



BULLYING AND HARASSMENT PROCEDURE (STUDENTS)

Sources of Authority	
CECWA Policy	COMMUNITY
Executive Directive	STUDENT BEHAVIOUR

RATIONALE

Queen of Apostles School has a responsibility to provide an educational environment that promotes the dignity and respect of the person and, therefore, aims to encourage the development of positive relationships between students to reduce all forms of bullying, harassment, aggression and violence. The policies and practices that a school employs, should enhance the dignity of the human person and reflect the Principles within the Code of Conduct.

Learning outcomes, physical health, emotional, psychological and spiritual wellbeing can be adversely affected by bullying, harassment, aggression and violence. Students who are bullied, subject to aggression or harassed tend to have poorer health, lower self-esteem, more interpersonal difficulties, higher levels of loneliness, depression, suicidal ideation and increased anxiety. They are also more likely to have a dislike of and want to avoid school, higher absenteeism and lower academic competence. The effects of bullying can begin early in life and, for some, last a lifetime.

The Australian Government's National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF) adopts a whole school approach to safety and wellbeing. It provides a comprehensive range of evidence-informed practices to guide schools in preventing and responding to incidents of harassment, aggression, violence and bullying and to implement their responsibilities in relation to child protection issues.

The National Safe Schools Framework is based on the following overarching vision: *All Australian schools are safe, supportive and respectful teaching and learning communities that promote student wellbeing.*

In the NSSF, a safe and supportive school is described in the following way: *In a safe and supportive school, the risk from all types of harm is minimised, diversity is valued and all members of the school community feel respected and included and can be confident that they will receive support in the face of any threats to their safety or wellbeing.*

This Framework is underpinned by the following guiding principles that represent fundamental beliefs about safe, supportive and respectful school communities. These guiding principles emphasise the importance of student safety and wellbeing as a pre-requisite for effective learning in all school settings.

Australian schools:

- affirm the rights of all members of Queen of Apostles School to feel safe and be safe at school
- acknowledge that being safe and supported at school is essential for student wellbeing and effective learning
- accept responsibility for developing and sustaining safe and supportive learning and teaching communities that also fulfill Queen of Apostles child protection responsibilities
- encourage the active participation of all school community members in developing and maintaining a safe school community where diversity is valued
- actively support young people to develop understanding and skills to keep themselves and others safe
- commit to developing a safe school community through a whole-school and evidence-based approach

The nine key elements that schools need to have in place to implement the NSSF are described in the Framework as:

1. Leadership commitment to a safe school
2. A supportive and connected school culture
3. Policies and procedures
4. Professional learning
5. Positive behaviour management
6. Engagement, skill development and safe school curriculum
7. A focus on student wellbeing and student ownership
8. Early intervention and targeted support
9. Partnerships with families and community

This policy is to be used in conjunction with the School's Student Engagement, Safe Behaviour and Wellbeing Plan.

DEFINITIONS

Bullying is when, over a period of time, an individual or a group intentionally harm a person, who finds it hard to stop this behaviour from continuing.

Additionally, bullying can be characterised as: causing distress, not only at the time of the attack but also by the threat of future attacks; and, an imbalance of power (that is inappropriate and where there is an intention to hurt).

Its nature may be:

- verbal – name-calling, put-downs, threats (spoken, written, electronic or cyber which may also apply to the following points)
- physical – hitting, tripping, punching, throwing objects, stealing
- social – ignoring, hiding, ostracizing
- psychological – stalking, threatening looks, spreading rumours, damaging possessions

Harassment is any unwanted, unwelcome or uninvited behaviour which makes a person feel humiliated, intimidated or offended. Harassment can be seen as one form of bullying.

Bullying and harassment are often thought of separately, however, both involve a more powerful person or group oppressing a less powerful person or group, often on the grounds of

'difference'. These differences can be related to culture, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, sexual orientation, ability or disability, religion, body size and physical appearance, personality, age, marital status, parenting status or economic status. (Bullying. No Way! website cited in the National Safe Schools Framework, 2003).

Unlike bullying and harassment, violence is not necessarily associated with an imbalance of power. It can occur between people of equal power. It implies extreme forcefulness, usually (but not always) of a physical kind. (Rigby, cited in the NSSF, 2003).

