



PROCEDURE: Anti-Bullying

System: Safe and Supportive Environment	Audience: School Community
Primary Responsibility:	Deputy Heads of Schools, Welbeing Team
Approved by:	Headmaster
Updated Document:	1/1/2009, 1/1/2014, 28/7/2015, 6/11/2018
Effective: 26/3/2024	Review Date: 18/8/2025
Manual Reference:	3.6, 3.6.2

1. PURPOSE

The School's procedures will generally include investigating the situation, interviewing those directly involved as well as observers of the incident, and meeting with parents/carers. These procedures have been established to ensure the safety, wellbeing, rights and responsibilities of all those involved and to assist the young people involved (bullies, victims and bystanders) to reintegrate successfully into the school community.

2. SCOPE

This procedure applies to all staff, students and parents at Central Coast Grammar School.

With specific reference to the:

- The Headmaster (or appointee)
- Deputy Headmaster
- Heads of Schools
- Deputy Heads of School
- School Psychologists

- House Co-ordinators and Director of Wellbeing (JS)
- All teachers

3. REFERENCES

- Child Protection Policy & Procedure
- Duty of Care document
- Discipline Policy and Procedures

4. PROCEDURES - GENERAL

A school is much better placed to carry out its primary goals when bullying is minimised and where proactive strategies are utilised effectively. Bullying MUST be viewed as everyone's responsibility. Staff, students and parents need to do all possible to minimise bullying and antisocial behaviour in any form.

- 4.1 School awareness. Students, staff and parents are encouraged to report any concerns about bullying incidents to the Deputy Head of the appropriate school, the Deputy Headmaster, Head of School, or to the appropriate House Coordinator, Director of Wellbeing JS.
- 4.2 Risk Minimisation. When the School becomes aware of a bullying situation, immediate efforts will be made to reduce the risk of any continuance of the bullying. This may involve contacting parents, keeping selected students away from others; organising for friends, buddies or more senior students to support victims; implementing procedures which may require students to write down their version of what has been happening; explain the steps that are planned to deal with the situation; etc.
- 4.3 Investigative Processes. When the School learns of a bullying incident, the Deputy, the Head of School, the Deputy Headmaster, the House Coordinator/Director of Wellbeing JS or another member of staff will investigate to try to determine the facts without making any initial judgements. This will involve finding out who is involved, how long the situation has been going on, what attempts have been made to resolve the problem, what exactly has been happening (as distinct from rumour, hearsay, misinformation, etc.)
- 4.4 Determination of Issues and Degree of Seriousness. Depending on how serious or sustained the bullying appears to be, different teams will manage and monitor the bullying.

The Deputy Heads/Heads of School will determine the seriousness or otherwise of a bullying situation. More than one Deputy may become involved when an incident involves students from different sub schools . The degree of seriousness will determine what level of support is required to manage the bullying behaviour. Many incidents which occur might be considered of a low level of seriousness when compared with more serious incidents involving deep psychological or physical harm. Consideration will be given to just how serious the situation appears to be, the likelihood of further bullying or harassment occurring, the number and age of the students involved, any previous involvement in bullying situations etc.

The Management Team will then speak to all of the students involved. If there appears to be a good chance that bringing all parties together will help to resolve the situation successfully a roundtable/restorative conference may be called.

It needs to be understood, that while it is important for the School to try to be as consistent as possible in dealing with bullying situations, as noted above, every bullying situation is unique and the many variables make it inappropriate and irresponsible at times to meaningfully compare different situations. The National Safe Schools Framework makes it clear that a case by case approach is needed as each case is different. What is important is that all of the issues are given careful consideration and the best resolution possible is obtained in line with the intentions of the anti-bullying policy.

Because each bullying situation is unique, staff managing the situation will consider all of the issues involved and will decide which response(s) are most appropriate for each situation. See table below for a range of possible responses for different levels based on age groups and the seriousness of the bullying behaviour.

Students who have been involved in a bullying situation (bullies, victims and bystanders) will be monitored following the review. If the bullying persists, further action will be taken including the possibility of being placed on a higher level. If the bullying has been resolved the monitoring will be discontinued.

Parents should initially contact the Deputy Head of School, or the appropriate House Coordinator/Director of Wellbeing JS if there are any concerns.

- 4.5. CCGS Management Response Levels. The following table should assist in determining the level of action required for unacceptable student behaviour.

