



## **ANTI-BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY (Empathy & Safety Policy)**

### **Whole school policy**

Staines Memorial College is aware that the educational, personal and social experiences at school impact on young people's personal growth as well as on their learning and life options. We are committed to helping families to raise their children in a safe Christian environment.

The Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy is a comprehensive, whole school approach, which aims to enhance the development of a school environment where students feel safe, valued, engaged and purposeful. We believe the policy should more appropriately be known as the **Empathy & Safety** Policy as these two words describe the focus of what we want. When we are empathetic and think and act safe there will be very little (no?) bullying and harassment.

### **PASTORAL CARE**

#### **Rationale**

Pastoral care at Staines Memorial College is all about the way we relate and care for each other. It is what we do for each other from day to day and is the simple expression of our Christian values.

The Gospels in the Bible spell out the actions we need to take to be a Christian. Our College is able to specifically define our goals and create a true community where people show love for each other. Pastoral care aims to foster the values of mutual respect, responsibility and service and is a commitment to Christian processes, cooperation and concern for the common good.

The staff at Staines Memorial College wish to respond to the unique social and cultural diversity of our community. Many families are undergoing enormous stress and we are all called to be aware of these needs and respond to them. This document attempts to ensure that structures are in place in order to maximise efforts to give expression to the relationships of faith, care and support for all members of the community.

#### **Aims**

For the members of the Staines Memorial College school community to:

- Feel valued in a happy and safe environment;
- Develop positive attitudes to living, working, communicating and cooperating;
- Develop greater self concept through the recognition of their worth; and
- Foster the growth and recognition of the potential of each individual.

#### **Belief statements**

At Staines Memorial College we believe that Pastoral care permeates all aspects of school life, providing opportunities for personal growth of the whole school community.

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Therefore we will:

- Provide opportunities for the whole community to come together in prayer;
- Foster quality interpersonal relationships between staff, students, and parents;
- Provide care and support for those within the community especially those experiencing need;
- Nurture a spirit of cooperation and hospitality; and
- Ensure that the school experience is one of hope and promise for the future.

**At Staines, we believe that a positive school climate ensures the respect and dignity of each individual and leads to the development of positive relationships.**

Therefore we will:

- Acknowledge and celebrate varying cultures within the community;
- Publicly affirm achievements and endeavours of all community members;
- Appreciate and cater for different learning styles;
- Implement positive behaviour management strategies within the classroom and playground;
- Ensure that consistent expectations are set for both classroom and playground behaviour to ensure a safe and happy learning environment;
- Promote opportunities for celebration both at an individual and community level; and
- Ensure that all members of the community are treated with courtesy and respect at all times.

At Staines Memorial College we believe that as a whole community we are committed to the total development of each child, leading them to be mature and responsible citizens capable of qualitative decision making.

Therefore we will:

- Identify children with specific needs and implement programs to cater for those needs e.g. ESL, Special Needs, Learning Support, Gifted and Talented;
- Provide opportunities for students to take part in decision-making processes;
- Encourage students to experience various leadership roles e.g. "buddy" relationships, captaincy etc;
- Focus on the development of cooperation and self-discipline as recognition of the rights of others; and
- Provide opportunities for students to participate in academic and sporting competitions of their own choice.

## **LINKS TO RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Our school's behaviour management policy is closely linked with our Pastoral care as they both endeavour to promote respectful, secure and healthy environments in which students can prosper. We believe that we should create an environment which is supportive of individuals and groups with special needs, conducive to worthwhile learning and which demonstrates a caring concern for the well being of all its members.

Our discipline plan aims to foster the development and experience of responsible self-discipline among students and seeks to promote the well-being and good order of the community.

## **Pastoral Support Programs**

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The overall care of a child includes not only the academic side of learning but also the emotional, spiritual and social. Personal, social, emotional and economic factors may all have a direct effect on children who are subject to stress, thereby affecting their learning. There are many programs and resources to provide support for students experiencing difficulties. We endeavour to help families access the most appropriate support programs to meet the needs of each individual.

## **Matters for Discipline**

Every school has some students whose personal and social problems manifest themselves in behaviours which are either disruptive to the teaching and learning program, disrespectful of school rules and codes of conduct, and/or harmful to the well-being and security of its members.

Such behaviours requiring action in accordance with the Staines' discipline plan would include:

- Bullying;
- Harassment;
- Racism;
- Infringement of classroom and playground rules;
- Rudeness/impoliteness;
- Failure to do homework; and
- Incorrect uniform.