Types of Bullying:

	DIRECT	INDIRECT
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hitting, slapping, punching • Kicking • Pushing, strangling • Spitting, biting • Pinching, scratching • Throwing things eg stones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting another person to harm someone
Non-Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mean and hurtful name-calling • Hurtful teasing • Demanding money or possessions • Forcing another to do homework or steal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spreading lies or nasty rumours • Trying to get other students to not like someone
Non-Verbal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threatening and /or obscene gestures • Exclusion • Sending nasty notes • Giving 'dirty looks' • Stalking • SMS texting • Emailing or using Social Media to cyberbully 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliberate exclusion from a group or activity • Removing and hiding and /or damaging others' belongings

PRINCIPLES

- 1 Queen of Apostles School is a safe and supportive environment where the 6 guiding principles and 9 key elements of the National Safe Schools Framework are practiced.
- 2 Queen of Apostles School owes a duty of care to their students.
- 3 Queen of Apostles School will provide supportive environments which:
 - act to prevent instances of bullying, harassment, aggression and violence
 - encourage socially appropriate behaviour using positive behaviour management and direct teaching of curriculum in areas such as interpersonal and self-management skills
 - promote respect for self and other
 - develop physical/emotional well-being and resiliency

- develop interpersonal skills and positive mental health

4 Responding to bullying, harassment, aggression and violence requires quality leadership and role modelling to facilitate strategy implementation and sustained change, together with a whole-school community approach that is consistent with the Pastoral Care Framework, the school's Pastoral Care practices and the school's Evangelisation Plan and which partners with parents and other agencies.

5 Bullying, harassment, aggression and violence may occur outside of the school. When these behaviours impact on a student's learning and behaviour in school, Queen of Apostles will take action to support the continued wellbeing of those involved.

6 All bullying, harassment, aggression and violence shall be responded to. When bullying, harassment, aggression and violence are ignored or overlooked, it serves to condone or reinforce the behaviour. Bystanders, (those who observe bullying) can encourage or assist those who bully simply by doing nothing.

7 While the aim is to promote and encourage positive behaviour, school policy and procedures shall contain clear statements regarding the range of appropriate consequences that may be applicable for unacceptable behaviour. In looking at consequences relating to specific issues, consideration should be given to other circumstances which may have bearing such as family or mental health matters.

8 All parties to incidents of bullying, harassment, aggression and violence are entitled to appropriate support.

PROCEDURES

Management of Bullying Incidents

Bullying is totally against the mission and purpose of Queen of Apostles School.

We are committed to providing an educational environment in which students feel valued and secure. To achieve this, we seek to create a school-wide culture that:

- Allows students to flourish free from discrimination, harassment or any form of bullying.
- Does not tolerate, condone or trivialise bullying behaviours.
- Is aware of what constitutes bullying behaviour.
- Provides support to the victims of bullying.
- Deals firmly with bullies so that they stop their bullying.

At Queen of Apostles School, bullying incidents are managed using a **Shared Concern** approach, which aims to change the behaviour of the student(s) involved and to improve the situation of the student(s) being bullied.

The strategies aim to be non-punitive, non-blaming and non-aggressive approaches to assisting individual or groups in dealing with others in a more positive way, particularly through discussion of the incidents.

Clearly defined steps are used to reach a point where the student who has been bullying can see the effect their behaviour is having on others and undertakes a process to change this behaviour. The student who has been bullied is also provided with opportunities to discuss the incident and consider ways they might be able to improve their own situation.

The effectiveness of the strategies used rests with ALL members of the Queen of Apostles' community.

The key points of the method of shared concern

- Those involved in a bullying situation are seen individually.
- The facilitator shares his or her concern for what is happening with the student being bullied.
- The facilitator invites and supports the student(s) who are bullying to take responsibility and suggest actions to remedy the situation.
- Developments are carefully monitored over time.

