

Section: Welfare
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ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to maintain a positive climate of respectful relationships where bullying is less likely to occur. The School seeks to create a safe, friendly and enjoyable environment for all of its students and all members of the School community where effective learning can take place. In such an environment students are entitled to pursue their various activities and studies feeling secure, confident and valued. Each student at the School must recognise the need to respect and appreciate the individual differences of the members of the School community and the importance of harmonious personal relations within the School.

What is bullying?

Whilst there is no universally accepted definition of bullying, there is general consensus that bullying behaviour has the following elements:

A desire to hurt; the perpetration of hurtful behaviour (physical, verbal or relational) in a situation in which there is an imbalance of power; the action being regarded as unjustified, typically repeated and experienced by the target of the aggression as oppressive, and by the perpetrator as enjoyable.
 (Ken Rigby, 2002)

Bullying is a pattern of uninvited on-going behaviour directed by a more powerful person or group to intentionally or unintentionally hurt, injure, embarrass and/or distress a less powerful person or group. Bullying may be physical, verbal, psychological, or social.

Bullying can take many forms, all of which will cause distress. Examples of bullying include:

- **Physical:** hitting, pushing, tripping, kicking, spitting on others
- **Extortion:** threatening to take someone's possessions, food or money
- **Verbal:** teasing, using offensive names, ridiculing, spreading rumours
- **Non-Verbal:** writing offensive notes or graffiti about others, using e-mail or text messaging to hurt others, rude gestures, facial gestures
- **Exclusion:** deliberately excluding others from the group, refusing to sit next to someone
- **Property:** stealing, hiding, damaging or destroying property
- **Cyber:** (emails, SMS, chat rooms) offensive, /threatening images, offensive/ threatening/hurtful comments rumour spreading

The key features of bullying are that it:

- Causes hurt and distress to the target and others e.g. family,
- Is repeated, and;
- Involves the use of power in an unfair way.
- Toxic to our school community

Bullying need not always be done by the older or stronger. "Bullying up" is bullying done by the smaller, the younger and the weaker, who either use anonymous means to bully, such as cyber bullying, or overt means to bully, knowing that any retaliation would make the provoked person look like they are the bully.

Symptoms of Bullying

For behaviour to be classified as bullying, it needs to involve repeated actions that are intended to cause hurt. Not having friends or not being popular isn't necessarily a sign that a person is being bullied. It may simply mean a person lacks inter-personal skills.

There is a difference between bullying behaviour and what can be described as normal interpersonal conflict.

The symptoms associated with bullying include, but are not limited to;

- Not wanting to go to school
- Change in friends and social activities
- Anger
- Tears
- Depression
- Low self-esteem
- And a raft of psychosomatic symptoms such as headaches and stomach aches.

Withdrawal and reluctance to "join in" can be a warning sign, as can truancy, misbehaviour and aggressive behaviour. Cuts, bruising, torn clothing, requests for extra food or money as well as a decline in academic performance can also be clues that a student may be suffering from bullying.

Any form of bullying is unworthy of a Peter Moyes student and against all that Peter Moyes ASC stands for. Those who are identified as bullies will be dealt with firmly and may be withdrawn from the School.

Students are expected to report any alleged episode or episodes of bullying or their knowledge of any alleged episode or episodes of bullying as soon as possible after they occur and/or become aware of them to a member of Staff within their respective Sub-School.

All alleged episodes of bullying will be investigated in a manner considered appropriate by the School.

The School reserves the right to apply all sanctions and implement such procedures as it considers necessary in the investigation and resolution of alleged incidents of bullying. The emphasis of the School's decisions concerning appropriate sanctions and procedures will be one of promoting positive student behaviour, preventing anti-social behaviour and encouraging respect and co-operation amongst students.

The wrongful use of power and/or influence is not tolerated within the School community and instances of such behaviour should be reported to teachers. Information will be acted upon by staff.