



<b>Review Date:</b>	<b>April 2019</b>
<b>Authorised by:</b>	<b>Principal</b>
<b>Contacts:</b>	<b>Dean of Students</b>
<b>Locations:</b>	<b>SS2/MyS/SW</b>

## **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

### **1. RATIONALE**

Somerville House (the School) seeks to promote understanding and tolerance of difference and recognition of the worth of each individual. It aims to provide a safe, supportive, caring, and Christian learning environment for all members of the School community.

In a Christian school, the values of love, respect, humility and care for others in the example of Christ are the essence of all relationships.

Bullying and harassment are the antitheses of these values and can have far reaching consequences, directly and indirectly, for everyone in the School Community and undermine the School's ability to achieve its Mission.

Under the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)* any form of harassment is unlawful.

The purpose of this policy is:

- ensure that students and staff feel safe from bullying in all its forms
- to define what bullying behaviours are
- to set out the process for dealing with bullying behaviours in a proactive manner and the procedures to follow in the event of an incident being reported; and
- to ensure the School meets its statutory and regulatory obligations with regard to bullying and harassment.

### **2. SCOPE**

This policy applies to any bullying behaviour experienced or caused by a member of the School community. Where bullying takes place out of school hours or off school grounds, the School will investigate as appropriate if the parties involved are identified as members of the School Community.

Note: Allegations of bullying by staff should be dealt with under the *Complaints Resolution Policy* and allegations of staff being bullied in the workplace should be dealt with under the *PMSA Harassment and Grievance Policies*.

Staff members who have a grievance against a parent whose behaviour is persistently intimidating and might be considered as bullying, should report the matter to their Head of School.

### **3. POLICY STATEMENT**

- 3.1 The School will not tolerate bullying or harassment in any form.
- 3.2 The School will take a proactive approach to dealing with bullying by establishing a "whole of School" approach based on the principles of restorative justice.

- 3.3 The School will provide:
- 3.3.1 formal and informal lessons within its Pastoral Care program:
- to educate students about bullying behaviours
  - to inform them of the procedures to follow in the event of someone being bullied
  - to inform them of the process which will be followed; and
  - the consequences if the behaviour persists.
- 3.3.2 staff education and training to identify and deal appropriately with bullying behaviours; and
- 3.3.3 information to parents through the Family Handbook, Newsletters and Parent Information Sessions covering the same topics.
- 3.4 The School will take all reported instances of bullying seriously, will investigate them ensuring that decisions made are based on the principles of procedural fairness, and, at the School's discretion, measures appropriate to the incident will be taken.
- 3.5 The School will keep appropriate records of all complaints received and investigations undertaken in respect of bullying, including cyber bullying.
- 3.6 If bullying amounts to "harm" as referred to in the *PMSA Child Protection Policy*, then the matter must be dealt with under the *Child Protection Policy*.

#### 4. REFERENCES

##### 4.1 References to other Policy

- *PMSA Anti-Discrimination Policy*
- *Somerville House Child Protection Policy*
- *Code of Behaviour*
- *Acceptable Use of Technology Policy*

##### 4.2 Legislative and other References

- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cwlth)*
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cwlth)*
- *Racial Hatred Act 1995 (Cwlth)*
- *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) Act 1986 (Cwlth)*
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cwlth)*
- *Child Protection Act 1991 (Qld)*
- *Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) template –for an Anti-Bullying Policy*
- *National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF) (revised 2011)*
- *Working Together Toolkit - A Toolkit for Effective School-based Action against Bullying 2010*
- *Family Handbook*
- *Student Diary*

## 5. RESPONSIBILITIES

### Principal

- Promote actively and often the values which underpin the philosophy of the School.
- Ensure all staff, students and parents are aware of the policy and understand:
  - the School's position and approach to bullying in all its forms
  - the processes to be followed
  - the consequences to be expected if the behaviour persists; and
  - the responsibilities of all groups in the Community in working together to prevent it.
- Provide programs for students, staff and parents to:
  - raise awareness and understanding of what bullying behaviour encompasses
  - counter the view that bullying is normal and acceptable
  - develop strategies which will promote a supportive climate, break down the code of secrecy, minimise the occurrence of bullying; and
  - develop in all members of the Community, the skills needed to deal with it effectively when it happens.
- Provide counselling services and support for all involved where necessary.
- Ensure staff investigating alleged bullying incidents make decisions based on principles of procedural fairness.

