



BULLYING PLAN

While overt physical bullying may not be a major problem in schools, where groups of children congregate, there will always be power struggles and opportunities for bullying to occur. Similarly, individuals may act alone to exert pressure on others through various forms. As such, teachers will be aware of different types of bullying and act in accordance with this Plan to prevent and stop bullying from occurring at Caralee Community School.

Bullying is defined as “the unnecessary exerting of force (physical, verbal or emotional) over another person”.

Philosophical basis for our Plan is that children will not be able to develop as desired in the school purpose statement if they are being bullied, harassed or aggravated in any of the above ways.

BULLYING TYPES:

Physical

- Touching people when they do not want to be touched,
- Violence e.g. punching, subtle digs, pushing etc.,
- Interfering with others' games, threatening,
- Face pulling, rude signs etc., body language.

Verbal

- Teasing, mimicking,
- Language (name calling, swearing),
- Racism / cultural / sexual which can manifest itself under any of the above headings,
- Emotional put downs.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

Identifying: Class and duty teachers must ensure that, when children approach them with complaints/concerns, that they listen and make appropriate judgements. They need to clarify the accuracy of the report and ascertain the extent and context of the behaviour, and if there are to be consequences as a result.

Where bullying is identified by duty teachers, he / she must inform the class teacher of the children involved. The duty teacher needs to let the teacher know if any initial action has been taken e.g. time out in the playground etc.

Class teachers will record bullying in class records and Integris. They need to use an appropriate key (standard throughout the school) which includes action taken, if any.

ACTIONS:

Class teachers will use the Whole School Positive Student Behaviour Plan in regard to consequences.

Some “bullying” can be dealt with as:

- A warning (equivalent of a tick in Classroom policy terms) and removal from the playground for the remainder of the recess / lunch period, or the following break period, and counselling by the teacher and / or Admin,
- A second offence constitutes removal from the playground for the remainder of the recess / lunch period for a designated number of days. A parent note will also be sent home,
- A repeated offence means immediate referral to administration for action, (in-school suspension etc.),
- Serious and violent offences can be dealt with under the existing positive student Behaviour Plan by referral to the administration who may short circuit the above process.

Repeated playground bullying, and extreme cases of bullying, will lead to a parent interview, and suspension from the playground and / or school for the safety and welfare of other students. This may also involve the intervention of the school psychologist and / or other outside agencies. Further misdemeanour will lead to full suspension.

Support for children being bullied:

- Teaching them their rights in order to enjoy a comfortable existence at school,
- Teaching them techniques for addressing problems,
- Establishment of self-esteem groups where appropriate (with school psychologist if possible).

Parents of children who are continually the victims of bullying will be contacted and given the opportunity of joining with the school to address the problem. This may include the involvement of the school psychologist (if appropriate).

DEALING WITH BULLYING AT SCHOOL LEVEL

Through the Health Programme (Mental and Emotional Health and Community and Environmental areas) and Social Studies (Co-operation and Conflict and Laws), teachers can provide opportunities for children to brain-storm strategies to deal with various situations which include bullying. (This should be dealt with as part of a regular and total program and not an isolated lesson.)

These could include things such as:

"What would I do if I were called names by another child?"

"What could I do to feel safe?"

This can be reinforced by the teacher stressing at all times that the child has the right to feel safe.

Teachers provide opportunities for children to develop networks i.e. adults who:

- will be accessible,
- will listen,
- will believe the child,
- will take action if necessary.

Children who are "bullying" need to be assured that it is the behaviour that is unacceptable, not the child themselves.

There is a need for class teachers to ensure that the self-fulfilling prophecy (I am a bully, so of course I bully people) is avoided.

Teachers will need to work with those children from their class who are bullying to help them identify their feelings before and after bullying. Children who bully may do so because,

- they feel powerless in other situations,
- bullying may provide a means of feeling 'powerful' or strong,
- they have learned that behaviour from adults or peer authority figures,
- they have difficulty expressing or articulating negative emotions (jealousy, anxiety, fear of rejection by peers),
- they may have difficulty in relating to peers on an equal basis.

In separating the behaviour from the individual, the above points may give a starting point for individual discussion / counselling.

In all cases, the process relies upon information being given by the school community that bullying takes place so that action can be taken. This is an ongoing process, as many children do not recognise bullying in all its forms. Constant feedback to children, regarding acceptable behaviour, is required at school as community standards may differ from those at school.