The method of managing bullying incidents is based on the following principles:

- Changing the social dynamics that maintain bullying will prevent further bullying;
- A shift in behaviour can be promoted by encouraging empathy and concern for others;
- Harsh punitive measures model and reinforce the use of power to meet needs and wants and put bullied children at risk of revenge;
- When dealing with a report of bullying each teacher will ensure that they:
 - are 'available' and actively listen;
 - treat the reported information seriously;
 - ensure follow-up by informing a member of the Behaviour Management Team;
- The teacher and/or the Behaviour Management Team will support students who raise a concern in regard to bullying to finding out the facts of the incident. As outlined above this will involve meeting with those concerned using a shared concern approach to address the issue.
- Parents or caregivers will be contacted at an early stage and where appropriate referral will be made to the social worker/educational psychologist to develop positive strategies to overcome bullying.
- The type of sanction imposed on those found to be bullying will depend on the seriousness of the situation.
- Incidents of bullying need to be recorded in SEQTA – Pastoral Care

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

At Queen of Apostles School, every person has a right to feel safe. Any person who bullies another is denying them that right. Queen of Apostles will not tolerate any action that undermines a person's right to feel safe, and it will take whatever steps are necessary to stop such behaviour.

This requires staff to:

- Be role models at all times
- Be observant for signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying
- Remove occasions for bullying by active supervision during yard duty

- Arrive at class on time
- Use a range of responses including the shared concern or no blame method and apply disciplinary consequences when necessary
- Report suspected incidents to the Principal or Assistant Principal
- Inform parents and liaise with them to support the child.
- Report incident in SEQTA- Pastoral Care

This requires students to:

- Refuse to be involved in any bullying situation
- Support students who are being bullied
- Actively discourage the bully from continuing the behaviour
- Report incidents of bullying to teachers in order to seek help.

Behaviour Management Team

The following staff members comprise the Behaviour Management Team, Principal, Assistant Principal, relevant class teacher, Wellbeing Coordinator.

Managing a Bullying Incident – Teachers

Any staff member observing a bullying matter or approached by a child in regard to a bullying matter must respond by:

1. Removing child/ren from harm and attend to them if required.
2. Listening carefully and making a decision about whether this is an incident of bullying. (Check definition).
3. Assessing the level of seriousness before beginning the anti-bullying process.
4. Discussing the child's feelings and possible options to deal with the bullying.
5. Stating the school's stance of not tolerating bullying. Complete a 'Bullying Incident Report' - The name of the child being bullied, who reported the incident/s and the bystanders involved are all recorded.
6. Focusing on helping *all* children involved.
7. Applying the **Shared concern** approach
8. Consulting with the Assistant Principals and /or Principal in cases where bullying is not being resolved.
9. Where necessary, speak to the class without using any names eg class meeting.
10. Inform staff to monitor during play times (photos to be included of students to monitor).

Managing a Bullying Incident – Behaviour Management Team

The Behaviour Management Team will:

1. Assess incidents in view of severity and history and document on 'Report of Bullying' Form
2. Ensure that any incident involving physical injury, physical bullying, serious damage to property or repeated bullying behaviour will result in the student being sent to the Principal immediately.

3. Decide on appropriate consequences for serious incidents. These may involve the following:
 - a. Contact parents via a 'Notification to parents of a Bullying Incident' Letter or other form of communication.
 - b. Detention/ community service
 - c. In-school suspension (different recess and lunch arrangements)
 - d. Loss of privileges
 - e. Out of school suspension or other appropriate action.

Shared Concern Approach

1. Assure the students that the incident will be dealt with.
2. When the time becomes available teachers or BM team member talk individually to *bullying students* first.
3. Students who are bullied are talked to last.
4. Follow up meeting with students who have been bullying/have been bullied.
5. Student who was bullied receives support and there may be a follow up with assertiveness training.

Proactive School Strategies to Prevent Bullying


In conjunction with the ways that are outlined in the Student Engagement, Safe Behaviour and Well-Being Plan, there are a number of important strategies employed here at Queen of Apostles School to prevent bullying and harassment.

1. At the commencement of each school year, and periodically throughout the year, classes will discuss the Student Engagement, Safe Behaviour and Wellbeing Plan.
2. Copies of the Student Engagement, Safe Behaviour and Wellbeing Plan will be made available to all current parents/caregivers on request.
3. At Parent Information evenings at the beginning of each school year, parents will be informed about our Student Engagement, Safe Behaviour and Wellbeing Plan including information on Behaviour Management and Bullying. Information will be given on the whole school Bullying program – *URSTRONG*.
4. Information on bullying will be made available periodically to parents, teaching and non-teaching staff in the form of newsletter articles and also literature educational sessions as required or through discussion with the Principal, School Social Worker and Behaviour Management Team.
5. Students will be given opportunities to talk about bullying through explicit teaching (ie *URSTRONG* and incidentally (eg class meetings).
6. Opportunities to discuss appropriate standards of behaviour and school rules with all students eg assemblies and whole school and class gatherings.
7. Identify students at risk/awareness of individual needs and develop individualised support plans (teacher/social worker, educational psychologist).

