

COATESVILLE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Policy Against Bullying

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1. PURPOSE

All members of the school community are committed to ensuring a safe and caring environment which promotes personal growth and positive self-esteem for all. Students have a right to learn and staff have a right to teach in an environment free from intimidation, bullying or harassment.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all students, members of school staff and the school council at Coatesville Primary School and will be made available on request.

3. REFERENCES

CPS. (2003) *School Charter 2003-2005*

Framework for Student Support Services in Victorian Government Schools,

DE&T. (1994) *Guidelines For Developing the Student Code of Conduct,*
Melbourne

<http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/welfare/index.htm>

Student Wellbeing Website, Victorian Government Website

Field, E. (1999) *Bully Busting,* Finch Publishing, Sydney

4. DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Parent In this policy in relation to a child, includes step parent, adoptive parent, foster parent, guardian, or person who has custody or daily care and control of the child.

Staff A person who carries out a duty on behalf of the school, paid or unpaid, or who is contracted to, or directly employed by the School or the Department of Education and Training (DE&T). Information provided to a school through job applications is also considered staff information.

5. RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY

This policy and procedure shall be issued under the authority of the Coatesville Primary School Council and was adopted at the School Council meeting on Monday 20 October 2003.

As a school community we strongly encourage the reporting of bullying incidents as they occur with a view to curbing bullying behaviour promptly. We understand that by not reporting bullying, it may escalate.

This requires **staff** to:

- Be positive role-models
- Be observant of signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying
- Make efforts to remove opportunities for bullying by active supervision at all times
- Move promptly between lessons and arrive at class on time
- Take steps to help victims and address the problem without placing the victim at further risk
- Report suspected incidents to the appropriate staff member (Level Students Welfare Coordinator, Assistant Principal or Principal) who will follow the designated procedures

This requires **students** to:

- Refuse to be involved in any bullying situation. If students are present when bullying occurs they should:
 - if appropriate, take some form of preventative action
 - never condone or encourage or be a spectator to bullying
 - report the incident or suspected incident to a teacher

The school recommends that **parents**:

- watch for signs of distress in their child eg. unwillingness to attend school, a pattern of headaches, missing belongings, request for money, damaged clothes or bruising
- take an active interest in their child's whereabouts after school and their child's friends and acquaintances
- encourage their child to tell a staff member about the incident. If possible allow the child to report and deal with the problem him/herself. S/he gain increased confidence and resilience through taking the initiative and dealing with the problem with minimal parental help, if appropriate
- inform their child's class teacher if bullying is suspected, if the child is reluctant to do so.

- Discourage the child from retaliating
- Communicate with the child that parental involvement, if necessary, will be appropriate for the situation
- Be willing to attend meetings with staff at the school, if their child is involved in bullying incidents
- Be willing to inform the school of any cases of suspected bullying even if their own child is not directly involved

6. POLICY/PROCEDURE

6.1 What is Bullying?

Coatesville Primary School regards bullying as:

- a) an act of aggression causing embarrassment, pain or discomfort to another
- b) an abuse of power

Bullying can:

- take a number of forms:
 - **physical** (hitting, pushing, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting)
 - **verbal** (name calling, put downs, threats, teasing)
 - **social** (ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating)
 - **psychological** (spreading rumours, stalking, dirty looks, hiding, interfering with or damaging others' possessions, belittling others or their families)
- be planned and organised or it may be unintentional (ie. effects may not be fully understood), individuals or groups may be involved
- take place over time

Other examples of bullying include:

belittling others' abilities and achievements
 writing offensive notes, graffiti about others and electronic messages
 making degrading comments about another's culture, religious or social background (See Equal Opportunity Policy)
 making suggestive comments or other forms of sexual abuse (See Sexual Harassment Policy)
 ridiculing another student's appearance
 forcing others to act against their will
 extortion
 intimidation

It is recognised that:

Bullying may make the victim feel frightened, unsafe, embarrassed, humiliated, angry or unfairly treated.

Work, sleep and ability to concentrate may suffer.
Relationships with family and friends may deteriorate.
S/he may feel confused and not know what to do about the problem.
Teachers are often the last to find out about bullying.

6.2 Prevention & Implementation of Policy

Parents, teachers, students and the community will be aware of the school's policy and procedures on bullying.
The school will maintain, publish and review procedures that are to be used in bullying incidents
Students will regularly be exposed to activities that educate and reinforce positive pro-social behaviour
Students will be regularly informed of the contents, consequences and procedures of this policy via assemblies, classes and newsletters

The school will adopt a four-phase approach to bullying.

6.2.1 Primary Prevention

- Continued functioning of the Student Welfare Team consisting of a Principal Class representative, a specialist teacher and a teacher from each level.
- Professional development for staff relating to bullying, harassment and the strategies that counter-act them.

Community awareness and input relating to bullying, its characteristics and the school's programs and response.

To provide programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.

A bullying survey and yard survey will be administered and acted upon annually.

"You Can Do It" Education program implemented across the school(2004).

- Three staff on duty in the yard at recess and lunch times.
- Two staff on duty in the yard from 8.45am to 9am and 3.30pm to 3.45pm.
- Clearly defined out of bounds area.
- Peer Mediation program.
- Buddy program.
- Bully Busters program.

Each classroom teacher to clarify at the start of each year the school policy on bullying.

The Student Representative Council, peer support delegates, staff and students to promote the philosophies of 'No Put Downs' and 'Don't Obey Bullies' as per the 'Bully Busters' program.

Students will regularly and frequently be exposed to activities that educate and reinforce positive pro-social behaviour.

The school's Student Welfare team will monitor incidents in both the classroom and school yard and take

necessary actions to prevent reoccurrence of similar incidents.

Maintenance of a register of students

6.2.2 *Early Intervention*

- Encourage students to report bullying incidents involving themselves or others.
- All teachers on a regular basis reminding students to report incidents, and that reporting is not dobbing.
- Parents encouraged to contact class teacher if they become aware of a problem.
- Designated safe and quiet places for children at recess and lunch times.
- Recognition and reward for positive behaviour and resolution of problems, particularly at level assemblies.
- School Council will be informed of serious bullying incidents as deemed appropriate by the Principal.
- Incursions related to developing students' social skills.

6.2.3 *Intervention*

- The Student Welfare Register monitored closely and action plans followed up as required.
- Once identified the bully, victim and witnesses spoken with, and all incidents of allegations of bullying will be fully investigated and documented.
- All parties involved will be offered support.
- Individual Learning Plans developed.
- Counselling offered as the need is identified.
- If bullying is ongoing, parents will be contacted and consequences implemented consistent with the school's Student Code of Conduct.
- Whole School Student Discipline Process implemented in line with the student Code of Conduct in the School Charter.
- Parents informed.

6.2.4 *Post Violation*

Consequences may involve:

- exclusion from class
- exclusion from yard
- after school detention (maximum 3 in one year)
- withdrawal of privileges
- internal suspension
- -external suspension
- ongoing counselling from appropriate agency for both victim and bully.
- Ongoing monitoring of identified bullies.
- Rewards for positive behaviour.

7. RECORDS

All staff are responsible for maintaining a Student Support Record Book. Student Welfare coordinators will maintain records of incidents and action taken. Privacy Act responsibilities will apply.

8. TRAINING

- Annual whole staff induction
- Annual distribution of Staff Information Book
- Professional Development of Student Welfare Coordinators and whole staff, as required

9. REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed with student, parents and community input as part of the school's triennial review cycle.

The Student Welfare team will review existing processes and effectiveness of implementation formally twice a year.

Analysis of student, staff and parent opinion surveys will be conducted annually.