LEVEL	ISSUES	POSSIBLE ACTION
I	Incidental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate with those involved. • No further action. Entry in Student Support
II	Relatively Minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate with those involved • Entry in Student Support JS • contact parents • Restorative consequence
III Warning	More serious or recurrent minor offences (Junior School)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate with those involved • Contact parents • Entry into Student Report • Restorative consequence (Order Mark)
IV	Serious	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate with those involved • Parent contact/interview and/or Executive Meeting. • Entry into Student Report • Possible referral to School Wellbeing team member. • Disciplinary action implemented
V	Major	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate with those involved • Parent contact/interview and/or Executive Meeting. • Entry into Student Report • Referral to School Wellbeing team member • Disciplinary action implemented (which may range from school detention, suspension to withdrawal of place at the school).
*	Confidential Issue	Immediate referral to Headmaster or Head of School/Deputy Headmaster – Student report not to be used.

These guidelines should assist teachers in determining the appropriate level of action for most situations. Of course, there is some flexibility.

5. MONITORING

New staff induction process –held at the beginning of the year

New staff throughout the year – access via MyCCGS

All staff – access via MyCCGS

APPENDIX 1: DEFINITIONS AND EXAMPLES

Bullying can be defined as intentional, repeated behaviour by an individual or a group of individuals that causes distress, hurt or undue pressure. It involves the abuse of power in relationships.

Bullying covers a wide range of activities including the following:

- verbal bullying (the most common form for both sexes) includes teasing, harassment, name-calling, insults, comments about physical appearance, verbal threats, hurtful teasing, banter, spreading malicious rumours, contacting the victim at home, whispering, homophobic comments, racist comments
- nonverbal including threatening and obscene gestures, subtle exclusion from a group or activity
- physical bullying includes pushing, physical violence, shoving, biting, kicking, taking or damaging possessions, pulling hair, stalking, using weapons
- relational aggression – hurting someone by harming their relationships with others, (antisocial bullying) including pointedly ignoring the victim, mimicking the victim in some way, passing notes, whispering or spreading rumours, using intimidating looks and gestures, isolation, extortion, exclusion, building alliances, forming exclusive cliques
- sexual harassment including grabbing and fondling, touching and pinching, making unwelcome sexual advances or requests, questioning sexual preference
- cyberbullying (as below)

Bullying and non-bullying behaviours:

It is important to note that not every act which causes pain or unhappiness can be classified as bullying. For example, an injury in a sporting event; a hurtful incident which happened by accident and clearly was not intended; leaving someone's name off a birthday invitation list may have been an oversight rather than an example of deliberate bullying. When all parties involved see an action as a joke or a game and no one is excluded, offended or hurt by the activity, it is not likely to be considered as bullying behaviour.

Cyber Bullying

Cyber Bullying involves the harassment through internet sites, chat rooms, emails, text messages mobile phones, electronic dispersal of photos, social media apps, etc. Cyber Bullying is in some ways like any other form of bullying where the primary intention is to hurt or exclude but its covert nature, its range, its immediacy and its 24/7 operation makes it much more insidious and difficult to identify and deal with successfully.

Dealing with Cyber Bullying raises many issues including the role of parents and the School in managing situations as they arise. Each situation needs to be considered on its merits but Cyber Bullying requires parents and families to work with the School when the Cyber Bullying is having an impact on students and their school life. At other times it may be a matter for the police.

The School encourages parents to supervise the interaction between their children and others through the use of technology. As well as cyber bullying there are many serious child protection issues associated with the use of electronic communication. If the need arises, parents should involve the relevant telecommunication agencies or police. It is recommended that families do not allow computers/mobile phones in bedrooms. They should be located in a part of the house where ongoing supervision is possible.

The absolute proof of the person responsible for 'ebullying' is problematical granted the number of variables possible (e.g. not seeing who actually types what; deliberate sabotage of email accounts, sharing or email passwords, etc) but the instant removal of your child's interaction and 'visiting' of these known Ebullying avenues is recommended.

The School Diary sets out the expectations with respect to acceptable use of the internet and mobile phones at Central Coast Grammar.

Cyber bullying, as with any other form or bullying will be managed by the School in line with this policy.

CYBERBULLYING - IMPORTANT CHANGES FROM 1 JULY 2015

From 1 July 2015, the Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner was introduced as was the cyberbullying complaints scheme administered by the Office under the *Enhancing Online Safety for Children Act 2015*.

The Act allows children suffering from serious cyberbullying to contact the Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner to have content removed if social media companies do not remove the offending content after it has been reported to them.

The Office has also absorbed the Australian Communications and Media Authority's Cybersmart program and associated information for children and their families. Resources can be found on the Office's website www.esafety.gov.au.