## **Behaviour Management Rights and Responsibilities**

At Staines', we have a shared understanding of the rights and corresponding responsibilities of all community members:

- Everyone has the right to be respected and treated with dignity;
- Everyone has the right to feel safe;
- Everyone has the right to have their property respected;
- Children have a right to learn and teachers have a right to teach; and
- Everyone has a right to work and learn in clean and healthy surroundings.

All members of the school community will be made aware of the specific rules (formulated in accordance with our shared rights and responsibilities) that apply to behaviour on the playground and in the classroom.

## **LINKS TO CHILD (Student) PROTECTION POLICY**

The College Child (Student) Protection Policy is closely linked with the Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy. The overall care of a child includes not only the academic side of learning but also the emotional, physical and psychological.

Staines Memorial College will take reasonable steps to ensure that students learn in a safe, supportive and caring environment without fear of being harmed by either staff members or other students.

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By definition *harm* is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional well-being. It is immaterial how the harm is caused. Harm can be caused by:

- Physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; or
- Sexual abuse or exploitation

A *child* is a person under 18 years of age.

A *student* is any person regardless of age who is enrolled at the school.

In any form harm is not acceptable and results in hurt, fear, loss of self-esteem and decreased social effectiveness for the victim. Within the context of Staines Memorial College harm is entirely contrary to the ideals of the school.

## Implementation of the Child Protection Policy

The following steps are a guide to dealing with reports of harm.

- If harm is suspected or reported, to ensure the student's safety, the member of staff approached should deal with the incident immediately. It is never acceptable to turn a blind eye to suspected or reported harm. Staines Memorial College will appoint Child Protection Officers who will receive extra training to enable them to deal effectively with incidence of harm referred to them.
- A clear account of the incident should be recorded on the 'Report of Suspected/Alleged Child Abuse (including Sexual Abuse)' form and given to a Child Protection Officer or the Principal.
- The Principal and/or Child Protection Officer will then work through the College's Child Protection Policy.

## Support for the Student

The school has a responsibility to offer a long-term, supportive environment for all students. The following are suggested as ways to support a student who may be in need of protection:

- Treat the student with respect and dignity;
- Be sensitive to the student's needs, feelings and concerns;
- Monitor the situation;
- Maintain confidentiality as far as is practicable; and
- Immediately notify the Principal if, after the initial report, any further incidents of harm are suspected.

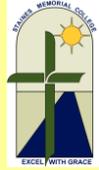
## WHAT IS BULLYING?

**Bullying** can take a number of forms (verbal, physical, social or psychological), including (but not exclusive to) name-calling, spreading rumours, ignoring, exclusion, teasing, put-downs, sarcasm, threats, physical contact, unwanted sexual contact or innuendo, hitting, spitting,

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kicking, tripping, racism, interference with or damage to property. These incidents involve an imbalance of power.

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## Definition:

- **Bully:** to intimidate or injure those weaker or more defenceless. A repetitive attack causing distress not only at the time of the attack, but also by the threat of future attacks.
- **Harass:** to repeatedly trouble, worry, annoy or accost.
- **Violence:** using physical force to injure, control or intimidate others, or to cause harm or destruction.

## Reasons why young people engage in bullying:

There are many reasons why a young person may engage in bullying behaviours, including:

- For entertainment or revenge;
- To experience power, to prove themselves or impress others;
- To compensate for perceived failure or lack of friends, to fit in with what others are doing;
- Because they have not learned appropriate social skills for interactions with their peers; or
- Because it is seen as an acceptable, funny or smart thing to do.

Children who bully often tend to have:

- High energy levels;
- Good verbal skills and an ability to talk themselves out of trouble;
- A high estimation of their own ability;
- An ability to manipulate individuals or groups;
- An enjoyment of conflict and aggression;
- A delight in getting their own way; and
- The appearance of being popular, but often disliked.

## What are the results of bullying?

The results of bullying can be very serious for both the bully and the bullied student, and can affect his or her whole life. For the bullied student it may result in stress, lower academic results, truancy, anger, poor self-esteem, sleeplessness, nightmares, depression, and even suicide.

For the bully, bullying may lead to a belief that inappropriate and bullying behaviour is acceptable and consequently lead to a failure to develop skills of cooperation and conflict resolution; also, bullying may result in suspension or exclusion, and may lead to problems with the law.

## What are we doing to prevent bullying?

- Use of the curriculum to work on aspects of bullying wherever possible. The inclusion of an anti-bullying segment in the College's curriculum and pastoral care.
- Use of the "Dealing with Bullying and Harassment" materials from the Mind Matters program with appropriate classes.
- Staff training and support to equip staff to: reinforce school policy, integrate strategies into class curriculum, teach self-protective behaviours to students, respond effectively to bullying incidents, resolve incidents, and to utilise other support structures within the school to manage difficulties.

