

## **SANDGATE DSHS POLICY: Anti-Bullying**

### **RELATED POLICY: 3.0 Parent Handbook, Student Organiser**

At Sandgate District State High School we are committed to taking action against bullying.

We believe that:

- Students have the right to learn in safety
- Adults, in the setting of the school, have a right to teach and work in safety
- All members of the school community have a right to respectful, fair and decent treatment
- Despite our individual differences – background, culture, ability etc. – we can all learn and work together in a productive way
- Individuals who have been harmed by bullying need to be believed and protected from further harm
- It is important for the whole school community to work together to take action against bullying.

Incidents of bullying need to be reported. We make a commitment to follow up all incidents that are reported.

#### **What bullying is:**

Bullying is repeated violence, physical or psychological, against a victim unable to defend herself/himself. It can take a number of forms and be direct or indirect and can include:

- Teasing and name-calling
- Threats
- Assaults
- Property damage and theft
- Gestures
- Cyber bullying including MSN, websites, blogs and text messaging.

#### **Bullying affects everyone**

Bullying affects teaching and learning at school. It has an effect on everyone, whether directly involved in the bullying or not.

Victims of bullying can feel:

- Unhappy
- Afraid
- Unable to concentrate
- Lonely and friendless.

These feelings can persist well beyond students' schooling years.

Students who bully others can be developing an unfortunate pattern of behaviour that makes forming happy friendships and family relationships difficult. They may come to believe that abusing their power is acceptable and may continue to behave this way well beyond their school years.

Even individuals who are not directly involved in bullying can be affected. They may feel fearful or helpless in the face of others' abuse. These negative feelings can affect progress at school.

#### **Myths about bullying**

- Bullying is a normal part of school life and should be tolerated
- Kids who bully others grow out of it
- You can do nothing about bullying so why bother
- If you report bullying it will make matters worse
- Kids who get bullied deserve it – besides, it toughens them up.

We reject these myths, as research and experience do not support them.

### **Actions for Students**

If you are being bullied, you have a number of options.

#### **1. Handling it yourself**

- Stay cool
- Ignore them – don't smile or look at them
- Be assertive – look them in the eye and say stop in a firm and strong way
- Walk away.

Your Year Level Coordinator or the Guidance Counselor can help you with good ways to help yourself.

#### **2. Asking for help**

- Go to your teacher or Year Level Coordinator
- Stand tall and tell them what the problem is and what you have tried to do to deal with it
- There are a number of things that adults in the school can do to help.

#### **3. Making a formal complaint**

Making a formal complaint means putting the problem in writing and giving it to your Year Level Coordinator, the Principal or a Deputy Principal. Be prepared to give all particulars of the bullying and who is involved.

The school will investigate the matter and then take formal action according to the *School Anti-Bullying Policy* and *Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students*.

#### **4. Telling your parent/caregiver**

No matter how you decide to handle it, it is a good idea to let your parents/caregivers know what is happening. They can support you no matter what action you decide on or they may wish to make a complaint on your behalf.

#### **If you see bullying happening**

- Don't get pressured into joining in on the bullying
- Tell the student or students involved to stop
- Tell a teacher or
- Report it to your Year Level Coordinator.

### **Actions for Parents**

- Believe your child
- Stay calm
- Ask what your child has done to deal with it
- Ask what your child would like to have done to stop the bullying.

You can support your child in any or all of the actions listed under *Actions for Students*.

Sometimes students don't want any action taken, even in the case of serious or long-standing bullying. As a parent, you will have to decide whether, in the best interests of the child, a complaint does need to be made anyway. If you need to take action, it is best to inform your child what you are going to do and why.

Please note, some types of bullying may be criminal offences (e.g. assaults) and you are entitled to make a police complaint.

For more information about the Anti-Bullying Policy contact ***The Principal***.