



Anti-Bullying and Cyber-Bullying Policy

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Anti-Bullying and Cyber-Bullying Policy

1. Anti-Bullying Policy

Rationale

Bullying is against the values and beliefs of Coast and will not be tolerated, condoned or trivialised at Coast Christian School ("Coast").

Bullying is not Christlike behaviour, it does not build a positive and caring community and it is the opposite to the attitudes and values found in the Bible.

Romans 12:9-21 clearly explains how we should treat one another:

"Be good friends who love deeply...bless your enemies...get along with each other...make friends with nobodies...don't let evil get the best of you; get the best of evil by doing good."
(The Message)

At Coast, we have an expectation of respect for all others, whether they are students, staff, parents or visitors. We expect every member of our School community to give and receive care and respect.

When we are bullied, or when we bully others, the whole school community is damaged. Within the school we seek to build a safe, positive and caring Christian environment in which we acknowledge that each human being is unique and created by God and therefore of immense value.

Staff, students, parents and caregivers at Coast have a shared responsibility in making sure that bullying behaviours are dealt with quickly and effectively whenever they occur.

We realise that bullies are everywhere in our society, not just in our schools. We also realise that even though we may do everything in our power to prevent bullying, there will still be bullies. Therefore, at Coast we have strategies to deal with both the people being bullied and those doing the bullying.

Coast endeavours to raise awareness of what makes students resilient, to develop strategies to reduce vulnerabilities and increase coping skills. We are an Anti-Bullying school. We take this position because we believe that ALL people are made in God's image and ALL are therefore worthy of our respect. Ephesians 2:10 "For we are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which He prepared in advance for us to do." Showing respect for others is one of the ways we can demonstrate our respect towards God as The Creator of all living things and towards one another as His creation.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is when someone or a group of people with more power repeatedly and intentionally causes hurt or harm to another person or group of people who feel helpless to respond. Bullying can continue over time, is often hidden from adults and will probably continue if no action is taken.

The key features of bullying are that it:

- causes hurt and distress,
- is repeated and
- involves the use of power in an unfair way.

Bullying is NOT:

- single episodes of social rejection or dislike; or
- single episode acts of nastiness or spite; or
- random acts of aggression or intimidation; or
- mutual arguments, disagreements or fights.

Forms of Bullying:

Physical: fighting, pushing, shoving, hitting, kicking, rude and intimidating gestures, invasion of personal space, taking or damaging belongings.

Group: ganging up against, isolating or rejecting from the group.

Verbal: mocking, name calling, putting someone down, offensive language.

Victimisation: picking on, excluding, threatening to "get", stand over tactics.

Sexual: unwanted sexual invitation or inferences, touching or brushing against in a sexual manner, writing or drawing or commenting about someone's body sexually, sexually oriented jokes or name calling and comments about someone's private life.

Discrimination: of any kind on the basis of race, gender or religion.

How do we prevent bullying?

At Coast we aim to develop a whole school culture which promotes respect for others through teaching and demonstration in all areas of school life. We believe this may help to effectively implement strategies that will prevent bullying.

We believe each group within the School community has a specific role in preventing and dealing with bullying, as follows:

Coast Staff will help by:

- Delivering Christian education in the context of curriculum, chapel services, assemblies and general nurture where the value of the individual is affirmed and the importance of qualities such as compassion, kindness, tolerance and respect are encouraged.
- Modelling examples of how to relate to one another with love and acceptance.
- Encouraging the teaching of tolerance, respect and valuing of difference and diversity.

- Providing access to this Policy, Code of Conduct for Students and Code of Conduct for School Community Members to all members of the Coast School community via website, hard copies (available on request) and newsletter articles from time to time.
- Programming specific activities in all classes which promote values associated with anti-bullying.
- Providing definitions of bullying - including explanations of the roles of perpetrator and bystander.
- Providing support and guidance to the victims of bullying.
- Providing intervention for individuals who bully others.
- Being aware of signs of insecurity, discomfort and suspected incidents of bullying.
- Making efforts to remove occasions of bullying by proactive management of students in the classroom and playground.
- Arriving at class and to playground supervision on time.
- Acting on situations immediately with regard to bullying and appropriate follow through (including strategies to prevent re-offending).
- Reporting suspected incidents to the appropriate staff member and Principal.

