

CROYDON PUBLIC SCHOOL



POLICY: ANTI-BULLYING

Introduction

Bullying is a form of repeated aggressive behaviour that is usually hurtful and deliberate. Bullying behaviour:

- is an abuse of power that is usually accompanied by a desire to intimidate and dominate;
- can take a number of forms - verbal, gesture, extortion and exclusion;
- can be planned and organised or it may be unplanned;
- can be subtle;
- often goes on undisclosed and may be kept secret (behind the teachers or parents back); and
- can occur at school (usually recess and lunch times), on the way to and from school and sometimes out of school (telephone calls, email, text messages etc).

Examples of bullying include:

- interfering with another's property by stealing, hiding, damaging or destroying it;
- using offensive names, teasing or spreading rumours about others or their families;
- using put downs, belittling others' abilities and achievements;
- any form of physical violence;
- writing offensive notes or graffiti about others;
- hurtfully excluding others from a group;
- ridiculing another's appearance;
- threatening or forcing others to act against their will;
- making degrading comments about another's culture or social background.

The impact of bullying can be significant. When students are bullied, their lives are made miserable. They may be unhappy about coming to school (or avoid school) and they are likely to lose self-confidence and self-esteem. Learning suffers and some stress-related symptoms may appear. Persistent bullying may pervade the relationships of students and become accepted as normal. Students may blame themselves for inviting bullying.

Croydon Public School does not tolerate bullying in any form and is committed to ensuring a happy, safe and caring learning environment.

Prevention of Bullying

Anti-bullying programs need to be positive, pro-active and ongoing to develop in all students the ability to form positive relationships, to avoid risky situations and, if necessary, to deal effectively and appropriately with bullying incidents.

Three levels of anti-bullying prevention and resolution mechanisms are used at Croydon Primary School.

a. Whole School

- buddy systems and Peer Support program;
- SRC involvement in discussing issues and suggesting and implementing solutions;
- transition programs Pre-school Kindergarten and Year 6 - Year 7;
- home school liaison;
- involvement of Student Welfare Committee;

- regular school assemblies that support, inform and promote a positive school ethos;
- relevant management of student behaviour policy and anti-bullying policy;
- structures that invite family involvement;
- community networks;
- professional collaboration among staff and staff briefings;
- effective playground supervision;
- provision of playground equipment and activities;
- wet weather activities, games etc.;
- extra staff where needed;
- quiet zones.

b. Classroom

- social skills programs through PDHPE and Child Protection;
- classroom environment where students feel happy, secure and willing to discuss issues;
- supportive teachers who treat students with respect and encourage feelings of happiness, safety and willingness to discuss issues;
- use of curriculum to support anti-bullying programs; eg drama, music, literature;
- extra curricular programs for selected students;
- use of effective management by each teacher to prevent or deal with classroom or playground bullying incidents.

c. Individual

- modelling and encouragement of positive relationships by staff. These relationships may be between Teacher - Teacher, Teacher - Student and Student - Student;
- individual support for victims. They are believed, understood and acknowledged. They are praised for telling;
- follow up of bullying incidents by teachers with support of School Executive and School Counsellor;
- use of Management of Student Behaviour Policy to resolve incidents;
- use of long term individual solutions using non-punitive approaches.

The most effective strategies to prevent and resolve bullying involve the whole school community - students, staff, parents and the wider community and are a regular topic of discussion, communication and review.

The School Community must not allow cases of bullying to go unreported.

Staff will:

- be role models for the students;
- teach co-operative learning and play skills and conflict resolution skills through the personal development program;
- be observant of signs of distress and suspected incidents of bullying, actively supervise to minimise opportunities for bullying;
- intervene to assist students being bullied by removing sources of distress without increasing the students exposure, support students who speak out and report incidents of bullying, consult with students to identify issues which give rise to concern; and
- report all incidents and suspected incidents to the principal or school counsellor.

Students will be strongly encouraged to:

- refuse to be involved in any bullying situation;

- if appropriate, take some form of preventative action;
- report all incidents or suspected incidents; and
- use conflict resolution and co-operative learning and play skills.

The school recommends that **parents:**

- be appropriate role models;
- encourage their child to tell a staff member about bullying incidents and if possible allow the child to report and deal with the problem;
- inform the school if bullying is suspected;
- do not encourage their child to retaliate;
- communicate to their child that parental involvement is appropriate;
- be willing to attend interviews at school if their child is involved in an bullying incident; and

Resolving Incidents of Bullying

Students who are being bullied. Students who are being bullied will be supported by their teacher, the school executive, and, if requested, the school counsellor. Parents will be involved and a support strategy will be developed jointly to suit the need of the student.

Support could involve:

- the class teacher discussing strategies to prevent situations arising and discussing options available to the student if bullying does occur;
- the teacher or school executive being available to listen and talk when bullying occurs;
- the teacher working with the entire class to resolve particular issues (if the bullying is class based);
- the teacher, principal and school counsellor conducting group meetings to resolve an issue or develop personal skills required to deal effectively with the issue;
- counselling sessions with the school counsellor; and
- involvement in meetings with the students who are bullying to establish ground rules so that the students can co-exist.

Students who bully others

The school's discipline policy will be used to manage occasional incidents of bullying. The emphasis in the initial stages is participative and non-punitive which focuses on the student developing and implementing solutions to the problem. Students who persistently bully others, despite the repeated intervention of the school, will be involved in intensive intervention with full parental involvement. Intervention could involve:

- intensive, individual counselling;
- participation in specialised group programs (e.g. Social Skills programs),
- personalised behaviour management plans; or
- finally, the more severe consequences of the Discipline Policy may have to be imposed as harassment is not tolerated at Croydon Public School.

Reviewed in 2011