strategies that will prevent bullying.

1. Inform Staff

General strategies to prevent bullying include:

- Christian education in the context of nurture, biblical studies, assemblies
- Curriculum where the value of the individual is affirmed and the importance of qualities such as compassion, kindness, tolerance and respect are encouraged

- Role modelling examples of how to relate to one another with love and acceptance
- Awareness of signs of insecurity, discomfort and suspected incidents of bullying.
- Make efforts to remove occasions of bullying by proactive management of students in the classroom and playground
- Arrive at class and to playground supervision on time
- Acting on situations immediately with regard to bullying and appropriate follow through (including strategies to prevent re-offending)
- Report suspected incidents to the appropriate staff member: class teacher, home-room teacher, Coordinator, or Principal

2.0 Encourage Parents

Obviously, parents play a significant role in dealing with the treatment of bullying. It is essential that SMCS work in partnership with parents in the disciplinary process. Parents can assist in the following ways:

- Clearly state to children that bullying in any form is never acceptable
- Encourage regularly the discussion of bullying especially SMCS' policy on zero tolerance of bullying
- Be alert to any signs of distress or anxiety, unwillingness to attend school, missing equipment, damaged clothing or bruising, and contact the School if they have any concerns
- Listen to their children with discernment
- Communicate effectively with the appropriate staff members
- Reassure students who are being bullied of their value
- Ensure that there are no bullying behaviours in the home
- Do not encourage children to "fight back" or "hit them back" (Rather tell a staff member of the occurrence of the bullying)
- Encourage students to take concerns to a trusted adult or senior student as soon as possible

3.0. Inform and Encourage Students

- Be aware that bullying is not acceptable in any form and that there are serious consequences
- Challenge or report bullying. Break the code of silence. Tell someone
- If you are being bullied, be prepared to walk away from the situation rather than respond in a negative way. Then tell someone
- Be aware that there are serious consequences for bullying
- If you have been or are being bullied, don't feel that it is your fault, or that no-one cares. Talk to a trusted teacher, a friend, your parents or another person you would trust
- Encourage others to make a stand against bullying

Consequences for Bullying

For students exhibiting bullying behaviours, the School may utilise:

- negative consequences for behaviour associated with bullying
- counselling and provision of a support network for all parties involved
- individual management plans, contracts and skill development to assist in the recuperative process
- Students who continue to bully will be interviewed by the Coordinator (Secondary) or the Coordinator (Primary) and parents will be informed. They will be encouraged to be more caring and respectful of their fellow students.

- A student who still chooses to bully will be interviewed by the Principal with his or her parent/guardian and asked to show why his/her position in the School should be still available

Process of Intervention

- A student informs a staff person of bullying or a teacher becomes aware of a bullying situation between students
- The staff person then reports the bullying situation to the relevant Coordinator
- The Coordinator then interviews the student as well as those involved in the bullying / harassment. He / She then implements strategies to address the situation. This may include some or all of the following:
 - discipline appropriate to the level of bullying
 - a process of restoration of relationship between the students
 - counsel for both the victim and the perpetrators (may involve referral to the School Chaplain, Counsellor, Stage adviser)
 - parental contact
- strategies to prevent further occurrence of the bullying (restorative justice process with families and the students involved)
- If the bullying continues after the above process occurs the Coordinator will report the matter to the Principal, which may involve in-school suspension for the student who is perpetuating the bullying
- In the case of cyber bullying, it is to be referred to the Coordinator (Primary/Secondary) and the student (or family) need to present the material which clearly identifies the offending person
- Final referral is to the Principal for suspension or recommendation to the board for withdrawal of the student's enrolment

Examples of Behaviour Management Plans and Practices

Preventative Approach

For all students, the school community should aim to:

- acknowledge the various elements of bullying and harassment
- establish a school culture that actively promotes being "imitators of God" (Ephesians 5:1)
- ensure the student voice is heard
- encourage parent involvement
- develop effective behaviour management policies and programs
- develop a school culture which helps break down the code of secrecy

Problem Solving Approach

For all students, the teachers should aim to:

- target individuals who exhibit bullying behaviours with conflict resolution, nurture and relationship-building programs
- encourage assertive behaviour and skills in mediation within the curriculum
- assist students in developing social skills
- assist students in recognising, identifying and managing bullying behaviours

6.0 Congruence With Legislation and Related Policies

- Safe and Supportive Environment (incorporating Nurture and Discipline Policy)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) Act 1986
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Racial Hatred Act 1995
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984

7.0 Sources

- SMCS Staff
- Toongabie Christian School
- National Safe Schools Framework
- NSW Department of Education and Communities website
- Bullying NO Way website

8.0 Consultation

- SMCS Staff

9.0 Review

Initial review will be conducted by the staff, to evaluate the policy's effectiveness, one year from implementation. Ongoing reviews will be conducted every three years thereafter.

10.0 Accountabilities

10.1 Responsibility

The Principal is responsible for the focus, content and maintenance of the policy.

10.2 Implementation Plan

This policy will be implemented by the Principal.

10.3 Training Plan

The Principal and the Coordinators will ensure that all staff are familiar and conversant with this policy.

Professional development of staff in the understanding signs of bullying, developing strategies for increased student resilience. This may include guest speakers, using online resources and NSSF manual.

10.4 Compliance

The Principal is ultimately responsible for ensuring that policies produced for and on behalf of SMCS comply with this policy.

11.0 Policy Adviser

The School Coordinators will act as the Policy Advisers.

12.0 Forms

NIL