### Staff

- Model the values of the School in their relationships with others.
- Monitor students for signs, which might indicate they are being bullied.
- Supervise grounds vigilantly when on duty.
- Promote positive, caring and acceptable behaviours.
- Treat all incidents and reports seriously.

### Parents

- Take seriously any report about bullying and notify the School.
- Support the School's values and Code of Conduct by emphasising them at home.
- Report any concerns re their daughter's behaviour, which might indicate she is being bullied, to the School.

### Students

- Care for other students and treat them as they would like to be treated.
- Comply with the Code of Conduct.
- Report any incidents involving themselves or others to their teacher or their parents or an adult at the School they trust.

### Other members of the School Community

- Model the values of the School in their relationships with others.
- Promote positive, caring and acceptable behaviours.
- Report any concerns re a student's behaviour which might indicate she is being bullied to the School.

## 6. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS – Guidelines for Staff

### 6.1 General Principles

- 6.1.1 Any member of the School Community involved in incidents of bullying will be supported.
- 6.1.2 All reports will be taken seriously and all bullying incidents will be investigated.
- 6.1.3 Incidents will be dealt with by a combined group of staff who are responsible for the discipline and care of the individuals involved.
- 6.1.4 Decisions made about alleged bullying incidents will be based on the principles of procedural fairness.
- 6.1.5 Action taken will be based on the principles of restorative justice and include the use of a conflict resolution approach. Measures may include:
  - individual counselling of those involved
  - group mediation and/or
  - a graded range of sanctions.
- 6.1.6 The Dean of Students, Heads of School and/or the Principal, as appropriate, will be informed in a written report of the allegations of bullying.
- 6.1.7 Parents of students affected will be informed of allegations of serious and/or on-going bullying behaviour among students.
- 6.1.8 If the situation continues to cause conflict, further review will be instigated at the request of any of the parties involved.
  - If necessary consultation and involvement with external agencies may be sought.

### 6.2 Procedures for dealing with bullying incidents or reports of bullying.

Refer to:

- *Attachment 1* - Procedures for Dealing with Student Bullying Incidents.
- *Attachment 2* – Flowchart - Action to be taken in Response to a student incident; and
- *Attachment 3* – Flowchart - Staged Consequences for Dealing with Incidents Determined after Investigation to be Bullying.

## 7. DEFINITIONS

**Bullying is** the **repeated** use of power and/or oppression (psychological or physical) by a more powerful individual or group of persons against a less powerful person. It occurs when someone or a group of people, upset or create a risk to another person's health and safety, or their property, reputation or social acceptance. It is done to intimidate, coerce, frighten or to control.

It is any **persistent** behaviour which harms other people who do not have the skills or resources to counter this behaviour.

Bullying can include but is not limited to:

- physical and psychological intimidation or abuse
- verbal abuse especially name-calling
- cruel teasing
- removing and hiding belongings
- threatening or menacing gestures
- exclusion that is malicious
- spreading malicious rumours; and
- cyber assault (any of the above can occur with the use of email, mobile phone or text messages, SMS, blogs, chat rooms, video internet and social media sites).

**Bullying is NOT:**

- one-off of social rejection or not liking someone
- one-off acts of nastiness or spite
- eye rolling
- rough, tough play in the school yard
- teasing which is well intentioned
- isolated incidents of aggression, intimidation or violence; or
- arguments, disagreements or fights (where there is no power imbalance).

**Harassment** is a behaviour which targets someone or a group due to their:

- identity, race, culture or ethnic origin
- gender
- religion
- physical characteristics
- age
- ability or disability
- sexual orientation; and/or
- marital, parental or economic status.

It humiliates, offends and causes a hostile environment. It may be:

- a continuing pattern or a single act
- intentional or unintentional
- directed randomly or towards the same person or persons.

**Bullying behaviour** becomes harassment when the person being bullied says it is not welcome or wanted and the behaviour continues.

**Discrimination** occurs when a person or group is treated less favourably than others because of the reasons outlined under harassment. It interferes with the legal right of all people to be treated fairly and have the same opportunities as everyone else.

**Harm** is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional well-being.

**Child** (in the context of child protection) is an individual under 18 years.

**Procedural fairness** the rules or principles which should be applied in the handling of an investigation to ensure that decision making is fair and reasonable. It involves the decision maker:

- informing the people of the case against them
- giving them the right to be heard
- not having a personal interest in the outcome; and
- basing the decision on the evidence before him/her.