APPENDIX 2: PROACTIVE APPROACHES

Central Coast Grammar has long endeavoured to be as proactive as possible in many areas and is very conscious of the need to do all possible to enhance the wellbeing of all members of the school community.

Examples of some of the proactive approaches used at CCGS are listed below:

- Adherence to the School Mission Statement, the School Aims and the School Values (based on the Christian ethos) that underpin all that the School does.
- Class time devoted to personal development issues such as self-esteem, respect, healthy life styles, conflict resolution, etc
- Targeted IT education programs addressing safe and appropriate use of technology
- The wellbeing system that focuses on the wellbeing of each student as he/she progresses through the School and provides care, guidance and support as appropriate.
- House Family activities intended to develop healthy relationships, caring and personal development. Special focus activities based on developing resilience, friendships, accepting others. House Tutors get to know each student in the House Family quite well and provide support and encouragement for their House Family members.
- A range of House competitions throughout the year that encourage participation, leadership, team effort, pride in achievement, etc
- Student Diaries that enable two-way communication between parents and the School and provide guidance and direction to help establish a community of respect where each member has rights as well as responsibilities.
- Services and Assemblies which provide opportunity for student participation and acknowledgment.
- Special programmes such as the Outdoor Education program; Seasons for Growth; Friends for Life, Parents as Partners, etc.
- A very busy school calendar which provides a very wide range of opportunities for students and families to become involved and to gain recognition and acknowledgement. This includes a wide range of sporting, social, religious, academic and arts related activities too numerous to mention here.

Minimising anti-social behaviour

Research based evidence indicates that the following are most likely to help minimise antisocial behaviour.

- A whole school approach which in practice fosters the well being of all members of the School community.
- A sense of ownership of the policy by students, staff and parents.
- Clear procedures in place that are followed by all parties.

- Full communication. The School cannot act when bullying incidents are not reported. Situations often become worse rather than better when the School is not informed.
- All involved accept that simplistic solutions rarely work. Bullying situations are often quite complex and need to be investigated and managed carefully.
- Teaching moments. All human beings are capable of bullying behaviours and bullying situations should be seen as opportunities for learning for all involved including the bystanders.
- Punishment seldom works to resolve the underlying issues even though this is a natural human response when someone close to us is a victim of bullying.
- The School is able to follow the determined policies without harassment or threats of any kind.
- Policies are seen as needing regular review so that they remain relevant and effective in minimising antisocial behaviour.

Serious Consequences

The seriousness of bullying and its capacity to impact on a whole community should never be underestimated. Everyone is affected when bullying is allowed to continue and there are no winners. The media, with its focus on extreme bullying, can serve at times to sanitise, glamorise and normalise bullying. Bullying, however, can have lifelong consequences for victims, for bullies and for the wider society. Such consequences include physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, social, hurt or damage and these can have very serious and long-lasting impact. Depending on the child's bullying experiences, coping mechanisms and support system, bullying can lead to severe pathological and psychological damage including anxiety disorders and depression, school refusal and school phobia leading to interrupted learning opportunities, trauma and suicidal tendencies.

Research indicates that most children experience bullying during their schooling.

In Australia, surveys reveal that about 15% of 17 year olds are bullied at least once a week.

Unreported Bullying

Failure to report bullying encourages bullies to continue their antisocial behaviour and helps to generate a climate where bullying is acceptable.

Commonly more than 60% of bullying is not reported in schools.

“Many serious cases of bullying go unnoticed and/or unreported in schools. Programs that focus on harsh sanctions against bullies do little to stop the problem because the victims have already been created. We need to do more to combat bullying than simply implementing policies. We need to work towards creating schools and communities that promote a caring and nurturing environment for everyone”.

Kennedy and Bloomfield (Victoria Uni) October 2004

1 WHAT CAN STUDENTS DO TO HELP MINIMISE BULLYING EXPERIENCES?

(a) Individual action:

- Try ignoring the bullying/teasing and do not show that it upsets you. If there is no reward for the bully there is a good chance the bullying will cease after a time.
- Try not to be alone when the bully is around. Stay with your friends as much as possible.
- Try to walk tall, keep your eyes up and look 'normal'. Confident body language often puts the bully off.
- Count to 10 and remain cool. The bully is hoping to see you are upset.
- Do not fight or bully back
- If you can, approach the person and tell them that you do not appreciate what they are doing and it needs to stop immediately
- Avoid being a "Bystander"; support the victim, go for help or walk away
- If you are a witness to someone else being bullied speak out against it or go and tell a teacher immediately. Encourage the victim to report the incident. Bullying will become a much more serious problem if students pretend it is none of their business.
- Sometimes it might be possible to cause a distraction or suggest that the victim go with you to another part of the school.