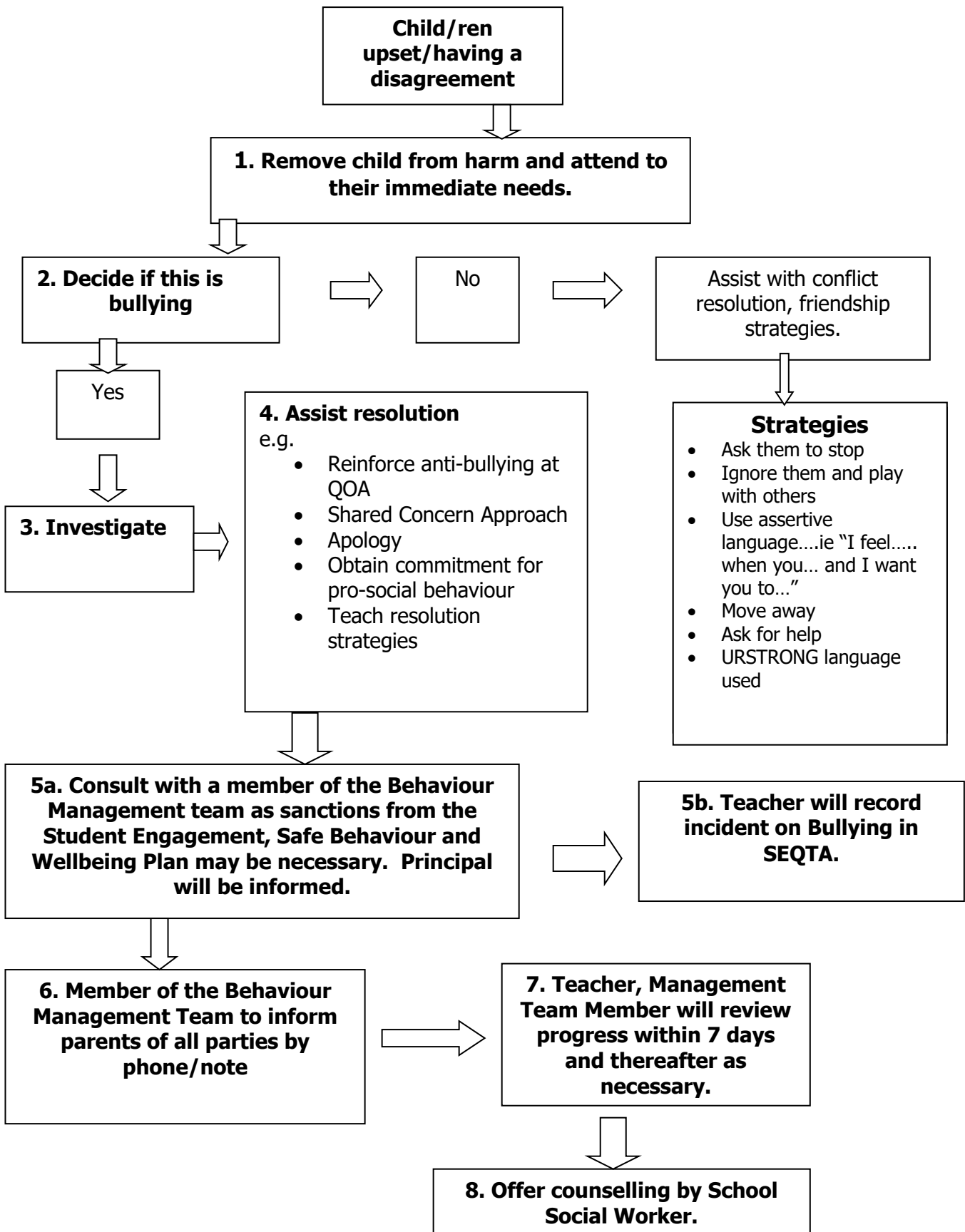
8. Organise appropriate referral for students experiencing difficulties (support teacher, social worker and educational psychologist).
9. Teach social skills, self-esteem and empathy building, assertiveness training, anger management, cooperation skills, conflict resolution skills, resiliency and protective behaviours (using *Keeping Safe Program*).
10. Emphasis on a conciliatory approach (listening to both sides, not labelling, problem solving).
11. Continue with “Buddies Programme” pairing younger students with more senior students for a variety of activities both with an academic and social value.
12. Encourage co-operative learning and teaching of explicit social skills.
13. Inform the students about opportunities for incidents to be reported confidentially in a verbal or written form to staff, the Principal, parents and student leaders.
14. Recognise and reward responsible and safe behaviour.