**Restorative justice** holds the person causing harm accountable for his/her behaviour and focuses on having that person recognise and accept responsibility for:

- the harm which has been caused to the person
- the harm which has been caused to others; and
- the need to take action to repair the harm caused.

## 8. ATTACHMENTS

*Attachment 1 – Procedures for Dealing with Student Bullying Incidents*

*Attachment 2 – Action to be taken in Response to a Student Bullying Incident – Flowchart.*

*Attachment 3 – Staged Consequences for Dealing with Incidents Determined after Investigation to be Student Bullying. – Flowchart.*

## **PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH STUDENT BULLYING INCIDENTS OR REPORTS**

All incidents of bullying, or suspected bullying, should be reported, either by the person who has experienced it, or any concerned person, to a responsible adult, (eg. a class teacher, boarding supervisor, homeroom teacher/tutor, a Head of Year, the School Counsellor, parent, Chaplain, Dean of Students or Heads of School).

Decisions arising from the investigation reports should be based on the principles of procedural justice namely, the persons making the decisions are not biased and the alleged offender has the right to hear the allegation and respond before the decision is made.

### **1. FIRST INSTANCE**

- 1.1 Provide a written report of the incident to the Head of Year, Dean of Students, Assistant Head of Junior School (Pastoral Care and Administration) who will organise an investigation into the allegation by the group responsible for the care and discipline of the parties involved.

1.1.1 This group will:

- have the students involved in the incident (including bystanders) separately record their versions of the events in writing
- interview the students individually
- give key people involved the opportunity to meet with the Dean of Students to discuss the incident and respond to any allegations
- determine if the incident was, in fact, bullying; and
- identify the behaviour clearly to the students to ensure there is a clear understanding of the issue, how it breaches the Code of Behaviour (Students) and why it is bullying or why it is not.

- 1.2 **If it is not** bullying, students will be counselled on appropriate behaviours and consequences matching the breach of the Code of Behaviour will be invoked.

- 1.3 **If it is**, the Dean of Students will:

- contact both sets of parents and explain the issue and the process to be followed
- provide advice to help parents support both students
- advise of consequences if behaviour continues; and
- keep written records of all proceedings.

- 1.4 The Dean of Students will inform the School Counsellor, Head of Year and the Assistant Head of Junior School who will work with both parties to resolve the issue and provide both parties with ongoing support to assist them to develop appropriate skills for coping and behaviour modification as deemed necessary. Mediation may occur if appropriate.

Expected outcomes:

- the students will clearly understand:
  - why the behaviour is bullying
  - the effect it has on other people and others (staff, friends, family)
  - how it breaches the Code of Behaviour
  - what needs to happen to repair the harm done; and
  - the consequences if it happens again.

- The student who has acted in a bullying manner, will accept responsibility for her behaviour and make a commitment to stop hurting others and to behave in accordance with the Code of Behaviour; and
- The student who was the recipient of the behaviour, will feel safe, supported and sufficiently confident to report any further incident should it occur.

1.5 The Head of Year and the Assistant Head of Junior School will monitor the students in an ongoing manner and provide feedback to the Dean of Students and relevant Head of School.

## 2. SECOND INSTANCE

2.1 The Dean of Students and/or the Head of School will follow the same procedure as outlined in 1.2 above to ensure the behaviour has been clearly identified and the student understands clearly the issue.

2.2 The consequences as outlined in the First Instance will be restated.

2.3 The legal implications of harassment will be outlined to the student.

2.4 Consequences will be invoked at the discretion of the Dean of Students and Head of School and the Head of Year, School Counsellor and Assistant Head of Junior School may again be involved in strategies aimed at future modification of the behaviours. They may refer the student to external agencies if necessary.

2.5 The Head of School and Dean of Students will request an interview with the parents to inform them of the issue, the measures taken and the consequences of any further incident.

2.6 The Head of School will provide the Principal with a written report on the process.

2.7 The Dean of Students and other staff responsible for the discipline and care of both students will monitor the behaviour of the student/s involved in an ongoing manner.

## 3. THIRD INSTANCE

3.1 If it should reoccur, if suspension or termination of enrolment is the likely consequence, the Head of School will refer the matter to the Principal.

3.2 The Head of School and/or the Principal will:

- follow the procedures outlined in 2.1
- restate the consequences outlined at 2.5; and
- make a decision on the student's future at the School.