Coast Parents will help by:

- Modelling anti-bullying attitudes and behaviour.
- Supporting the values of tolerance and respect in the home.
- Encouraging children to exercise these values in all contexts including at school.
- Reporting bullying and encouraging their child to do same.
- Providing support and encouraging their child to seek help.
- Being alert to any signs of distress or anxiety, unwillingness to attend school, missing equipment, damaged clothing or bruising, and contacting the School of your concerns.
- Communicating effectively with the appropriate staff members.
- Reassuring students who are being bullied, of their value.
- Working in partnership with the school to resolve bullying issues.

Coast Students will help by:

- Modelling anti-bullying attitudes and behaviour.
- Showing respect for all members of the Coast community.
- Speak out against bullying and report it when they see it.
- Reporting to staff if you are bullied.
- Supporting students who are bullied.
- Suggest anti-bullying strategies to your teacher.
- Encouraging others to make a stand against bullying.

What should happen if a bullying incident is observed or reported?

- The incident is investigated by the teacher to whom it has been reported (if this is a casual teacher this teacher will report to the Stage teaching partner or the adjacent classroom teacher for investigation);
- The teacher determines whether or not the incident is bullying, according to the agreed definition in this Policy;

- If it is not bullying the incident is dealt with by the teacher in accordance with the Student Discipline and Behaviour Management Policy;
 - If it is bullying the incident is dealt with using the following strategies-
- **Interview with bullies.**

This is done by the investigative teacher, interviewing one student at a time, starting with the student seen as the group leader. This is a non-adversarial interview designed to emphasize the concern of the person who is being hurt or elicit some empathy and to come to some agreement as to what the person might do to help the victim. During the meeting the teacher remains calm, empathetic, never angry or indignant and respect is shown for the bully as a person.
 - **Interview with the victim.**

This is done by the investigative teacher in a supportive manner and the aim is to explore ways in which the victim can behave to minimise the chances of the bullying being repeated. This may involve the victim being shown assertive behaviour or reducing behaviour which may be provoking the bullies.
 - **Parents are contacted and informed.**

The investigative teacher contacts the parents of the victim and the bully/ies to advise them of the report, the results of the investigation and of the School's response. The parents are invited to maintain communication with the relevant Coast staff.
 - **Coast Staff are advised.**

All Coast staff who are responsible for supervising students on playground duty and/or classroom supervision are advised of the bullies and the victim so that continued observations can occur.
 - **Follow-up with bullies and victims.**

It is essential that daily follow-up takes place. This involves asking the bullies individually how they have followed through what they agreed to do to help the victim, and asking the victim how they are progressing and whether or not there have been any further incidents. The follow-up is initially carried out daily, and then tapered off if all is going well. This is done by the investigative teacher and supported by the classroom teacher of each of the student's involved.
 - **If the bullying behaviour does not stop** as a result of this intervention, then the Principal is advised and the usual sanctions of the Student Discipline and Behaviour Management Policy will be implemented. This may include a suspension or the implementation of a level within the Behaviour Management system. Communication with the parents of the bully/ies and victim/s will be maintained. For severe cases of bullying, the student may be expelled without moving through the levels of the behaviour management system.

There will be a need to keep working with the victim at this time to support them and

make sure that they continue to problem solve to try to make sure that there is not something else they can do to prevent the bullying from re-occurring. This may have to be carried out by the Principal, depending on the nature of the bullying incidents.

The School Chaplain is included at this level in order to provide support for the bully and the victim.

If required, the Principal will contact the local Police "School Liaison Officer/s" to provide further support to relevant staff and students - contact details are:

Senior Constable Armitage or Senior Constable Hughes at Gosford Police Station on Phone 4323 5599

2. CYBER-BULLYING POLICY

Policy Statement

Coast encourages the use of technology for educational purposes. However, the misuse of such technology can cause direct or indirect psychological or physical harm to others. Such misuse is viewed as Cyber-Bullying at Coast . It shows a direct lack of respect for others. We expect staff, students and parents to give and receive respect within a secure, supportive and caring environment. Coast is an Anti-Bullying school.

What is Cyber-Bullying?

Cyber-Bullying is the term used for bullying using the internet or by SMS. It involves bullying which is carried out through an internet service such as email, chat room, discussion group, social media, instant messaging or through mobile phone technologies. It includes, but is not limited to, actions such as:

- Using technology such as mobile phones to record conversations for the purpose of slandering an individual by altering the context of the conversation and playing it back in a public, private, or semi-private setting or placing the recording on the internet for global access.
- Using any technology such as mobile phones to photograph individuals, especially in what are considered private settings such as change rooms, and using the photographic material to slander, vilify, promote in an irresponsible way, or present in such a way as causes embarrassment to the individual. This would include placing the photographic material on a computer which others may view, or on any intranet, or on the internet for global access, or by producing hard copy(s) of the photos without the knowledge of the person concerned, or by distributing photos in any form to any other individual.
- Obtaining physical photos of a person and translating them into electronic form and then placing those images on any computer without the permission of the person

concerned, for any use other than identification of students within the school community by Coast staff.

