

Framework for Countering Bullying

Aveley Secondary College supports that the rights of all people are to be respected at all times and aims to protect students from bullying and harassment. Given the reach of social media and cyber networks events may entirely happen outside of school hours but impact a student's capacity to feel safe at school. Our processes aim to empower and skill students to resolve social conflict with peers and protect themselves from bullying or harassment behaviours.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is a repetitive attack, which causes distress not only at the time of the attack but also by the threat of future attacks. It is a pattern of behaviour by one person (or group of people) which is designed to injure, hurt, embarrass, upset or discomfort that person. It also is characterised as having an imbalance of social or physical power which distinguishes bullying from conflict.

Types of bullying

Verbal bullying - The repeated use of words to hurt or humiliate another individual or group. Verbal bullying includes using put-downs, insulting language, name-calling, swearing, nasty notes and homophobic, racist or sexist comments.

Emotional/psychological bullying - Includes repeated stalking, threats or implied threats, unwanted email or text messaging, abusive websites, threatening gestures, manipulation, emotional blackmail, and threats to an individual's reputation and sense of safety.

Relational bullying - Usually involves repeatedly ostracising others by leaving them out or convincing others to exclude or reject another individual or group, making up or spreading rumours, and sharing or threatening to share another's personal information.

Physical bullying - Includes repetitive low level hitting, kicking, pinching, pushing, tripping, 'ganging up', unwanted physical or sexual touching and damage to personal property. More serious violent behaviours are not necessarily treated as bullying and may be better managed through the school's discipline processes.

Cyber bullying - Involves the use of information and communication technologies such as email, text messages, instant messaging and websites to engage in the bullying of other individuals or groups. This technology provides an alternative means for verbal, relational and psychological forms of bullying. People can be involved in bullying behaviour either as individuals or members of a group. Research has shown that removing bystander support or bystander action can be effective in limiting or stopping bullying behaviour.

It is important to distinguish the difference between **bullying** and **peer conflict**. Conflict is a disagreement that happens when people want or view things differently. Although conflict is a normal part of human interaction, poor behaviour and choices may also be present.

At Aveley Secondary College we will implement the following structures and strategies:

- promote collaborative relationships between the school, parents and the wider community to develop and implement school-based strategies and programs with students
- develop a whole-school Positive Student Behaviour plan based on the teaching and recognition of respectful and pro-social behaviour
- develop active, trusting relationships within the whole school community
- establish a skilled and appropriately resourced student support team
- provide professional learning for staff and parents in identifying, preventing and addressing bullying
- promote a school culture that seeks to be proactive and restore relationships affected by persistent or unresolved conflict
- promote positive staff role modelling
- regularly evaluate and review strategies.

Targeted Intervention

Aveley Secondary College will identify and respond to bullying behaviours early.

Targeted early intervention strategies include:

- raise awareness and plan around specific forms of bullying, such as cyber-bullying and racism
- identify and target early signs of problematic peer relationship issues within the school community
- identify individuals and groups at risk that require targeted programs
- teach effective bystander behaviour to targeted groups or for specific situations
- teach pro-social behaviour to identified students and groups
- provide access to specialist/pastoral care staff and case management processes for students at risk of being targeted or those who demonstrate bullying behaviour
- promote the inclusion of parents of students at risk in identifying and addressing bullying behaviours that may be occurring within the community

Intervention for Bullying Incidents

Aveley Secondary College procedures for responding to incidents of bullying include:

- staff are provided with support and training to manage bullying situations as they occur
- staff, students and parents have processes for reporting incidents or when they become aware that a student needs support because of bullying
- intervention practices that resolve conflicts, restore relationships, and promote tolerance and social problem-solving are used for responding to bullying incidents
- there are processes for recording and monitoring bullying incidents and interventions
- bullied students are provided with supports to promote recovery and resilience
- case management of students involved in persistent bullying is implemented

Expectations for Parents

Aveley Secondary College recommends that parents follow these guidelines if their child is experiencing bullying

- Encourage your child to report incidents of bullying, harassment or a conflict they are having trouble dealing with, even if this means attending a meeting or helping them write their account.
- Help clarify with your child or the school who the information needs to go to (generally student services staff)

- Don't try to resolve the situation for the child, this not only disempowers your child but can make matters worse.
- Once the school has had opportunity to act on the initial report, ensure that any further instances are also reported. Let them know, keeping quiet doesn't help their situation or the person behaving that way modify their behaviour.
- Monitor your child's health and wellbeing and speak to your GP and the school about any noticeable changes that could indicate your child requires further support

The College Student Services team can assist students experiencing social conflict or bullying behaviour. Students are encouraged to report concerns to Student Services staff promptly so that supports can be quickly implemented.

Websites relating to bullying which may provide useful information for parents/carers and students:

<http://www.headspace.org.au/is-it-just-me/find-information/bullying>

<http://au.reachout.com/bullying>

<https://www.youthbeyondblue.com/understand-what's-going-on/bullying-and-cyberbullying>

<https://esafety.gov.au/?from=cybersmart>

<http://friendlyschools.com.au>

<http://www.mindmatters.edu.au/about-mindmatters/news/article/2015/04/22/online-information-session-on-recognising-warning-signs>

<https://education.gov.au/bullying-research-projects>

<http://www.thinkuknow.org.au/site/cyberbullying>