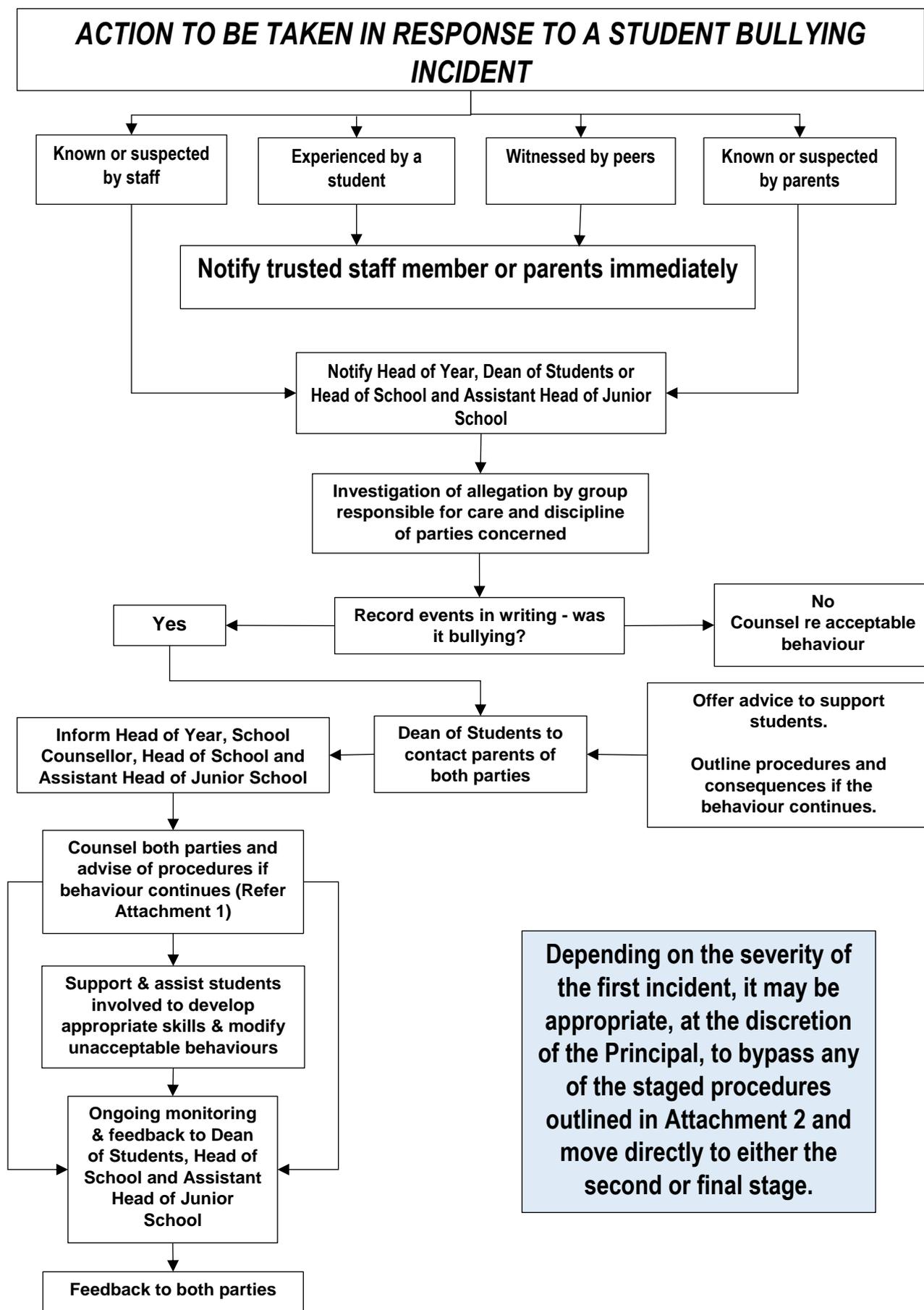
## NOTE

A. Depending on the severity of the incident, any or both of the First and Second Instance procedures may be bypassed and the Third Instance Procedures followed.

