

# Murray High School

## Policy Statement: Anti-bullying Plan

This policy is an addendum to the school's *Behaviour Code and Student Welfare and Behaviour Support Structure*. Reference should also be made to the Murray High School policy for the use of devices such as mobile phones, portable computer games, mp3 players/ipods, cameras and similar.

### **The responsibilities of the school**

The operations of the school reflect a belief that every person has the right to be treated with politeness, respect and understanding and to have their individual rights respected by everyone. The school *Behaviour Code and Student Welfare and Behaviour Support Structure* emphasise the development of conflict resolution skills amongst all students and staff.

The school will develop an anti-bullying plan in consultation with its community. This plan will identify the behaviours that are acceptable and the strategies for dealing with bullying in the playground and the classroom.

The teachers of the school will model appropriate behaviours in their dealings with others at the school. By modelling acceptance of difference and constructive conflict resolution they will encourage students to deal with differences in a more constructive way.

**The school does not tolerate harassment. No reported or observed case of harassment is to be ignored by the teaching staff of the school.**

### **What is covered by this policy?**

Bullying is defined as *intentional, repeated behaviour by an individual or group of individuals that causes distress, hurt or undue pressures*. These behaviours include:

- Verbal bullying: some examples of this are name calling, teasing, abuse, put-downs, Sarcasm, insults, threats;
- Physical bullying: some examples of this are hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting
- Social bullying: some examples of this are ignoring, excluding, ostracizing, alienating, making inappropriate gestures
- Psychological bullying: some examples of this are spreading rumours, dirty looks, hiding or Damaging possessions, malicious sms and email messages, inappropriate use of camera phones (see school policy on use of mobile phones).

### **The role of parents**

It is important that parents work with the school to help overcome bullying. The relationship between the parent and child is crucial in helping children deal with issues such as bullying. We encourage all parents to go through the anti-bullying plan and help their child understand what is meant by bullying behaviour. Parents should also ensure the school is aware of instances of bullying and support the school in its attempts to help the bullied child.

## Procedures

- All teachers are listed as contact people for students who wish to report bullying. Their response can be as simple as warning the bullies that their actions are against the school rules to instigating more intrusive actions, such as:
  - detentions;
  - if the bullying occurs in the classroom, referring the matter to the head teacher of the faculty;
  - if the bullying occurs in the playground, referring the matter to the head teacher on duty for that day;
  - referring the matter to the year adviser to make further enquiries;
  - referring matter to head teacher-welfare
  - referring matter to the school counsellor;
  - referring the matter to the deputy principal.

Even in instances that are dealt with directly by the teacher, the Year Adviser must be kept informed of the incident and a referral should be entered on the school's *Sentral* database. In this way, an across-the-school perspective can be maintained and action can be taken.

- Instances of bullying reported by parents will be investigated by the Deputy Principal, Head Teacher, Year Adviser or Counsellor (as appropriate). Suitable action must be initiated to attempt to curb this bullying. Parents will be kept informed as to the actions taken.
- Of course in many instances the perpetrators of bullying make sure they are not seen by teachers. In these instances we must rely on the bullied student, another concerned student or a parent to inform us of the issue.
- There will be ongoing opportunities for teacher education in conflict resolution skills.
- Year 7 Year Adviser will deliver the anti-bullying message to Year 7 students.
- Vertical roll groups provide an avenue for bullied students to receive peer support.

## Support for any victim of bullying :-

### Possible actions

- The Year Adviser, in concert with the Deputy Principal, may counsel bullies of the outcomes that will occur if they continue in their actions.
- The Counsellor works with the bullied and bully/ies to devise strategies that will help them deal with the issues.
- Parental involvement for both the bullied and the bullies to help negotiate a course of action to resolve the issues.
- Interventions such as detentions, in-school isolation, suspension and expulsion may be applied by the Deputy Principal/Principal, in cases in which the bullies refuse to cease the bullying.
- Use of personnel (such as behaviour support and student welfare consultants) to provide programs designed to overcome bullying issues.
- Change of class (victim or bully) if considered in the interests of the victim.
- Sheltered areas for break times.
- Planning and monitoring of individual cases by the school welfare committee.

The school has instituted many proactive programs designed to increase student self-esteem and counter bullying. Programs such as *Rock and Water*, *Mind Matters* and conflict resolution, in concert with the procedures above, clearly illustrate the school's commitment to minimising bullying and dealing with it when it does arise.

## **Reviewing the plan**

This plan will be discussed amongst the executive, taken back to faculty meetings for consideration, tabled for discussion with the SRC, revised and amended prior to endorsement by the school's P & C Association, publicized in the school newsletter, revisited on assemblies and roll calls, and acted upon accordingly.

Regular evaluation of the anti-bullying plan will allow amendments and improvement. This evaluation will be undertaken by the school welfare committee in consultation with the senior executive. It will use data from *Sentral*, suspension reviews, school culture surveys and anecdotal considerations.

Evaluation will be informed by consultation with students, staff and parents/carers as well as longitudinal statistical information.