

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS ABOUT BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

INTRODUCTION

How does it feel to be bullied?

Victims of bullying can feel powerless, angry, intimidated, depressed, alone, scared, humiliated, unwanted, aggressive, revengeful, worthless, neglected and embarrassed. They can blame themselves, suffer low self-esteem or become a bully themselves. In extreme cases bullying can lead to lifelong trauma or suicide.

What happens when someone is being bullied?

A victim of bullying may want to avoid social contact with others. They may have a loss of self-esteem and confidence. They may have difficulty in expressing emotions. Their schoolwork may be affected and their home life may be disrupted.

What roles can students play in bullying behaviours?

Not all students play a clear role as either the student who is bullying or the student who is being bullied. Students may take on different roles in different circumstances. For example, a student who is being bullied in one context may do the bullying in another, or a student who acts as a bystander may intervene and act as protector if the ring-leader is not around.

- **Ring leader:** student who through their social power can direct bullying activity.
- **Associates:** students who actively join in the bullying (sometimes because they are afraid of the ring-leader).
- **Reinforcers:** students who give positive feedback to the student doing the bullying, for example through comments, by smiling or laughing.
- **Outsiders/bystanders:** students who remain silent or watch and therefore appear to condone the bullying behaviour, or who want to keep themselves safe by not drawing attention to themselves out of fear of the bully.
- **Defenders:** student who try to intervene to stop the bullying or comfort students who experience bullying.

ADVICE FOR STUDENTS

What should students or others do who have been bullied or have observed bullying?

Bullying will continue if those responsible think they can escape detection and avoid consequences.

If students are being bullied it is important that they talk to an adult such as a class teacher, the year coordinator, the Director of Student Wellbeing, the Assistant Principal (Head of Primary or Head of Secondary), a college chaplain, tutor, parents, support staff, or a counsellor with whom they feel comfortable.



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There can be a reluctance to report bullying because of fear of being labelled a 'dobber' and going against an unwritten code of student behaviour. This concern is understandable, but must not prevent students from reporting bullying behaviour. Most students dislike bullying and would support attempts to stop it.

ADVICE FOR PARENTS

What to do if your child is being bullied

It is not always easy to tell if a young person is being bullied, as sometimes they do not want to disclose what has been happening to them.

If you notice a significant change in your child's behaviour it could be cause for concern. Other signs can include changes in mood or to eating and sleep patterns; withdrawal from family, social groups or friends; decline in school performance or unwillingness to attend; lost, torn or broken belongings; scratches or bruises; or implausible excuses for any of the above.

If you think your child is being bullied or you hear your child talk about bullying you can:

- Listen calmly and get the full story.
- Reassure your child that they are not to blame.
- Ask your child what they want to do about it and how you can help.
- Contact the college and inform the class teacher, tutor, the year coordinator, the college counsellors or chaplains, the Director of Student Wellbeing (sueoconnor@bdc.nsw.edu.au), the Assistant Principal (Head of Primary or Head of Secondary).
- Check in regularly with your child.
- Support your child in developing his/her talents and participating in sports and other activities that will build confidence and friendships.
- Do **NOT** encourage your child to retaliate either physically or verbally.
- Do **NOT** contact the student(s) you believe to be bullying your child.

What to do if your child is bullying others

The National Centre Against Bullying recommends that parents of students who have been found to bully others should:

- Stay calm. Remember, the behaviour is at fault, rather than the child.
- Make sure your child knows bullying behaviour is inappropriate and why.
- Try to understand the reasons why your child has behaved in this way and look for ways to address problems.
- Encourage your child to look at it from the other's perspective, asking for example 'how would you feel if...?'
- Help your child think of alternate paths of action.
- Provide appropriate boundaries for their behaviour.



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- Contact the college and inform the Director of Student Wellbeing (sueoconnor@bdc.nsw.edu.au) or the Assistant Principal (Head of Primary or Head of Secondary).

RESOURCES

Further resources about bullying and harassment can be found at:

www.ncab.org.au (National Centre Against Bullying)

www.bullyingnoway.gov.au

<https://esafety.gov.au/esafety-information>

kidshelpline.com.au (1800 55 1800)

www.safeschoolscoalition.org.au

CONTACTS

Bishop Drutt College Director of Student Wellbeing, Sue O'Connor sueoconnor@bdc.nsw.edu.au

NSW Police School Liaison Officer, Bernadette Snow (02) 6691 0799

RELATED DOCUMENTS

[*Bishop Drutt College anti bullying and harassment policy.*](#)

[*Procedures for preventing and responding to bullying and harassment.*](#)

[*Bishop Drutt College statement on procedural fairness*](#)