B. Where an investigation by the School shows that the matter:

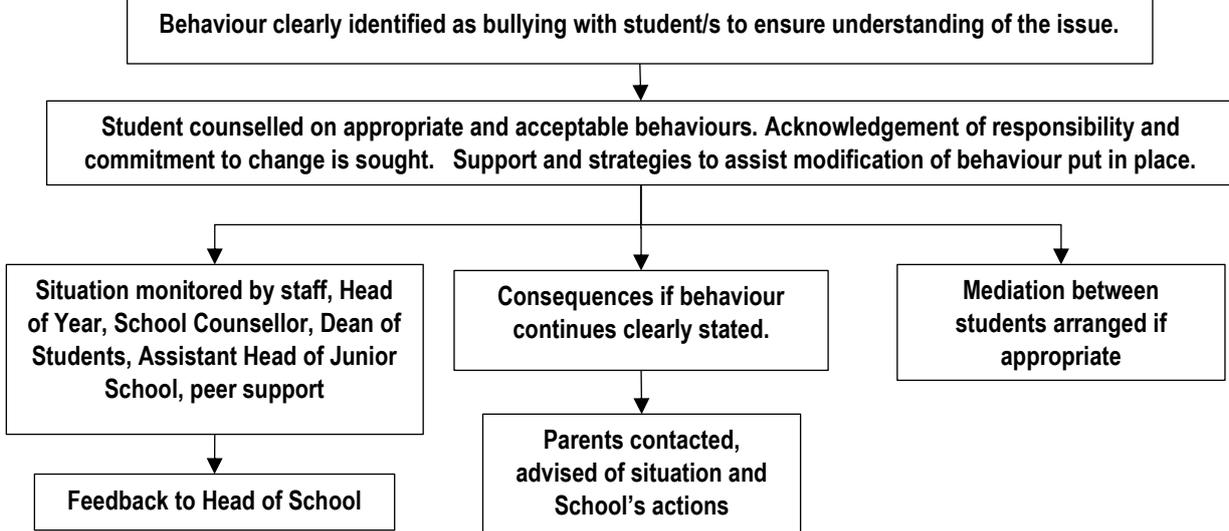
- involved criminal liability, the School may:
  - advise the student and the parents they may make a formal complaint to the police
  - assist the police in any police investigation; and
  - inform the parents, if they do not wish to pursue this course of action, of the School's limited powers going forward to monitor the matter.

- involves civil liability, the School may:
  - advise the student and the parents to retain their own lawyers for advice to pursue the bully; and
  - seek advice from its own lawyers and PMSA regarding the School's rights to pursue the matter.

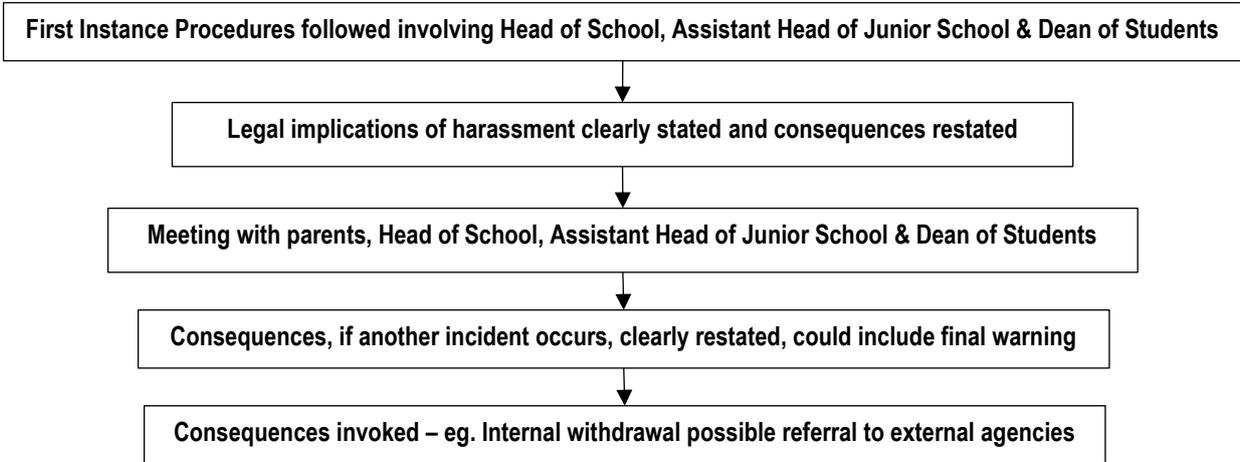


**STAGED CONSEQUENCES FOR DEALING WITH INCIDENTS**  
**DETERMINED, AFTER INVESTIGATION, TO BE STUDENT BULLYING**

**First Instance**



**Second Instance**



**Third Instance**