- Creating or using any website to place information on it which may cause damage or psychological harm to any student, or place them in potential danger from another person. For example placing home and address details of anyone on a website, or placing name(s) on a website with comments about the person(s) named, or placing any identifiable details on a website of another person without that person's express permission.
- Sending an electronic message(s) to a person which is threatening, degrading, or slanderous, or sending the message(s) to others.

Why is Cyber-Bullying not acceptable?

Bullying displays disrespect towards others. It has a negative effect on personal relationships. At Coast, we have an expectation of respect for all others. We expect every member of the school community both to give and receive respect within a secure, supportive and caring environment.

Cyber-Bullying is a form of bullying which is treated more seriously at Coast because often the victim is defenseless and unaware of the personal attack until such attack is released into the public domain. Also, the content of Cyber-Bullying can sometimes be of a highly vilifying and degrading nature.

What are the preventative measures?

In order to protect our students from cyber bullying occurring at school, Coast has implemented a number of preventative measures:

1. Mobile Phone policy:

It is strongly recommended that students do not have a mobile phone or iPod etc. whilst at school. These items are valuable and cause undue stress if lost or damaged. If parents require their child to have a mobile phone for transport reasons, the phone must be switched off and kept out of sight whilst the student is on school premises. Students who use their phone at school without permission will have it confiscated for the rest of the day. The parent will be contacted by the classroom teacher in order to ensure that the parent is aware of this policy and of the consequences that will be applied should this occur again. The classroom teacher may choose to discuss a solution to the communication problem with the family.

A second occurrence will mean that the phone will be confiscated and held in a secure location in the School Office until collected by a parent. Upon collection of the phone, Coast staff will once again explain to the parent the Coast Mobile Phone Policy and the consequences attached.

The third time will mean the student will surrender the phone to front office staff at the beginning of the school day and collect it from the front office at the end of the day. This will occur daily and for two weeks. The relevant classroom teacher will contact

the parent to ensure that the parent is aware of the breach of policy and the subsequent consequence.

2. Using the Computer Network and the Internet at Coast:

Staff and students are advised of the appropriate use of the internet whilst at school. This advice is provided by classroom teachers and appropriate staff. Upon enrolment, the school provides the student with a copy of the "Using the computer Network and the Internet at Coast". This policy includes an Internet User Agreement form (see Appendix) which is to be signed by the parent and student. A copy of this form is retained by the Office Manager in the child's enrolment file. Appropriate use of the internet at school is explained to each class before commencement of relevant classes.

How will we respond to any reports of Cyber-Bullying?

Often, Cyber-Bullying occurs outside of the school property and premises. Should such Cyber-Bullying be brought to our attention the school will respond, as in all instances of bullying, in a matter which seeks reconciliation and a return to a balanced and healthy relationship.

Any student who suspects or becomes aware that Cyber-Bullying has or is occurring should report the details in the first instance to their classroom teacher as soon as possible. The teacher needs to inform the Principal the same day. If the instance is noted by a teacher, the teacher should report to the Principal that same day.

The Principal should be informed of any unresolved or serious situation and, if appropriate, the Police contacted.

The Principal will investigate the issue, gather evidence from appropriate students and apply appropriate discipline and/or counselling to the students concerned. Serious cases of Cyber-Bullying may result in instant expulsion. As in all serious disciplinary matters at Coast, parents will be notified of the circumstances involving their children and usually be invited to discuss the matter with the Principal.

How will we communicate the Anti-Bullying and Cyber-Bullying Policy, plan and procedures?

- At least once each year, the whole school community is reminded of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy. This will be done through the regular Coast Newsletter by the Principal.
- Professional learning regarding the Anti-Bullying Policy will be conducted annually in January or sooner if there has been a significant turnover in staff in any one year. At the time of professional learning, a whole-school evaluation of the Anti-Bullying Policy will also occur. If appropriate, students, staff and parents may be surveyed to see how effective the Anti-Bullying strategies have been and if any changes or improvements are required.

Related Policies/Documents

- Child Protection Policy
- Code of Conduct for Students
- Code of Conduct for School Community Members
- Internet user agreement
- Student Internet Permission Form