



Anti- Bullying Policy and Procedures

January 2010

The Lakes College

Anti- Bullying Policy and Procedures

The Lakes College does not tolerate bullying of any kind. Every person has the right to be treated with dignity and respect and to enjoy positive relationships with all members of the College community.

All students of the College have the right to be safe and to learn and all teachers have the right to teach in a safe environment that promotes self-worth and personal growth. It is the responsibility of all members of the College community to play an active part in ensuring that everyone is treated with respect and that any bullying is managed effectively.

The key aims of this policy are:

- To provide a safe, secure and supportive environment for all members of the College community by actively promoting positive relations;
- To provide support for victims of bullying;
- To ensure that the perpetrators of bullying behaviour understand and accept responsibility for their behaviour, be able to offer reparation and receive appropriate consequences;
- To educate students of all ages about appropriate ways to treat others and
- To produce students who are responsible and caring citizens in the community.

Definition

Bullying is a subset of aggression and is the intent to hurt, it is repetitive, has a power imbalance and the victim is unable to defend themselves. The hurt may be physical, emotional or psychological and can include comments, gestures, extortion and exclusion.

In essence, bullying involves individuals or groups exerting power over another person or group with the intent to hurt.

Examples of bullying behaviour:

- Any form of physical violence such as hitting, punching, pinching, biting, pushing or spitting on others;
- Invasion of another's personal space with the intent to intimidate;
- Using offensive names, teasing or spreading rumours about others or their families or friends;
- Using put downs such as negative nicknames or belittling others' abilities, achievements or efforts;
- Ridiculing other because of their race, gender, religion or social grouping;

- Ridiculing another's physical appearance or dress
- Writing offensive notes, emails or graffiti about others;
- Using a third person or group to exert harm against someone;
- Hurtfully excluding others from a group, conversation or event;
- Using stand over tactics or threats to intimidate others
- Interfering with another's property by stealing, hiding, damaging or destroying it.
- Making sexually suggestive comments or gestures or telling sexually orientated jokes that cause discomfort
- Using technology such as emails, websites, mobile phones to inflict hurt on others.

The effects of bullying:

- May lead to a loss of self-esteem, confidence and self-worth;
- May feel frightened, embarrassed, angry depressed or unsafe;
- May be unable to sleep, experience, nightmares, loss of appetite or declining concentration on school work;
- May become more reserved and avoid participation in extra curricular activities or social events;
- May feel confused, alone and helpless to do anything about the problems;
- May experience a deterioration in other relationships;
- May begin to display bullying behaviour themselves.

Strategies to Prevent Bullying

At The Lakes College, staff will:

- Increase the awareness of students about the appropriate ways to treat others;
- Actively display non-bullying behaviour in their treatment of both students and other staff;
- Listen to students and be sympathetic to reports of bullying behaviour even if they have retaliated under provocation;
- Be alert to the possible indicators prevalent in victims of bullying;
- Report possible concerns regarding treatment of individuals or actual incidents of bullying to the student's class teacher;
- Investigate parent concerns that have been raised with them;
- Promote an atmosphere in class and extra-curricular activities which allow for the full involvement of students without fear of ridicule;
- Be mindful of how students are allocated in group work activities or the way that teams are selected on sporting occasions;
- Be vigilant on playground duty and in class change over times;
- Assist students to develop positive strategies to deal with bullying and to build self-esteem and resilience;

- Encourage students to talk about and report concerns regarding bullying – to encourage a ‘telling environment’ as against the ‘dobber’ mentality;
- Explain the key terms ‘bullying’, ‘harassment’ and ‘teasing’ at appropriate opportunities in class;
- Be actively and enthusiastically involved in supporting and implementing the College’s bullying and behaviour management policies;
- Be involved through interdisciplinary curriculum initiatives and pastoral care groups in education about bullying.

At The Lakes College, the victims of bullying behaviour will be urged to consider using the following strategies:

- Confront the offending student and make it clear that such behaviour is unacceptable;
- Speak with the relevant teacher or parent/guardian to work out strategies for dealing with the problem and follow the appropriate guidelines for the management of bullying.

