

Bullying Policy



Preventing Bullying

The Brisbane Independent School aims for a harmonious and caring environment that is supportive of all members of the community remaining safe from discrimination and harassment.

By definition bullying is repeated oppression, psychological or physical of a less powerful person or group of persons by a more powerful person or group of persons. It may be manifested in many ways e.g. harassment verbal, sexual or psychological), victimisation, alienation, coercion, intimidation, exclusion, ostracism or discrimination.

In any form bullying is not acceptable behaviour and results in hurt, fear, loss of self-esteem and decreased social effectiveness for the victim. Within the context of the Brisbane Independent School bullying is entirely contrary to the values of the school. We believe that bullying hurts all participants of the community and therefore requires serious intervention for all participants in helping develop protective behaviours.

Subsequently the importance of supporting protective behaviour is cemented throughout our curriculum and daily activities.

In the Curriculum

Weekly whole school meetings highlight possible “Hotspots” for bullying and allow the whole community to discuss acceptable types of behaviour. The students also problem-solve empowering ways to make their experiences at BIS positive. The results of these discussions are:

- Published class rules and consequences (classroom walls and in the newsletter) that can be used without teacher intervention.
- Active use of the Values through posters and discussion cards.
- Maps of Hotspots with poster clues for “How to keep safe” displayed around the school.
- Targeted staff surveillance of hotspots with awareness that over-observation will merely drive the bullying to a new site.

Reappraisal and Action - Annual Review

A review of the school’s policy is undertaken every 12 months that will use a variety of tools:

- The centralised records to ascertain the success of “Hotspots”behaviour strategies, contracts and interventions the staff can maintain a successful program.
- The school will also send out a questionnaire to the parents (References TF453) either through the newsletter or at the Whole Community Meeting.
- Child-protection updates and,
- New research or resources on Anti-bullying and behaviour management.

This combination of data will help successfully tailor the Anti-bullying policy to the school community needs.

Procedure

The following steps are a guide to dealing with reports of bullying:

If bullying is suspected or reported, the member of staff who has been approached, to ensure the student's safety, should deal with the incident immediately. **It is never acceptable to turn a blind eye to bullying.**

The staff member should work through the anti-bullying process described in the sections below:

STEP 1

When a staff member believes that a bullying incident has occurred the first step in the process is to talk to each participant separately to understand his or her interpretation of the incident. This process must be written on the Child Protection Bullying Sheet .If one of the participants still refuses to discuss the incident they must be sent home and are unable to return to school until they are willing to proceed with a conflict resolution process.

STEP 2

By using the BIS Conflict Resolution Process each participant is encouraged to "Step into the other person's shoes" for greater empathy.

Participants now spend time discussing how they need to change their behaviour to stop this happening again. Both participants must go through this process, as there are always protective behaviours that we as individuals can use to keep ourselves safe. Examples:

- Early use of the rules or Conflict Resolution to deal with frustrations before they become problems.
- Negotiated exclusion from particular areas of the school,
- Exclusion from independent activities,
- Increased adult supervision.

The participants then need to apologise, recognising that respect for each other is the goal and agree to adhere to the behaviour guidelines discussed.

STEP 3

A clear account of the incident from the staff member should be added to the report and then the report filed in the "Keeping Track" folder and discussed at an emergency staff meeting.

STEP 4

If the incident occurs again for either of the participants, a second contract must be written up and signed by both participants.

STEP 5

If the bullying continues for a third time a letter is sent to both sets of parents asking for a meeting with them, explaining the situation, outlining the strategies that have been determined and reinforcing the consequences that may flow from a repeat of the bullying¹ . A third contract is

¹ Action may include cancellation of membership of BIS inc. and subsequent cancellation of enrolment of student at the school.

written. During this process staff are focussed on protecting the child who is the recipient of the bullying behaviours.

STEP 6

If the bullying continues further with no sign of progress a report recommending an outside specialist working with the student unable to change their behaviours is tabled at the board meeting. If no resolution occurs then the family is given written warning of cancellation of enrolment and suspension of their child from school.

STEP 7

If no outside support is brought in by the family to work with the child then the student displaying these bullying behaviour has their enrolment cancelled.