

# Preventing and managing bullying at Yanchep Secondary College

Bullying is a learned behaviour which is unacceptable. However, bullying behaviours can be changed. Yanchep Secondary College takes an educative approach to managing and preventing bullying. The College's processes and activities promote the development of the values and behaviours that create and maintain inclusive, safe and supportive education environments.

## Definition of bullying:

*Bullying is an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more persons. Bullying can happen in person or online, and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert).*

Bullying may involve one or more of the following:

- **Verbal bullying:** The repeated use of words to hurt or humiliate another individual or group.
- **Social/relational bullying:** Involves repeatedly ostracising others by ignoring someone or keeping them out of conversations, convincing others to dislike or exclude an individual or group, spreading rumours, and sharing information or images that will have a harmful effect on the other person.
- **Physical bullying:** Includes violent actions towards another person which involves hitting, pinching, biting, pushing, pulling, shoving, damaging or stealing someone's belongings, and unwanted touching.
- **Cyberbullying:** Involves the use of technology to bully a person or group with the intent to hurt them socially, psychologically or even physically.
- **Bystanders:** Bystanders are those who are aware of, or witnesses to, the bullying situation.

Confirming if the behaviours were intentional is not required to implement the strategies for responding effectively. Young people involved in bullying are not always fully aware of the impact of their actions on others. It is more important to act as a result of the effects on the targeted individual immaterial of the determination of intent.

## Prevention strategies

Teaching staff at Yanchep Secondary College implement teaching strategies and classroom management strategies that teach and encourage positive behaviours. Supportive and inclusive classroom environments are important in ensuring students feel safe and able to learn.

The Yanchep Approach underpins all teaching and learning programs at Yanchep Secondary College providing the framework for the teaching and recognition of respectful and pro-social behaviour throughout the College. This is reinforced through GEM programs which incorporate social emotional learning programs to support students in building their emotional intelligence, empathy, tolerance, assertiveness, social and coping skills. The Student Services Team are available to assist students with peer issues or conflict in an effort to resolve situations before they become more serious. Professional learning is provided for staff in identifying, preventing and addressing bullying with plans and policies being monitored, reviewed and refined regularly and collaboratively.

## Responding strategies

Early identification and effective responses reduce the associated risks and potential long-term harms caused by bullying. When a student reports a bullying concern various actions are implemented to address the issue. This may include the following:

- Notification letter to parent/carer of the student identified as engaging in bullying behaviour
- Use of a 'shared concern' approach to assist students in understanding the impact of their behaviour on others
- Support with conflict resolution and restorative practices
- Daily 'check in' with students
- Timely follow up of further instances of bullying behaviour
- Consequences for further instances of bullying behaviour which can include suspension from school for up to ten days
- Increased supervision in the yard at break times or during class transition
- Implementation of a 'Yard Plan' to separate individuals from one another during break times and class transition
- Individual risk management or behaviour support plans
- Collaboration with parents and families to support positive behaviours

One of the most important strategies to support students impacted by or engaged in bullying behaviour is communication and collaboration between parents/carers and school staff. Along with early identification, this provides an effective tool in managing and responding to a bullying issue.

The following websites represent examples of some of the online resources available that may inform schools in planning whole-school prevention and management approaches. Many have links to other valuable resources.

- <https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/> – Safe and Supportive School Communities (SSSC) Project; Queensland Department of Education, Training and Employment on behalf of the Australian Education Authorities (2018)
- <https://www.esafety.gov.au/> – Office of the eSafety Commissioner; Australian Government
- <https://cybersavvy.telethonkids.org.au/> – Cyber Savvy; Telethon Kids Institute
- <https://studentwellbeinghub.edu.au/> – The Student Wellbeing Hub; Federal Government Department of Education and Training (2017)
- <https://www.telethonkids.org.au/our-research/brain-and-behaviour/development-and-education/health-promotion-and-education/friendly-schools/> – Friendly Schools; Telethon Kids Institute
- <https://beyou.edu.au/> – Be You; Australian Government Department of Health, Headspace, Early Childhood Australia
- <http://thinkuknow.org.au/> – ThinkUKnow Australia; Australian Federal Police (AFP)