South Sydney High School

Positive Peer Relationships Policy

This policy was developed in consultation with staff, students and parents from South Sydney High School, 2012 and in response to findings of parent, student and staff surveys April – May 2012. It acknowledges the work of the Educational Excellence and Equity Research Program, University of Western Sydney, 2011 and research conducted by Edith Cowan University 2004, 2012
Purpose

South Sydney High School actively seeks to provide students with a stimulating learning environment that is safe. It is fundamental right of everyone in our school community to feel safe. It is the right of everyone to be able to come to school each day without fear of being intimidated, humiliated or threatened verbally or physically with harm. Bullying denies this right to members of our school community and as such bullying is not accepted in our school.

South Sydney High School has the motto “Let us be known by our deeds” and as part of the School’s Quality Behaviour Expectations (appendix 1) students are expected to follow all teacher instructions, respect others and their rights and to use appropriate language.

This policy outlines the responsibilities of all staff and students and how parents can assist, to ensure that our school is a safe and respectful place for everyone.

What is bullying?

Bullying is made up of behaviours intended to deliberately hurt, threaten, frighten or exclude someone by physical and non-physical means over extended period of time. An individual or group may direct these behaviours towards another individual or group.

Someone is bullying another person when:

- They repeatedly verbally abuse a person or group by calling them unpleasant names, by writing nasty notes and or messages or by using unpleasant gestures
- They repeatedly physically harm a person or group or physically intimidate them by threatening physical harm or by taking / destroying their belongings without permission
- They repeatedly encourage others to verbally, physically threaten a person or group; or ask them to harass, embarrass, ignore or exclude that person or group from activities
- They repeatedly use digital communication technology to threaten, harass, humiliate, embarrass or offend a student or group of students

Bullying may take one, two or all of these forms. Repeatedly means that they do these things to that person or group the majority of the time they talk about them see them or spend time around them.

Research has shown that bullying has negative, long term consequences for all involved:

- For victims / targets of bullies – constant feelings of rejection, low self-regard, fear, an inability to solve problems with others in acceptable ways, relationship difficulties and problems achieving full potential academically and socially
- For bullies – many of the above problems and also an increased risk of criminal behaviour
Policy Aims

This policy aims to ensure that:

- Our school is a secure and safe environment free from threat, harassment and intimidation
- Teachers, students and parents are aware of and encouraged to implement positive strategies to prevent and address school bullying
- Teachers, students and parents are knowledgeable about the nature, causes and consequences of bullying and the procedures that have been set in place to address bullying episodes in this school
- Teachers, students and parents are committed to collaborate on maintaining a bully-free environment
- Students are taught pro-social peer interaction skill and conflict resolution skills. They are encouraged to and positively reinforced for interacting with members of the school community in a positive manner
- Teachers are aware of their role in fostering the knowledge and attitudes which will be required to achieve the above aims

Guidelines for addressing bullying

This school will address all bullying acts in a serious manner. Those who carry out bullying will be given every opportunity to change their behaviour and reflect on the consequences of their actions on others and choose more acceptable ways of behaving. Everyone in our school will play a part in reducing and preventing bullying.

Staff responsibilities:

- Model positive relationships in their day to day dealings with members of the school and model pro-social ways of solving disputes
- Positively reinforce students for behaving in an appropriate pro-social manner
- Be knowledgeable about and educate students about the nature, causes and consequences of bullying and the procedures that have been set in place to address bullying episodes in this school
- Be familiar with our schools behaviour code and management system
- Respond immediately, decisively and consistently to cases of bullying brought to their attention by students, parents and/or colleagues
- Respond to early signs of distress in students. These early signs can include an unusual lack of concentration or inappropriate behaviours such as aggressive outbursts and poor class or school attendance
- Seek advice and support from colleagues when unsure how to respond to and address specific bullying incidents
- Encourage students to report situations of bullying by; listening carefully and avoiding giving judgements when reports are made, and remaining calm and understanding of the student’s/parent’s/colleague’s concern
Student responsibilities:

- A strong anti-bullying stance by students contributes in a major way to making the school a safe place. For this reason our school expects students to:
- Contribute to a safe learning environment by being respectful of others
- Positively interact with members of the school community in their day to day dealings and resolve disputes in pro-social ways
- Be knowledgeable about the nature, causes and consequence of bullying, strategies for preventing and addressing bullying and the procedures that have been set in place to address bullying at our school
- Be aware that bullies rely on other people not to do or say anything to anyone about their behaviour towards others so it is important to address bullying by offering help to the victim of bullying or by being vocal or ignoring bullies to show disapproval, and report bullying to teachers and parents
- Watch for early warning signs of distress in other students such as temper outbursts, truanting class / school or crying without apparent reason
- Report all bullying incidents to a trusted adult so that all incidents of bullying can be addressed seriously

Parent assistance:

Bullying can be best dealt with by a community approach and this is why our school encourages parents to:

- Be knowledgeable about the nature, causes and consequences of bullying and the procedures that have been set in pace to address bullying at this school
- Encourage children to interact positively with other people in their day to day dealings and enact pro-social ways of resolving disputes
- Positively reinforce children for behaving in an appropriate way
- Inform their children about effective strategies for dealing with bullying
- Watch for warning signs such as: physical injuries; repeatedly losing possessions, reluctance to go to school or talk about school, altered sleep patterns; mood swings; changes in personality, few if any friends, lack of interest in life or unexplained health problems
- Contact their child’s Year Advisor as early as possible if they suspect their child is being bullied or is bullying other children
- Allow the school to investigate and manage the situation and be aware it is not appropriate for parents to approach alleged bullies or victims
- Discuss bullying incidents with the school to discuss the strategies the school is using to address specific cases
School procedures for proactively addressing bullying

Preventing and addressing bullying via a whole school policy

This policy is designed to use a whole-school approach whereby teachers, parents and students are actively involved in implementing this policy by working together to address and prevent bullying.

