

Parent Protocols

Anti-Bullying Policy



BRISBANE BOYS' COLLEGE



THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT IS TO GIVE YOU SOME GUIDELINES AND TIPS IF YOUR SON IS CONFRONTED WITH BULLYING. YOU WILL BE PROVIDED WITH A DEFINITION OF BULLYING, CATEGORIES OF BULLYING, CLASSIFICATION AND EXAMPLES OF WHAT ISN'T BULLYING, WHAT TO DO IF BULLYING OCCURS, PLACES TO GET HELP, HOW TO REPORT INCIDENTS AND HOW THE BULLYING REFERENCE GROUP (BRG) WORKS. THE INFORMATION IS A BRIEF OUTLINE THAT IS SUPPORTIVE OF THE BRISBANE BOYS' COLLEGE ANTI-BULLYING POLICY, WHICH CAN BE FOUND ON THE BBC WEBSITE UNDER POLICY AND GOVERNANCE.

What is bullying

From Farrington (1993), an English criminologist.

"Bullying is repeated oppression, psychological or physical, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person and occurs when someone, or a group of people, upset or create a risk to another person's health and safety, or their property, reputation or social acceptance."

In any bullying incident, there will likely be three parties involved: the bully (aggressor), the person being bullied (victim), and bystanders (witnesses). Those who are the bystanders have an obligation to report bullying because, if they are aware of the problem, they are condoning bullying unless they do something about it.

Categories of bullying

Direct physical bullying e.g. hitting, tripping and pushing or damaging property.

Direct verbal bullying e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.

Indirect bullying e.g. lying and spreading rumours, playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate, provoking a food-allergic reaction, gestural or mimicking, encouraging others to socially exclude someone, damaging someone's social reputation and social acceptance.

Cyber-bullying e.g. abusive or hurtful texts, emails, messages, posts, images or video, deliberately excluding others online, nasty gossip or rumours, imitating others online or using their log-in.

All incidents of bullying, regardless into which category the incident falls, will be dealt with by the same procedure.

What isn't bullying (classifications and examples)

There are many negative behaviours that, although distressing to those involved, are not classified as bullying. These instances may require a teacher to intervene and to apply the behaviour management policy in dealing with the incident.

The following situations are often confused with bullying:

Mutual conflict: e.g. an argument or disagreement between students.

Social rejection or dislike: Unless the social rejection is directed towards someone specific and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others, it is not bullying.

Single-episode acts of nastiness or meanness, or random acts of aggression or intimidation: Single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If a student is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion, this does not constitute being bullied. This does not, however, lessen the seriousness of the incident or the subsequent consequences.

Warning signs

Parents should be aware that the following are some of the signs that your son may be being bullied;

- An unwillingness or refusal to go to school, feeling ill in the mornings
- Very few friends and claims to hate the boys at school
- A decline in quality of school work
- Loss of interest in sport and social activities
- Becoming withdrawn and lacking confidence
- Change in normal eating, sleeping or mood patterns
- Crying at night, having nightmares
- Asking for money or starting to steal (to pay the bully), frequently lost possessions and/or money
- Refusing to talk about what's wrong
- Having unexplained bruises, cuts, scratches
- Beginning to bully other children or siblings
- Becoming aggressive and unreasonable
- Or implausible excuses for any of the above

What to do if your son is being bullied

If you believe your son is being bullied;

DO: Breathe, be grateful that you are aware, and take a moment to process the information.

Listen to the whole story without interrupting and then have a calm quiet conversation about the incident to clarify what you have been told.

Help your son protect himself by asking if he has followed these steps:

- Stay calm, ask the aggressor to stop, walk away and ignore the aggressor, keep a record of the details of the incident, talk to a staff member to seek help, report the incident
- Encourage your son's development of his confidence, resilience and coping strategies
- Above all get your son to focus on himself and what is important to him
- Refer your son to a staff member for help
- Report the bullying behaviours to the College

DO NOT: Suggest that your son provoke, retaliate or get into a verbal battle with the aggressor/s.

Provoke, retaliate or get into a verbal battle with the aggressor/s or his/their parents yourself.

Blame yourself for the situation.

What to do if your son is a bystander

If your son witnesses bullying behaviour encourage him to;

- Ask the aggressor to stop
- Give support to the person being bullied
- Keep a note (time, place, what was said, what he did) of incidents
- Report the bullying

What to do if your son is the aggressor (bully)

DO: Breathe, be grateful that you are aware, and take a moment to process the information.

Listen to the whole story without interrupting and then have a calm quiet conversation about the incident to clarify what you have been told.

Explain what bullying is and that it is the behaviour which is the problem, not your son.

Encourage your son to think about how they would feel in a similar situation (empathy).

Help your son to think of alternative approaches towards dealing with others.

Encourage your son's development of empathy, compassion, tolerance, understanding and problem solving skills.

Talk to someone (counsellors/chaplains) to seek assistance to help change these behaviours.

DO NOT: Blame yourself or others for the situation.

Justify the behaviour by saying things like, "This has happened to my son, he was just reacting."

Say "I know my son and he doesn't bully others, he is not like that".

Provoke, retaliate or get into a verbal battle with the victim/s or his/their parents.

Remember:

Everyone copes with situations differently. What works for one person, may not work for your son. He may need to try a variety of solutions and if these do not work, seek help from someone else.

Report the bullying to a staff member

By sending an email to your son's Housemaster

By sending an email via the BRG email address

brg@bbc.qld.edu.au

Through the anonymous confidential bullying report on MyBBC

MyBBC - Resources - Bullying Action Report - Online Submission

What happens when you report an incidence of bullying?

Once an incident is reported and it is determined to be bullying in nature. The BRG conduct an investigation to ascertain all of the facts by interviewing the victim/s, the aggressor/s and the bystander/s.

The strategy at this stage is not to apportion blame, or to punish; but to support the victim and make the aggressor aware of the College's policy and of the consequences if the behaviours do not change.

Once the investigation has concluded, a report is compiled for the Deputy Headmaster/Head of Middle School/Head of Junior School.

The Deputy Headmaster/Head of Middle School/Head of Junior School then reviews the documentation and recommendations, after which the nature of the consequences, if any, are determined and enacted.

Any repeat of the bullying behaviours may lead to further sanctions taken against the aggressor/s.

Other places to go for help

Education Queensland

<http://education.qld.gov.au/studentservices/protection/community/bullying.html>

Bullying No Way!

www.bullyingnoway.gov.au

Bully Stoppers

www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers

CyberSmart

www.cybersmart.gov.au

Kids Help Line

www.kidshelp.com.au

Safe Schools Hub

www.safeschoolshub.edu.au

Youth Beyond Blue

www.youthbeyondblue.com