Confidentiality

Appropriate sensitivity and confidentiality is to be observed by all staff members when dealing with all incidents or situations involving bullying and harassment with students and parents.

Authorised by	Mark Ryan	Signature:	
Written	2012	Review Date/s:	2015 2020 2025
Effective Date:	March 2025	Next Review:	March 2027

Steps for dealing with Reported Bullying





NOTIFICATION TO A PARENT OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

Date: _____

Dear _____

This letter is to inform you that your child _____ has been involved in a recent bullying incident/s at school on _____.

Your child was involved by: _____

Queen of Apostles School philosophy in regard to any bullying incident is that of consultation with all parties involved.

With support, all parties are responsible for improving peer relationships, finding solutions to relationship problems, seeking a commitment to resolve a negative situation and change behaviour choices for the future.

This matter has been acted upon and all children involved will be contacted again no later than one week from this incident to monitor the situation and intervene again, if necessary.

This letter is *not* intended to result in extra punishment at home. It is for your information, any information may be useful in promoting discussion with your child about their behaviour choices. You are encouraged however to discuss the importance of:

- taking responsibility for our own choices
- being sorry and making amends through positive behaviour choices in the future

We appreciate your support and consultation with the school. Please do not hesitate to contact me via the school office if you require any further clarification.

Yours sincerely

Behaviour Management Team

REPLY SLIP regarding a Bullying Incident

(Please return this reply slip by tomorrow)

Thank you for informing us about _____'s involvement in this incident of bullying.

- We have discussed the situation with him/her and support your efforts to help students at Queen of Apostles School 'own' and be responsible for choices they make.
- We understand that you need us to support the school and reinforce the need for students to treat others with care and respect at all times.
- We understand that we will be informed again and may need to meet if the situation does not improve.

Date _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature



BULLYING INCIDENT REPORT

Student's Name: _____

Date: _____

Date of Incident: _____

Recorder: _____

PERSON reporting the incident is: _____

WHERE the incident is reported to have taken place:

- Classroom
- Tuckshop Area
- School Oval
- Annexe Oval
- Toilets
- Other _____

WHEN the incident is reported to have taken place:

- Before school
- Recess
- Lunch
- Class
- Other _____

TYPE OF BULLYING involved:

Physical

Verbal

Emotional

WHO was involved (those being bullied, those bullying, those bystanders or helpers)?

DESCRIPTION OF WHAT HAPPENED (or is still happening)

Has there been previous notification of this situation? Yes [] No []

- A bullying notification report has been completed and filed.

Action taken with those reported to be bullying:

- Shared Concern Approach
- Taught/revised Strategies
- Commitment to stop negative behaviour
- Stated anti-bullying position of the school
- Other_____

People Notified:

- Class Teacher
- Parent (Form: 'Notification of a Bullying Incident')
- Social Worker
- Assistant Principal
- Principal
- Other_____

Result of Interview with Person Accused of Bullying:

Response of Witnesses/Bystanders:

Action Taken (consequences)

Record of Interview with Parent (if required):

Signed _____
Principal/ Assistant Principal

Signed _____
Student and Parent (if required)



FOLLOW UP ON BULLYING INCIDENT

Student's Name: _____

Follow Up report – One Week Following

Date: _____

Follow Up report – One Month Later (if Required)

Date: _____

Matter Resolved: Yes[] No[]

Signed _____ Date: _____
Principal/ Assistant Principal

Signed _____ Date: _____
Student and Parent (if required)