The role of teachers:

Teachers at south Sydney High School will:

- Reinforce students positive peer interactions in the classroom and playground
- Vigilantly monitor and proactively address bullying incidents according to the school’s management procedures
- Develop and implement a sequence of focussed curriculum activities that genuinely educate students about the nature, causes and consequences of bullying and successful strategies for preventing and addressing bullying in the school context:
- Implement perspectives across Key Learning Areas to create a highly visible programs and to actively engage students in promoting a positive school climate with zero reinforcement and tolerance of bullying behaviours

Parent education:

Parental support is crucial. The school will provide parents with information about:

- The rationale for addressing school bullying and foster their involvement and support
- The nature, causes and consequences of bullying for victims, bullies and bystanders
- Successful strategies for encouraging their children to prevent and assist in the addressing bullying in the school context
- The school policy for managing bullying incidents
- How they can assist their child to support the school policy

Educating students:

Students in our school are actively engaged in creating and shaping a positive school environment. This is achieved by educating students about:

- The nature, causes and consequences of bullying
- Self-control strategies
- Target avoidance skills and resilience
- Positive peer interaction skills
- Avoiding reinforcing bullying behaviours
- The importance of reporting bullying incidents to teachers
- Where they can seek assistance
- Strategies they can implement to constantly promote a positive school climate
- School procedures for addressing suspected bullying incidents

Appendix 1 – Mapping of curriculum and welfare programs that address positive peer relationships and internet safety
Procedures for managing bullying incidents:
All suspected bullying incidents will be taken seriously and investigated.

First incident:
When teachers witness a bullying incident or have an incident reported to them the incident will be treated in a serious manner. If it is a low level incident, where no lasting impact or consequence is likely to occur, the teacher will intervene and apply an appropriate consequence. Teachers will provide brief counselling about responsible behaviour and respect for others. The teacher will record the incident on RISC.

Repeated low level incident
If it is a repeated incident of a low level nature the teacher will proceed as above and will also inform the Year Advisor.

Role of the Year Advisor

The Year Advisor will:
- Regularly check RISC for reports so that repeat offenders can be readily identified
- Liaise with teaching staff regarding appropriate courses of action
- Investigate and communicate with staff, parents and DP at weekly meeting
- Action may include: Referral to counsellor / learning support / Student Support Officer
  - Mediation
  - Behaviour contract
-Review the situation by communicating regularly with parents and students
  - If the matter is resolved, praise the students for addressing the situation and advise parents
- If matter is unresolved – refer to Deputy Principal.

Unresolved low level incident or serious incident

If serious incident, such as those of a sexual nature, where physical harm or severe emotional harm has been perpetrated, has been ongoing for some time or involves serious threats and intimidation:

Teacher will complete incident report and record on RISC and refer directly to Deputy Principal.

Deputy Principal will:
- Investigate incident and communicate with staff and parents
- Will develop an action plan and utilise a range of strategies which may include:
  - Withdrawal from class / playground during investigations
  - Withdrawal from class/ playgrounds for periods / days / breaks
  - Place student on a behaviour contract
  - Referral of the matter to the Principal
  - Disciplinary action such as formal warning of suspension or suspension
  - Mediation
  - Referral to counsellor / Learning Support / Student Support officer / outside agencies
  - Police involvement
  - Safety and security informed
  - Review the situation by communicating regularly with parents and students
Anti-bullying Flow Chart

**Is the incident serious?**
- Sexual nature
- Caused physical harm
- Been ongoing for some time
- Causing severe emotional harm
- Serious intimidation / harassment

**Is the incident ongoing and unresolved?**

**Teacher / Year Advisor will:**
- Refer to DP immediately
- Complete an incident report and record on RISC

**Deputy Principal will:**
- Investigate incident and communicate with staff and parents
- Will develop an action plan and utilise a range of strategies which may include:
  - Disciplinary action
  - Mediation
  - Behaviour contract / monitoring
  - Referral to counsellor / Learning Support / Student Support officer / outside agencies
  - Police involvement
  - Safety and security informed
  - Alternative timetabling / lunch arrangement

**Incident sighted or reported**

**Is the incident low level?**
- A low level incident is defined as one where no lasting impact or consequence is likely to occur
- Creating conflict
- Exclusion
- Name calling
- Taking personal possessions

**Teacher will:**
- Intervene and apply an appropriate consequence
- Provide brief counselling about responsible behaviour and respect for others
- Record the incident on RISC
- Inform Year Advisor if repeated or unresolved

**If repeated issue Year Advisor will:**
- Investigate and communicate with staff, parents and Deputy Principal
- May take action including:
  - Mediation
  - Referral to counsellor / Learning Support / Student Support officer
- Actions recorded on RISC