

BULLYING POLICY

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POLICY PURPOSE

Bullying is a form of abuse that can seriously affect the health, wellbeing and educational outcomes of children. This includes those being bullied, those bullying others, families and the whole school community. The impact of bullying can be tracked to adulthood for many individuals.

Bullying is now more pervasive with new technologies such as text messaging, email and the internet. These covert psychological methods also allow the person bullying to be even further removed from the person they are bullying and the direct consequences of their actions.

Section 3.13.10 of Communicare Policy and Procedure Manual Forms of Harassment is to be the first point of reference for all Communicare staff in relation to bullying, and in all instances this will be the first reference for staff of the Academy.

It is the policy of Communicare Academy to provide work and learning environments that are free of bullying in all forms. This document focuses on bullying behaviour exhibited by students towards other students. Claims of adults bullying students are treated as child abuse.

Definition of Bullying

“Bullying is a behaviour which can be defined as the repeated attack, physical, psychological, social or verbal, which is formally or situationally defined, on those who are powerless to resist, with the intention of causing distress for their own gain or gratification.”

Besag (1989)

Bullying involves a desire to hurt + hurtful action + a power imbalance + an unjust use of power + (typically) repetition + evident enjoyment by the aggressor and generally a sense of being oppressed on the part of the victim. *Ken Rigby (2002)*

What is Bullying?

- Repeated and unjustifiable behaviour
- Intended to cause fear, distress and/or harm
- Physical, verbal, psychological, relational
- By a more powerful individual or group
- Against a less powerful individual unable to effectively resist
- *Child Health Promotion Research Centre – ECU (2005)*

All three definitions of bullying contain the same three main parameters of bullying. These are:

- Repetitive behaviour – prolonged over time;
- Involves an imbalance of power; and
- May be verbal, physical, emotional or psychological

Bullying takes many forms, but can be best categorised under the following headings:

Emotional bullying includes:

- being excluded from group conversations and activities

- making up or spreading rumours to facilitate dislike for someone
- being ignored repeatedly
- purposeful misleading or being lied to
- making stories up to get others into trouble

Physical bullying:

- hitting, kicking, pinching, pushing, bumping, shoving, scratching, slapping, biting, punching or tripping someone repeatedly
- unwanted physical or sexual touching
- throwing objects with the intent to injure or annoy

Threatening/Psychological bullying:

- stalking, threats or implied threats
- dirty looks
- manipulation – pressuring others to do things they don't want to do
- intimidation – forcing students to do demeaning or embarrassing acts
- extortion – forcing someone to give you money or material items

Verbal bullying:

- constant teasing in a sarcastic and offensive manner
- name-calling and offensive nicknames
- swearing to unsettle or upset others
- homophobic comments to cause distress
- racist or sexist comments

Property Abuse:

- Stealing money repeatedly
- Interfering with someone's belongings
- Damaging other personal items
- Repeatedly hiding someone's possessions

Cyber bullying:

- Spreading gossip and rumours through email, phone and internet
- Sending offensive text/phone and email messages
- Abusive phone calls
- Posting personal information on internet sites without permission to cause distress and humiliate

Other forms of conflict, including teasing and fighting amongst peers are not necessarily bullying. These may represent the normal dynamics of a particular friendship and children need to have the skills to deal with these situations. Conflict between students of roughly equal physical strength and/or social status may require implementation of the school's behavioural policy.

Further information about bullying can be found in the Staff Handbook.

PROCEDURE

Communicare Academy does not tolerate bullying and any bullying activity will be dealt with swiftly and in the following manner:

1	All claims of bullying will be taken seriously and treated confidentially. Staff have a responsibility to provide a safe work environment that enables staff and students to work free from bullying. Bullying is seen as a serious matter and will be investigated in a timely manner
2	A victim of bullying can make a formal complaint to his/her teacher, Connect Teacher, Youth Worker, Staff & Student Wellbeing Leader (SSWL). A person against whom a complaint of bullying has been made will be treated confidentially and fairly while the complaint is investigated.
3	If bullying is witnessed staff and students, staff must intervene and report the incident.
4	Staff and students are encouraged to raise the issue of bullying directly with the person believed to be responsible for the bullying. An informal approach can quickly resolve an instance of bullying.
5	Staff and students should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model anti-bullying behaviour. • Take appropriate steps to discourage and prevent bullying. • Be alert to bullying behaviour and signs of distress in students. • Advise staff of bullying
6	Should the bullying continue, SSWL will interview the victim, then the bully/ies.
7	Depending on the outcome of the meetings, restoration of relationship will be sought. This will entail the victim, the perpetrator(s) and the SSWL meeting. A supervised discussion between the parties to take place with strategies put in place to resolve the bullying and subsequent behaviours to be monitored by all staff. Parents/guardians of both parties to be contacted and updated on the progress.
8	If the bullying continues, the Principal may withdraw the place of the bully.