(b) Getting Help

If the bullying continues report what is going on to a teacher or other adult that you feel comfortable with. Remember that no one has a right to bully you and you do have a right not to be bullied. Bullying which is not reported often gets worse. Reporting demonstrates that you are not prepared to take it and that you want it to stop.

KIDS HELPLINE

Sometimes it may be easier to talk to someone on the phone. KIDS HELPLINE has trained support people available to help.

RING 1800 551 800

E-Headspace "online chat: support available.

2. WHAT CAN TEACHERS AND OTHER ADULTS DO TO HELP MINIMISE BULLYING EXPERIENCES?

- Be a good role model for students
- Be fully conversant with the CCGS Anti-Bullying policy and procedures.
- Be aware of the locations and times when bullying is most likely to occur.
- Be observant for examples of distress or suspected bullying incidents.
- Deal with bullying incidents and/or report details to the appropriate House Coordinator/Director of Wellbeing JS, or Deputy.
- Take steps to help those who are bullied. Provide support and comfort and let the victim know that the bullying is not OK and they can do something about it. Try to remove the source of distress without putting them at further danger and risk.
- Listen carefully when students are trying to report possible bullying.
- Do not be too quick to make judgements or to assume bullying is not happening.
- Make efforts to remove occasions for bullying by actively patrolling during supervising duties in the playground or oval as well as inside buildings. Enforcing mobile phone ban during school hours.
- Arrive at class on time and move promptly between classes.
- Be on the lookout for possible bullying in the classroom and the playground. Deal with situations by speaking to students, separating students, seeking assistance, etc.
- As appropriate, try to use lesson times, House meeting times, incidents in the playground, etc to raise awareness about bullying and the School's anti-bullying policy. Teaching students how to manage their relationships with others reduces the impact of bullying. As appropriate, reinforce understanding of resilience development (bounce-back); assertiveness skills, telling someone who can do something about the situation, etc.
- Acknowledge that any teacher can (wittingly or unwittingly) practice bullying behaviours. The principles in this document apply to staff as well as to students. Endeavours to promote the wellbeing of students can easily be undermined if students witness staff employing bullying behaviours that are not rectified.

3. WHAT CAN PARENTS DO TO HELP MINIMISE BULLYING EXPERIENCES?

- Be a good role model for your children. Try to use situations and television incidents etc to talk about bullying and ways to deal with it. Teaching children how to manage their interpersonal relationships with others reduces the impact of bullying. As appropriate, reinforce the importance of developing resilience, accepting responsibility for actions, assertiveness skills, telling someone who can do something about the situation, etc.
- Ensure that your child(ren) is aware that bullying is never a joke and that the School sees bullying from the viewpoint of the victim. If it is hurtful it can usually be interpreted as bullying no matter what the bully says.
- Listen to your child and try to remain open-minded and non-judgemental. Help your child to understand what will happen in line with the School's anti-bullying policy which is designed to hear all sides and deal with the situation as fairly as possible.
- Contact a Deputy or House Coordinator/Director of Wellbeing JS if you think bullying is occurring as soon as you become aware of it.
- As a parent, never try to sort out the bullies yourself as this rarely works and can easily make matters worse. Working with and through the school is a much better way to deal with bullying.
- Understand that any child might give a one-sided account of a bullying incident and that there will always be different viewpoints.
- Encourage your child to become actively involved in school activities
- Encourage your child to become tolerant and accepting of differences
- Watch for signs of distress in your child such as unwillingness to talk about school or to attend school, a pattern of headaches, missing equipment, requests for extra money, damaged personal belongings or bruising, once earned good grades now doing poorly in school, less emotionally secure, decline in academic grades
- Take an active interest in the child's social life and acquaintances.
- Advise your child to tell a trusted teacher or House Coordinator. If possible, allow the child to report and deal with the problem him/herself. The child can gain much self respect through taking the initiative and dealing with the problem without Mum and Dad's involvement, but this may not always be possible.
- As soon as possible inform the House Coordinator, Class Teacher, Director of Wellbeing JS, Head or Deputy of the appropriate School if bullying is suspected.
- Do not encourage your child to hit back or retaliate in any way.
- Communicate to the child that, as a parent, your involvement will be appropriate so that the problem is not aggravated.