

# KAIKORAI VALLEY COLLEGE

## ANTI-BULLYING PROCEDURE



### RATIONALE:

Bullying is a problem that exists in most schools and communities throughout New Zealand.

Many people consider it to be part of the 'rough and tumble' of growing up. This is a common misconception. At the very least, bullying, or 'teasing'; as some call it, can damage a child's self-esteem, having short and long term physical and emotional consequences.

Bullying is a serious matter. No one has the right to hurt another person whether it be physically, verbally or emotionally. However, we must also be cautious about the wide generalised definitions of bullying. Children do need to learn how to conduct their own relationships and cope with the ups and downs in friendships. Too much adult intervention or overreaction, can blow trivial incidents out of proportion, and stifle the development of judgment and problem solving skills. This is now often referred to as resilience.

At Kaikorai Valley College we believe that all children have the right to live and learn in an environment where they feel valued and safe. Students are able to learn most effectively in an atmosphere free of harassment (physical, verbal, sexual) and physical violence. We will not support, encourage or condone any behaviour that can be defined as bullying, including the improper use of power, position, age or race.

If detected or reported, incidents will be dealt with as outlined in the procedures below.

### PURPOSES:

1. To develop a school climate where there is *NO tolerance* of bullying.
2. To establish a clear pathway for dealing with incidents of bullying that leads to the intimidation of other children.

### DEFINITION:

Bullying usually has three common features:

- it is *deliberate*, hurtful behaviour
- it is *repeated*, often over a period of time
- it is *difficult* for those being bullied *to defend* themselves

There are five main types of bullying:

- *physical* - eg. hitting, stealing, throwing things
- *verbal* – eg. name calling, insults, racist comments
- *social* – eg. spreading rumours, leaving someone out, rejection
- *psychological* – eg. making threats, stalking
- *cyber* – eg. using technology (texts, Facebook, Tumblr, AskFM, Internet etc) to do any of the above

## GUIDELINES:

1. At the beginning of every year staff, students, parents, and the school community will be made aware of what bullying is, and that it is unacceptable. This will be done through the publishing of the school's procedure in the school newsletter, focus of school assemblies, reference to bullying in student Log Books, anti-bullying posters and materials posted in classrooms, as well as a curriculum focus in Health programmes.
2. At least one professional development session per year for staff (teaching and non-teaching) will be devoted to discuss, identify and teach strategies for dealing with reported incidents of bullying. This will include going through the *flowchart* that outlines the KVC approach to bullying.
3. Annually, whanau teachers will have a co-ordinated teaching time around bullying with a lesson plan and supporting resources provided. In these teaching times, students will be advised of ways they may communicate things they are not comfortable about.
4. Parents who recognise a change in a student's behaviour and/or an unwillingness to come to school, are encouraged to contact the school immediately.
5. Complaints from children or caregivers will be treated seriously. You need to first determine the nature of the incident/s, discuss the definitions of bullying (see definitions above), put the incident in context and reassure the victim that the school will take some action to address the student's concerns.
6. One-off incidents or acts of violence will be dealt with using the school's discipline systems.
7. In the case of bullying, teachers will enter the incident on EDGE including what has been reported and what actions will take place as a consequence. If unsure, discuss the incident with the school's Guidance Counsellor, Dean or Management Team.
8. Inform the parents of the victim that you are aware of a problem using the standard letter. This encourages them to engage the student in a conversation about their concerns.
9. Endeavour to follow the 'No Blame Bullying' approach. Remember that punishing a bully only reinforces the behaviour or drives it underground.

### *'No Blame Bullying' Approach*

When bullying has been observed or reported, the 'No Blame Approach' offers a simple seven-step process, which can be used by a teacher or other facilitator. Note that each step is to be carefully planned as a single part of a whole and variations may undermine the success of the method. The seven steps are:

- Step 1 – Talk with the victim
- Step 2 – Convene a meeting with the people involved
- Step 3 – Explain the problem
- Step 4 – Share responsibility
- Step 5 – Ask the group members for ideas
- Step 6 – Leave it up to them
- Step 7 – Meet them again

For further detail please see Appendix A.