At The Lakes College we acknowledge the role that bystanders play in bullying behaviour and actively encourage other students to:

- Inform an appropriate member of staff or responsible senior student immediately;
- Make it clear to others in the peer group that such behaviour is wrong;
- Understand that observing such behaviour without action can be seen as supporting the offending student.

At The Lakes College, we encourage parents to:

- Be supportive of the College’s efforts to deal with incidents of bullying and be willing to attend interviews or conferencing if required;
- Be aware of signs of distress or changed behaviour that may indicate their child is a victim of bullying, for example, reluctant to attend school, a pattern of headaches or stomach pains, frequently missing equipment that is out of character, requests for extra money, damaged clothing or bruising;
- Take an active interest in their child’s social life and friendship groups;
- Communicate openly and regularly with their child so the child is more inclined to tell them of problems before they become major problems;
- Encourage their child to report the problem to a trusted teacher or do so themselves if the child is unable to do so;
- Refrain from encouraging the child to retaliate or involving themselves directly with the child or their parents;
- Trust the College’s established procedures and desire to reach the best outcome for all parties concerned rather than seek retribution themselves.

Management of a Bullying Incident

All reports of bullying are to be investigated by relevant staff members in consultation with the Principal to determine the nature and extent of bullying.

Level 1

If the bullying is a less severe offence, the staff member will follow up as appropriate. This should involve speaking with the offender and victim, then bringing them together for a Restorative Chat (see Appendix A). This will allow both parties to talk through the situation and for the offender to apologise and modify their behaviour. It is important that we are trying to improve social behaviour rather than apportion blame, so punitive measures are not necessarily appropriate. However, the offender needs to understand that their behaviour is wrong and must not recur. The staff member will inform parents and record the incident in the Incident Book. This book is to be sent to Junior Primary Coordinator and Senior Primary Coordinator at the end of every term.

Level 2

If the behaviour recurs, or if it is a serious first offence the staff member will complete a Bullying Incident Report Form (Appendix B) and submit to the Junior Primary Coordinator (P-3) or Senior Primary Coordinator (4-6). The relevant Coordinator will investigate to find out the nature and extent of the bullying and hold restorative discussions with both the offender and victim and any bystanders if appropriate. The Coordinator will ensure appropriate restoration is offered to the victims and the offender is supported in changing their behaviour. A written agreement will be drawn up (or equivalent in lower year levels) and signed by the offending student who agrees to refrain from such behaviour in the future. Parents will be contacted at this level, with a phone call in the first instance and a follow up meeting if required. Follow up will occur to ensure the victim feels safe and the bullying behaviour ceases.

Level 3

In the event of repeated bullying or bullying that has not been resolved through the mechanisms described above; the Principal will hold a restorative conference with the students and their parents. Consequences for ongoing bullying may include the following:

- playground suspension;
- College service;
- Professional assistance or counselling for conflict resolution, anger management;
- Other consequences as determined in the restorative conferencing process;
- A contract agreeing to refrain from such behaviour in the future will be signed by the offending student and parents;
- Suspension;
- If the bullying is repeated behaviour that does not cease despite all attempts at restorative conferencing and other consequences, it is considered a breach of

the Enrolment Agreement and the Principal may implement expulsion procedures. (See sections 3(c) 3(b) and 7.4 of the Enrolment Agreement).

Records

Each staff member has an Incident Book in which to record first low level incidents. This book is handed to the Coordinators each term for analysis and may require conversation with staff and students.

Bullying Incident Report Forms and written agreements are filed on student files for both the victim and the offending student.

Review

It is important that staff follow up with victims and offenders of bullying in the days and weeks following the original incident, to ensure the situation has been resolved.

Evaluation

The College undertakes to review this Bullying Policy annually.

The evaluation would also include an assessment of the extent to which the strategies used and educational opportunities undertaken have been effective. In light of such an evaluation, the Principal in consultation with other relevant staff will map out the approaches, activities and external support needed to ensure that all students are aware of the issues involved in bullying and all behave in socially appropriate ways.

Conclusion

While bullying exists at all levels of society it is important that we communicate our intolerance of this behaviour and take all action to restore relationships when bullying occurs. We understand the effects of bullying on learning, self-esteem and general adjustment in the school environment as well as long term psychological effects.

The implementation of this policy requires the whole College community to share in the responsibility of managing bullying wherever and whenever it occurs.