Safe and Supportive Environment (Anti-Bullying) Policy

Background

Kambala is a dynamic learning community that encourages students to achieve excellence in a supportive environment. All members of the Kambala community have the right to enjoy a safe and positive environment that promotes acceptance and respect. This position is expressed in the following principles:

- learning takes place in a safe and supportive environment;
- personal possessions and School property are treated with care and respect;
- School values are upheld within the wider community; and
- a Christian ethos underpins our interactions

Kambala provides student wellbeing policies and programs that:

- nurture and support the individual needs of students,
- are designed to encourage in each student a deep understanding of and responsibility for self and others,
- build the confidence and resilience to positively shape her future.

Bullying and harassment will not be tolerated at Kambala.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is repeated verbal, physical or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons.

Bullying can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and all forms of harassment including that based on sex, race, disability, and/or sexual identity.

Bullying behaviour exists in a number of forms including:

- **Verbal bullying:** Teasing, name calling, offensive language, putdowns, threats, insults, sarcasm, unwelcome comments, intrusive questions and "nuisance" or abusive telephone calls.
- **Physical bullying:** Fighting, pushing, hitting, punching, scratching, kicking and invasion of personal space.
- **Social bullying:** Standover tactics, ignoring, repeated excluding, ostracising, extortion, threats, alienating, making inappropriate gestures.
- **Psychological/emotional bullying:** Spreading rumours, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions, malicious SMS and email messages, inappropriate use of camera phones.
- **Cyber bullying:** Any destructive text or images posted on the internet. This may be via personal websites or web logs (blogs), email messages, discussion groups, message boards, online personal polling sites, chat services or instant messaging (IM) or on mobile phones using short message services (SMS) or multimedia messaging services (MMS).

What Bullying is Not

Bullying does not refer to an age-appropriate conflict between peers (e.g. falling out) or negative behaviours that occur only once in most instances.

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Signs of Bullying

Major behaviour changes in a student may be indicative of bullying. Such behavioural changes may include:

- Crying at night and having nightmares;
- Refusing to talk when asked "What's wrong?";
- Having unexplained bruises, cuts or scratches;
- An unwillingness or refusal to go to school;
- Feeling ill in the mornings;
- A decline in quality of school work;
- Becoming withdrawn and lacking confidence;
- Beginning to bully siblings; and
- Acting unreasonably.

Parents/carers are encouraged to recognise signs of bullying and notify the school through a trusted staff member immediately (such as a class teacher, Head of Year, school counsellor etc), if they suspect their child is a victim of bullying.

Prevention and Intervention

Kambala aims to prevent bullying in the following ways:

- we encourage and maintain a climate of respect
- the School leadership and management reflect practices that contribute to building a safe and supportive learning environment for all students
- the School curriculum develops life skills to nurture personal development in an inclusive and equitable manner
- the Discipline Policy is implemented in a consistent manner
- the School promotes a common understanding of acceptable classroom behaviour
- the expectations for behaviour outside the classroom are communicated and practised by all members of the School community

It is the responsibility of all members of the School community to ensure the safety and protection of one another.

Students are expected to:

- treat others respectfully
- refuse to bully others
- refuse to let others be bullied
- refuse to watch, laugh or join in when someone is being bullied
- walk away, speak up, be a friend, or ask others for help if they observe someone being bullied
- report cases of bullying to an adult

Staff are expected to:

- supervise students in all areas of the school and the playground
- watch for signs of bullying and to deal with bullying appropriately as outlined later in this policy
- respond quickly and sensitively to reports of bullying and to follow-up all reported incidents

- report all cases of bullying to the relevant Classroom Teacher, Head of Year, Head of Junior/Senior School, Head of Counselling, Director of Students and/or the Principal
- take seriously parents' concerns about bullying
- assign consequences for bullying as outlined below

Parents are expected to:

- take an active interest in their daughter's online activities
- place computers in open areas that are easily visible
- talk to their daughters about the potential dangers and teach them strategies for avoiding these dangers (e.g. if they come across inappropriate content they should hit the Back button and move on)
- supervise Internet access until their daughters are clearly capable of behaving safely and ethically in virtual environments
- ensure that their daughters do not put personal details online
- reinforce acceptance and respectful behaviours in their daughters

Approach to Addressing Bullying

The aim of Kambala's approach to address bullying is to create a situation where all parties can co-exist peacefully in a caring and safe environment. The School promotes resolution and restorative practices rather than punishment. This practice is based on research. A restorative approach, which seeks to bring about change in the behaviour and thinking of the student(s) who are bullying, will be used wherever possible.

At all times, discretionary judgement will be applied according to the severity, frequency and the duration of the bullying situation and age of the students involved.

It should be noted that responses to bullying will be tailored to suit the situation.

One approach the School draws from is the 'method of shared concern', a non-punitive method for responding to bullying situations.

The method of shared concern consists of a series of stages in which those involved in the bullying situation are interviewed individually, including the suspected bullies and their target(s). This approach emphasises that bullying takes place within a group context and that an effective way to address bullying is to therefore work closely with all involved, not just the suspected bullies.

It is important to note that none of the students is accused of being a bully but rather, how their behaviours are bullying behaviours in accordance with the policy. They are seen as important contributors to the emergence of a solution to the bullying problem. This will be used as a learning experience for the students to gain insight into their own behaviours.

Procedure

People involved:

- Senior School: Head of Year/Head of Senior School/Director of Students
- Junior School: Deputy Head/Head of Junior School

As mentioned, methods for responding to bullying will be tailored to the individual situation.

Other procedures that might be implemented depending on the severity of the situation include:

- counselling for those involved
- formal mediation between the parties
- detention(s)
- removal of privileges
- consultation with Youth Liaison Office/Police Liaison Officer Rose Bay 93626399
- suspension
- expulsion

Throughout the process, care will be taken to ensure that all actions are based on the principles of procedural fairness and to maintain confidentiality as far as possible.

Implementation

It is important that the issue of maintaining a safe and supportive school environment remains a high priority each year. This policy will therefore be reviewed on a regular basis.

References are made to all or some of the policy and procedures at various times throughout the year in Pastoral Care lessons, Parent information sessions, School/Year assemblies as well as on the intranet.

Useful Resources

Bullying No Way
Kids Help Line
Mood Gym
Cybersmart Kids Online