

Westmead Christian Grammar School

Policy for Anti-Bullying

Westmead Christian Grammar School is committed to cultivating an inclusive learning community which is safe, supportive, nurturing and free from bullying and harassment. The school will not tolerate bullying in any form. It is an offensive, injurious and anti-social practice which is condemned in all its varied and subtle nuances. Such uninvited harassment or attention involves the wilful hurting of others (verbally, physically, emotionally or socially) for personal gratification. To combat this pervasive and complex social issue, the school undertakes to educate and empower students, whether subjects of bullying or silent onlookers, to speak forthrightly against bullying, and to face offenders with grace, courage and power through the mind of Christ. Training in the formation of Christian character forms an integral part of the entire process.

Biblical Principles

The school's vision and mission will be achieved through corporate acceptance of the following biblical principles relating to bullying:

1. Scripture charges us with a duty of care toward all others. *You shall love your neighbour as yourself. (Matthew 19:19b)*
2. Protecting children is a God-given charge. The Lord declared, *But whosoever shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone was hung about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea. (Matthew 18:6 KJV)*
3. The Bible declares that we are made in the image of God. *(Genesis 1:27)* Therefore, all human beings are of great value.
4. Children are a supreme gift from God and the Lord places great value on them. *(Psalm 127:3-5; 1 Kings 17:17-23)*
5. Bullying is reprehensible behaviour, and to tolerate it in any form is wrong. *"So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets."* (Matthew 7:12).
6. We must love our brother and not be led by hate to justify the bullying or harassment of another. *(1 John 2:9; 1 John 3:15; Proverbs 10:12; Luke 26:27-35)*
7. Just as God cares for his children, so must we care for all children entrusted to us. *(2 Samuel 7:14; Jeremiah 31:9; Matthew 6:9, 23:37; 2 Corinthians 6:18)*
8. Repentance, forgiveness and restitution are necessary steps in the process of personal change and healing. *(1 John 1:9-10; Matthew 5:24; Matthew 18:21-35)*

Procedure

Bullying is the repeated practice of hurting or threatening someone with deliberate intent through the use of words, images, expressions, gestures or actions. This anti-social behaviour includes the following types of unacceptable behaviour:

- Threatening, teasing, name calling,
- Belittling through innuendo, double entendre and deprecation,
- Interfering with another's property,
- Writing offensive notes,
- Displaying or creating offensive images,
- Hitting, punching, shoving, and other physical abuse,
- Excluding another from the group,
- Manipulating another to conform/obey,
- Ridiculing another person's appearance, effort, viewpoint, and so on,
- Glaring or staring,
- Threatening or intimidating by expressions or gestures,
- Offering suggestive sexual comments, and
- Exercising any physical violence.



Procedure

The following responsibilities will be expected within the school community towards bullying:

The staff of Westmead Christian Grammar School will:

- Instill in students the value of inclusivity of all students irrespective of differences perceived or real,
- Teach students that bullying in any form is wrong,
- Be good role models in thought, word and action at all times,
- Be vigilant and observant for signs of distress and conflict, and possible incidents of bullying,
- Actively supervise on playground duty,
- Arrive at classrooms and designated duties, on time to avoid unsupervised students,
- Help students who are subjected to bullying in a supportive and sensitive manner,
- Report incidents of bullying to the appropriate staff,
- Seek the Chaplain's support and spiritual counsel,
- Equip students who are subjected to bullying with the strategies needed to deal directly with the perpetrator/s,
- Empower all students to speak out forthrightly against any form of bullying,
- Collaborate with other members of the school community to promote a bully free environment,
- Ensure that perpetrators of bullying take steps, according to biblical principle, to seek forgiveness and make restitution to those whom they've harmed,
- Inform the staff of any students who are or may be being bullied, and
- Recommend and request external support, as necessary.

Students will:

- Accept, value and include all fellow students irrespective of differences,
- Refrain from involvement in any form of bullying,
- Recognise that to keep quiet about matters of bullying supports and protects the bully,
- Help, support, encourage and instill confidence in any student who is being subjected to bullying, and
- Report the bullying incident to a member of staff.

Parents will

- Teach children to accept, value and include others,
- Teach children that bullying in any form is reprehensible behaviour,
- Encourage children to use self-control in relation to others,
- Build confidence in children through positive family relationships,
- Speak up for children where necessary in relation to any negative incidents including bullying by reporting appropriately to school staff, and
- Be a good role model in regards to treatment of others.

Dealing with Bullying as a School

Bullying should be dealt with at the time where possible by the class teacher or the teacher on duty. Students may wish to seek help from a different staff member of their choice. Staff should inform colleagues as appropriate in order to avoid on-going incidents. Bullying of a more serious nature or repeat offences should be referred to school executive staff.

In dealing with a situation of suspected bullying, the staff member involved should collect all information possible from all sources possible. Written statements should be obtained where appropriate. Copies of any information and reports should be kept in student files and a copy should be issued to all key staff members involved.

Students who have been bullied or staff suspect of being bullied should be met with following incidents to ensure that they are feeling safe and secure. Students who have allegedly bullied should also be met with. Where appropriate a joint meeting may also be conducted. In a joint meeting, the student will be granted the opportunity to explain what was done. The students may be granted the opportunity to state what he or she would like to see happen in the future. The offending student is given the chance to share his/her thoughts/feelings. A summing up of the meeting will take place where the biblical principles of both the student and the offender/s are reiterated. The objective to meet again soon to review progress will be emphasised.



Disciplinary Consequences

The teacher, Deputy Principal or Principal will administer appropriate disciplinary consequences for the offender's unacceptable conduct. (Refer to the Discipline Policy).

Future Review

A progress review will take place approximately two weeks later. It is important that offending students be made aware that a failure on their part to change their behaviour will result in the administration of more serious corrective disciplinary consequences.

Signs that tell you a student might be suffering from bullying at school

- Unexplained withdrawal and unresponsiveness,
- Reluctance/refusal to go to school,
- Stomach ache, headache, vomiting,
- Loss of confidence,
- Change of sleep pattern at home,
- Change in appetite,
- Regression of behaviour to that of a much younger person e.g. bed wetting,
- Unusual aggression,
- Unusual anger, and
- Feigning sickness.

Children who are most likely to be bullied

- New to class,
- Different – height and weight, intelligence, hair colour, shape of their school bag, and so on,
- Children with low self-esteem, especially those with learning problems or experiencing family breakdowns,
- Children who are vulnerable due to being sufferers of abuse,
- Children who fail to conform,
- Sensitive children,
- Children who have been overprotected, and
- Some children are bullied for no reason at all.

The principles and procedures outlined in the *Anti-Bullying Policy* are to be read in conjunction with the school's *Child Protection Policy and Discipline Policy*.