Date of Confirmation by the Board of Trustees	23 April 2013
Reviewed	June 2016

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24 February 2020

## **Appendix A: The No Blame Approach**

When bullying has been observed or reported, then the No Blame Approach offers a simple seven-step procedure which can be used by a teacher or other facilitator. Note that each step has been carefully planned as a single part of the whole and variations may undermine the success of the method. The steps are summarised below:

### Step one - talk to the victim.

When the facilitator finds out that bullying has happened, s/he starts by talking to the victim. During this conversation the listener encourages the victim to describe how s/he feels with reflective comments such as, "that must be very hard for you...So you have felt really upset".

The purpose is not to discover factual evidence about this or other events; if the victim wants to include evidence in the account this is always reframed to establish the resulting distress. For example a comment like, "They have all been ignoring me, nobody will talk to me." Might be replied to with a response like, "So you felt really lonely and you were upset that you had nobody to talk to".

It is important that the victim understands and gives consent to the process. Sometimes there may be a real fear that it could lead to further victimisation but when the non-punitive aspect is fully explained the victim usually feels safe, and relieved that something is being done. S/he may want the perpetrators to understand how much distress has been caused. Talking to someone else who has been through the experience might give further reassurance.

The facilitator should end the meeting by:

- Checking that nothing confidential has been discussed which should not be disclosed to the group
- Asking the victim to suggest the names of those involved, some colluders or observers and some friends who make up the group
- Inviting the victim to produce a piece of writing or a picture which will illustrate his/her unhappiness
- Offering the victim an opportunity to talk again at any time during the procedure if things are not going well.

The victim is not involved to join the group to present his own account, as it is possible that s/he will make accusations, provoke denial or justification and undermine the problem-solving approach.

### Step Two - convene a meeting with the people involved

The facilitator arranges to meet with the group of pupils who have been involved and suggested by the victim. A group of six to eight works well.

This is an opportunity for the facilitator to use his/her judgement to balance the group so that helpful and reliable young people are included alongside those whose behaviour has been causing distress. The aim is to use the strengths of group members to bring about the best outcome.

### Step Three - explain the problem

The facilitator starts by telling the group that s/he has a problem- s/he is worried about “John” who is having a very hard time at the moment. S/he recounts the story of the victim’s unhappiness and uses the piece of writing or a drawing to emphasise his/her distress. At no time does s/he discuss the details of the incident or allocate blame to the group.

### Step Four - share responsibility

When the account is finished, the listeners may look downcast or uncomfortable and be uncertain about the reason for the meeting. Some may be anxious about possible punishment. The facilitator makes a change in the mood here by stating explicitly that:

- No-one is in trouble or going to be punished
- There is a joint responsibility to help John to be happy and safe
- The group has been convened to help solve the problem.

### Step Five - ask the group members for their ideas

Group members are usually genuinely moved by the account of John’s distress and relieved that they are not in trouble. No-one has been pushed into a defensive corner by accusations and the power of the group has shifted from the “bully leader” to the group as a whole, whose members withdraw consent for the behaviour to continue.

Each member of the group is then encouraged to suggest a way in which the victim could be helped to feel happier. These ideas are stated in the “I” language of intention. “I will walk to school with him.” I will ask him to sit with me at dinner.” Ideas are owned by the group members and not imposed by the facilitator. S/he makes positive responses but s/he does not go on to extract a promise of improved behaviour.

### Step Six - leave it up to them

The facilitator ends the meeting by passing over the responsibility to the group to solve the problem. No written record is made - it is left as a matter of trust. S/he thanks them, expresses confidence in a positive outcome and arranges to meet with them again to see how things are going.

### Step Seven - meet them again

About a week later, the teacher discusses with each student, including the victim, how things have been going. This allows the teacher to monitor the bullying and keeps the young people involved in the process.

These meetings are with one group member at a time so that each can give a statement about his/her contribution, without creating a competitive atmosphere. It does not matter if everyone has not kept to his intention, as long as the bullying has stopped. The victim does not have to become the most popular person in school, just to be safe and happy.