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- Explanation and discussions of this policy (e.g. in form classes and assembly) and publication in the school newsletter.
- Observation of students by teachers both inside and outside the classroom.
- Involvement of non-teaching staff including community and school support staff.
- Discussions with and encouragement of senior students to become involved with younger students.
- Collection of relevant behavioural data when students first enroll at school.
- Professional development for teachers.
- Assisting home teachers / form teachers to be "Bullying Referral Teachers."

## What are the "Bullying Referral Teachers"?

'Bullying Referral Teachers' receive training to enable them to deal effectively with bullying incidents referred to them.

A process they, or other teachers, might use when bullying is reported is:

- Listen carefully to the bullied student, and if the Incident is minor, offer advice. If it is not minor, talk to the bully immediately, or for serious repeated bullying, refer the situation to the Administration.
- Write up in the Bullying Register.
- Follow up with the student to check on the situation.
- Talk to bully if necessary - use the 'No Blame Approach'.
- Write up Incident report (unless incident is minor) and give to Administration member in charge of the bully's year level, who will note it and arrange for filing in the bully and the bullied student's files.
- Refer the bully or the bullied student to appropriate services if there appears to be a need for counseling or skill development.
- Follow up by checking on both the bully and the bullied student to ensure the situation has been resolved.

## What will we do when bullying is reported?

Discussions will take place with the bully and the bullied student by a teacher or an Administration member.

As a consequence of bullying, a range of options is available depending on the students and the nature of the situation. Some of these may be counseling, restitution (making amends), detention or some other logical consequence.

A staff member will make a written report. This will be placed on the bully's file. Main details will be noted in a Bullying Register, which will enable staff to identify any patterns that may arise.

Parents of the students involved will be contacted about serious or repeated bullying incidents. Parents may also be contacted in regard to lesser bullying episodes.

Repeated bullying will be dealt with under the school's behaviour management policy.

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## What can you do if you are being bullied?

- Try not to show that you are upset. Bullies feel great if they have upset you.
- Try to be assertive - look and sound confident.
- Walk quickly and confidently even if you don't feel that way inside - appearing confident is helpful.
- If students have been calling you names or teasing etc., reassure yourself that you are OK, and that those students are the ones with the problems.
- Report it - remember that the bullying will continue if those responsible think they can get away with their behaviour.
- Talk to a friend/friends about it. Ask him or her to help you. It will be harder for the bully to pick on you if you have a friend with you for support.
- Avoid risk situations where possible, or stay close to adults or friends.
- Consider whether you have been bullying yourself, e.g. have you been name calling, annoying, threatening, showing off etc? If you have, change what you are doing.
- If bullying continues after reporting it, report it again - talk to a Bullying Referral Teacher.
- If you feel or think that you are different in any way, be proud of it - individuality and diversity, within the rules, are important.
- Consider talking to a teacher or pastor who can help you to develop skills which can be useful in bullying situations

## How can you help someone else who is being bullied?

- Remember that nobody deserves to be bullied.
- Show the bully that you and your friends strongly disapprove of his/her actions.
- Seek help.
- Give sympathy and support to students who are bullied.
- Be careful about teasing people or making personal remarks. If you think that students might not find your comments funny, don't say them.
- If you know of bullying, report it. The person bullied may be too scared or upset to tell anyone.

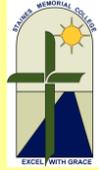
## What can parents do if they suspect their child is being bullied?

- Watch for signs that your child might be being bullied. Some of the following may indicate bullying: wanting to miss school; a pattern of headaches or stomach aches; becoming withdrawn; nightmares; tension or unhappiness; taking out on others at home; bruising; the disappearance of property; damaged clothing, etc.
- If you think that your child is being bullied, inform the school immediately, and ask for an interview with a staff member who can help. With staff, devise strategies that will help and support your child inside and outside school.
- Don't be swayed by your child's pleas not to interfere because of their fear of retaliation: for the student's sake, bullying needs to be addressed, and this will be most effective with the school and family working together.
- When discussing the problem with your child, go through the advice given in this policy.
- Encourage your child to develop friendships. A student who has friends is less likely to be bullied.

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- Support your child in developing their talents and participating in sports or other activities that will build confidence, in a safe, supervised environment.
- Work on improving your child's self-esteem.
- Help your child develop behaviours and language that does not attract unwarranted attention.
- If your child has been bullied frequently by different students, seek school advice and counseling so that he/she may become more assertive and resilient, and hence reduce the likelihood of being bullied.