



Anti-Bullying & Harassment Policy

Philosophy

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

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

The development of our Policy and Procedures has been guided by the federally funded health initiative MindMatters, because we want to create a protective environment that promotes spiritual, social and emotional health and well-being. MindMatters provides a whole school approach to such an environment.

In reading this document, the policy framework is developed against all forms of harassment including sexual harassment. There are several categories of harm that we may be confronted with from time to time in the course of involvement with children.

Definitions

Harassment, intimidation, and bullying involve the abuse of power with the intention of causing distress to the other person/s, or for personal gain or gratification. Some repeated behaviours could be covert and subtle and involve the following:

- Social aspects: e.g. Exclusion, racism.
- Psychological aspects: exclusion, racism, threats, teasing
- Verbal aspects: e.g. Name-calling, teasing, threats
- Physical aspects: Hitting, kicking...
- Sexual in nature: Wolf whistling, innuendo, come-ons, sexually explicit jokes, sexually explicit language, unwanted pursuing for a sexual purpose or relationship, unwanted touching of any kind.

Bullying is repeated oppression, psychological or physical, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group of persons. This includes physical attack (hitting, kicking, sexual assault, theft); verbal attack (name calling, racist, sexist or homophobic comments, offensive remarks, ridicule) and indirect bullying (spreading rumours, explicit ostracism from social groups). It can include doing one or more of the preceding acts by use of modern technology such as e-mail or text messaging.

(from *Student Protection*, V9.0 at <http://ppr.det.qld.gov.au/education/community/Pages/Student-Protection.aspx> for master.)

Pastoral Care – How we develop a culture of Empathy & Safety

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 as 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 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 and Action Statements

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

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
- Strive to make the College experience one of hope and promise for the future.

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

Therefore and in accordance with the Mission statement of Staines Memorial College our Policy position is that we seek to:

- Acknowledge and celebrate varying cultures within the community – both staff and students
- Publicly affirm achievements and endeavours of all community members
- Develop an environment that nurtures and promotes student self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Appreciate and cater for different learning styles
- Implement positive behaviour management strategies within the classroom and playground
- Promote 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
- Ensure that all members of the community are treated with courtesy and respect at all times
- Develop in students an understanding that they must take responsibility for their own behaviour
- Develop in students critical and effective thinking and problem solving skills
- Develop in students life skills related to healthy life styles

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.

Students who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a member of staff of their choice;
- Reassuring the student;
- Offering continuous support;
- Providing encouragement to form and maintain friendships with non-bullying students.

Students who have bullied will be helped by:

- Discussing what happened
- Discovering why the student became involved;
- Establishing the wrong-doing and the need to change;
- Enlisting the support of parents/caregivers to help change the behaviour and attitude of the student, where appropriate.

Pastoral Support Programs – An aspect of pastoral care

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.

Links to Responsible Behaviour Development Plan

Our College’s Responsible Behaviour Plan is a focus of our Pastoral Care. 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 processes aim to foster the development and experience of responsible self-discipline among students and seek to promote the well-being and good order of the community.

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 College expectations / codes of conduct, and/or harmful to the well-being and security of its members.

Such behaviours requiring action in accordance with the Staines’ Responsible Behaviour 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 College 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.

What is Bullying? – A summary provided to the Community

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, kicking, tripping, racism, interference with or damage to property.

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 people (students and staff) engage in bullying:

There are many reasons why a 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 [MindMatters](#) program with appropriate classes.
- Staff training and support to equip staff to: reinforce College 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 College to manage difficulties.
- Explanation and discussions of this policy (e.g. in form classes and assembly) and publication in the College newsletter.
- Observation of students by teachers both inside and outside the classroom.
- Involvement of non-teaching staff including community and College support staff.
- Discussions with and encouragement of senior students to become involved with younger students.
- Collection of relevant behavioural data when students first enrol at our College.
- Professional development for teachers.
- Assisting Pastoral Care (Secondary) and Home room (Primary) teachers to be "Bullying Referral Teachers."

What are the "Bullying Referral Teachers"?

Our Pastoral Care (Secondary) and Home room (Primary) teachers receive training to enable them to deal effectively with bullying incidents presented 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.
- Follow up with the student to check on the situation.
- Talk with wisdom to the person bullying - 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's and the bullied student's files.
- Refer the bully or the bullied student for additional support if there appears to be a need for counselling 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 counselling, restitution (making amends), detention or some other logical consequence.

A staff member will make a written report. A behaviour record will be noted on the offender's file on Edumate (the College's administration software). This will enable Pastoral Care 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 College's Responsible Behaviour Plan.

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 from an adult.
- Give sympathy and support to students who are bullied.
- Be careful about teasing people or making personal remarks. If you think that others (students, staff) 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 College; 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 College 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 college.

- 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 College 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.
- 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. Make positive comments and NO put-downs
- Help your child develop behaviours and language that does not attract unwarranted attention.

If your child has been bullied frequently by different students, seek College advice and counselling so that he/she may become more assertive and resilient, and hence reduce the likelihood of being bullied.

Related Legislation

- [Education \(General Provisions\) Act 2006](#)
- [Education \(Queensland Studies Authority\) Act 2002](#)
- [Vocational Education, Training and Employment Act 2000](#)
- [Child Protection Act 1999](#)
- [Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000](#)
- [Anti-Discrimination Act 1991](#)
- [Judicial Review Act 1991](#)
- [Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995](#)
- [Workplace Health and Safety Regulation 2008](#)
- [Right to Information Act 2009](#)
- [Criminal Code Act 1899](#)
- [Youth Justice Act 1992](#)