



West Moreton Anglican College

Policy & Procedures: 2.3 Anti-Bullying Policy

This policy defines bullying and outlines the College's opposition to such behaviour. It gives a general guideline of the College's response to and prevention of such behaviour.

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Parent Policy

2.0	Pastoral Care Strategic Policy
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Referenced Policies and Procedures and Governing Legislation

	The College's Respect and Responsibility Program
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1.0 Introduction

This policy identifies forms and examples of bullying. It provides a general guideline to the College's response to and prevention of such behaviour, whether psychological, verbal or physical.

The College has a zero tolerance to all forms of bullying and is determined to provide each child with a safe, happy and secure environment where each student can take advantage of all the educational opportunities offered. Any form of bullying goes against the Respect and Responsibility Pastoral Care Program in the College. This program has, as its name suggests, a key foundation of respect and recognises that every individual has the right to feel safe.

This policy also outlines steps for reporting incidents.

2.0 Anti-Bullying Definition and Guidelines

The College adopts the national definition of bullying for Australian schools, which says:

Bullying is an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more persons. Bullying can happen in person or online, and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Some of the forms of bullying are:

- Direct physical bullying e.g. hitting, tripping, pushing or damaging property.
- Direct verbal bullying e.g. name calling, insults or verbal abuse.
- Damage to a person's property or violation of privacy e.g. cutting clothes, hiding possessions, defacing property.
- Nonverbal put-downs e.g. finger gestures, rolling eyes, staring.
- Indirect bullying e.g. spreading rumours, practical jokes, social exclusion, mimicking.
- Cyber-bullying which involves the use of technology such as email, text messages or networking sites.

Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.

Bullying is different from ordinary teasing, rough-and-tumble or school yard fights. What makes it different is that the incidents are ongoing, and there is usually an imbalance of size, strength and power between the students involved. In formulating an effective approach to dealing with bullying it is helpful to note that bullying is not:

- Mutual conflict. This is where there is an argument or disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the problem.
- Social rejection or dislike. It is not feasible to think that every student must like every other student. Refusing to play with a particular child or, for example, not inviting them to a birthday party is not bullying.
- Single-episode acts of nastiness or meanness, or random acts of aggression or intimidation. A single episode of nastiness, physical aggression, verbal abuse or an occasional push or shove is not bullying, neither is nastiness or physical aggression directed towards many different students. However, West Moreton Anglican College has a duty of care to provide a student with a safe and supportive school environment, and single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression should not be ignored or condoned.

In all instances of bullying, students are encouraged to:-

- not feel guilty;
- seek help from an adult;
- be specific about the bullying behaviour.

Parents who observe a radical change in their child's behaviour should talk to their child and their Classroom Teacher (Junior School), Head of Year (Year 7 – 9), House Coordinator (Year 10 – 12), Deputy or Head of School, Counsellor or Deputy Principal because such changes may be symptomatic of bullying. These changes may include a lack of confidence, withdrawal from school activities, refusing to go to school, temper flare ups. Other changes may include demands for extra

money, forgetfulness, distractibility, loss of appetite, sleeplessness, wanting to change the route to school and avoidance of specific lessons.

The issue of bullying is discussed in the College's Religion and Values Education (RAVE) and SpiritED programs, as well as at assemblies and other forums.

3.0 Student Responsibilities and Reporting of Bullying

If a student feels they are being bullied they are encouraged to talk to their parents, their Classroom Teacher (if in the Junior School), Head of Year (if in the Middle School), House Coordinator (if in the Senior School), a Head of School or Deputy Head of School, a College Counsellor, the Chaplain, the Deputy Principal or the Principal.

A conscious decision must be made to be involved in any incidences of bullying, students should always try to take some form of preventative action if present when a bullying incident occurs. Students who witness bullying should report the incident to a member of staff.

Students may utilise a variety of mechanisms to report bullying which include:

- **talking to their teacher;**
- **emailing a specific person; or**
- **by emailing the saynotobullying@wmac.com.au address. The Deputy Head of Middle School receives these emails and forwards any Junior or Senior Student reports of bullying to the relevant Head or Deputy Head of School.**

4.0 Bullying Intervention

The College aims to create an environment of understanding and co-operation in which the victim of bullying will feel empowered to seek help and by collaboration with staff and others, confront the influence of the bully.

Once a staff member is made aware of an allegation of bullying, the victim and the alleged bully will be interviewed along with any witnesses to the alleged bullying.

If this is a first offence (and a minor infringement) then a no blame interview will be set up between the bully and the victim (as long as the victim feels comfortable for this to occur). During this interview the alleged bully at the discretion of the Head of School may be asked to sign an anti-bullying agreement in which they acknowledge their actions and indicate that all bullying will cease.

If the bullying incident is a second or subsequent offence or a first offence of a more serious nature, consequences including detention or suspension may be put in place. A consequence will be implemented through the Respect and Responsibility Pastoral Care Program resulting in the review of the student's behaviour level.

In the interest of restorative justice, a conversation and/or written apology may be useful in resolving the situation. Follow up support may also involve counselling for both the victim and the bully.

5.0 Staff Responsibilities Regarding Bullying

Students will often need reminding of the expectations regarding bullying. It is the responsibility of staff at the College to model appropriate behaviour at all times. The Heads of School should ensure that appropriate class time and forums are held to address the issue. For example, this could be either through assemblies or through presentations by companies.

The bullying survey should be conducted on an annual basis.

6.0 Working to Prevent Bullying

All College staff and students are expected to adhere to this policy. These protocols will be distributed to all teachers and information pertaining to students will be disseminated at regular appropriate intervals.