

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Oran Park Anglican College recognises its duty to students to provide a safe and positive learning environment where individual differences and diversity within the college is respected and accepted.

Bullying is not tolerated at Oran Park Anglican College.

Furthermore, as an Anglican College, we have a primary obligation from biblical teachings whereby each human person is valued by God and the given commandments to love and care for one another. This policy is supported by pastoral and academic programs which focus on conflict resolution, individual choices, promoting self-esteem, healthy relationships, and an understanding of the characteristics and behaviours that constitute bullying as well as an explanation of causes and consequences. We believe the key to encouraging a safe and supportive College environment lies less in legal remedies or disciplinary action than in the College creating a positive culture, a culture which enhances self-worth and builds caring relationships.

It is our policy that:

- Bullying be managed through a 'whole of college community' approach involving students, staff and parents/carers;
 - Bullying prevention strategies be implemented within the college on a continuous basis with a focus on teaching age appropriate skills and strategies to empower staff, students and parents/carers to recognise bullying and respond appropriately;
 - Bullying response strategies be tailored to the circumstances of each incident;
 - Staff establish positive role models emphasising our no-bullying culture; and
- Bullying prevention and intervention strategies are reviewed on an annual basis against best practice.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

A student is being bullied or victimised when they are exposed repeatedly and over time to negative actions on the part of one or more other students. (Olweus 1993)

WHAT IS BULLYING

Bullying may include:

- hurting physically
- damaging/stealing belongings
- name calling, insults, spreading rumours, giving nasty looks
- drawing attention to one's weaknesses
- excluding people from activities
- deliberately ignoring someone
- playing practical jokes
- getting others to join in the harmful behaviour
- sending offensive phone or electronic messages

It is important to realise that for Bullying to exist, incidents must take place REPEATEDLY over time. A one-off disagreement or teasing does not constitute Bullying.

STRATEGIES TO COUNTER BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

The College has instituted a range of strategies to counter harassment and bullying.

These strategies are based on the following principles:

- Every member of the College has the right to be treated with dignity and respect and to enjoy positive relationships with all members of the College community
- All members of the College community have the right to expect to be able to learn and teach in a safe and caring environment that promotes the virtues of self-worth and personal growth
- Not everyone will be liked by everyone else but everyone can and should respect each other's personality differences and be polite and kind
- Any behaviour which stops an individual from feeling comfortable in this shared environment is a form of bullying or harassment and is not condoned
- We cannot assume that there will not be instances of bullying or harassment wherever children and young people gather
- Children and young people therefore need to be taught not to tease, intimidate, harass, insult, spread rumours, exclude, stare at, hit, pinch, bite, spit upon, apply pressure or do anything to another individual of which they do not approve

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- Staff must model in words and actions the Christian principles on which harmonious interpersonal relations are based
- All reported incidents will be thoroughly investigated in an impartial and transparent manner following the procedures outlined in the College guidelines for Managing Compliments and Complaints
- Teaching students how to relate properly to one another and how to handle instances of bullying is an ongoing process
- Students need to be taught by their parents and teachers how to take initiative themselves to deal with problems of harassment without always having to rely on adult intervention
- Students and staff who are the victims of any form of bullying or harassment must be supported
- The perpetrators of bullying behaviour must accept responsibility for their behaviour. It should be noted that inappropriate use of any technology such as mobile phones, e-mail or the internet to intimidate, identify, bully or defame students, teachers or the College will be responded to seriously, including by 'show cause' and the possibility of expulsion. Misuse of technology can lead to criminal charges of stalking, threats, assault and breaches of the Child Protection and Defamation laws
- Students who are the victims of bullying or harassment must be encouraged to report instances of such behaviour to a teacher as soon as possible so that appropriate action can be taken

MANAGING BULLYING OFFENCES

When an allegation of Bullying is made, the matter is referred to the Head of Senior School or the Head of Junior School. The principles of 'procedural fairness' are implemented for student allegations of serious offences. Procedural fairness involves seeking the views of both parties when dealing with an allegation of misbehaviour, giving both parties the opportunity to clarify and/or rebut the views of the other party, and seeking input from witnesses in order to establish what is factual and what is conjecture, opinion or prejudice. Penalties may include detentions and suspensions. Restorative Justice Practices are also used and there may be referrals to the School Counsellor.