



Canning Vale College

Promoting Positive Relationships Preventing and Responding to Bullying Behaviours

Rationale

Canning Vale College is committed to providing a “positive, safe and inclusive environment”. We encourage staff and students to foster positive relationships within the school community. We aim to have a whole school approach that enhances students’ social skills, relationships and encourages positive interactions designed to reduce or prevent bullying behaviour. All students have the right to learn and feel safe and respected while attending school.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is a complex social problem, when an individual or group misuses power to target another individual or group, repeatedly and with an intention to cause harm. Bullying is not a one off incident, conflict or fighting.

Types of Bullying Behaviours

Physical: Hitting, kicking, pinching, pushing, tripping, taking or damaging property, “ganging-up”, unwanted physical touching. These behaviours are often easy to identify.

Verbal: Put downs, name-calling, swearing, homophobic, racist or sexist comments, nasty notes or postings online. This involves the use of words to hurt or humiliate another person.

Relational: Leaving out or convincing others to exclude or reject a certain person or people from their social connections. This is linked to verbal bullying and is often through making up or spreading rumours (more often girls).

Emotional/Psychological: Threats or implied threats, stalking, unwanted emails or text messages, threatening gestures, manipulation. These behaviours are sometimes not easy to identify.

Cyberbullying: This involves the use of information and communication technology to intentionally harm another person. It may involve behaviours such as using a mobile phone and/or the internet to send threatening emails, pictures, video-clips or text messages directly to a person. It may also include pretending to be someone else online to make them look bad, and or sending things to others about a person.

Bystander: Bystanders are those who are aware of or are witnesses to bullying. When bullying incidents take place other students may inadvertently or deliberately provide an ‘audience’ for the bullying. It is important for others to not contribute or inadvertently approve the bullying by standing and watching and not taking any action.

Terminology

The terms “bullies” and “victims” are not recommended as appropriate terminology to use when identifying, reporting, recording and responding to bullying incidents. More appropriate terms to use may include “bullied students”, “students who are bullied”, “students who bully”, and “students who engage in bullying behaviour.” This will ensure that the unacceptable behaviours are addressed in a manner that supports the individuals involved to learn and demonstrate more acceptable social behaviours without the impact of enduring labels.

Whole School Prevention Strategies

Canning Vale College understands it is necessary to implement a whole-school proactive approach to achieve sustainable behaviour change. In addition to our College policies we adopt a number of whole-school evidence based initiatives. Through these initiatives we aim to provide a safe, supportive school culture that promotes healthy and positive relationships, teaches social and emotional skills, and fosters connectedness to the College.

Mindmatters

Canning Vale College recognises the importance of mental health. Through embracing the Mindmatters framework we aim to improve the mental health and wellbeing of the young people attending the college.

Act-Belong-Commit

Canning Vale College has a partnership with Act-Belong-Commit to enhance our community's mental health and wellbeing by strengthening individual resilience and building community cohesion. The goal of the Act- Belong-Commit campaign is to encourage people to become more proactive about their mental health.

Friendly Schools Plus

We are committed to preventing incidences of bullying. Friendly Schools is multi-component, evidence-based initiative involving the whole-school community to build social skills, create supportive environments and significantly reduce bullying in school communities. Friendly schools will be fully implemented Semester Two 2017.

Curriculum

Through the Department of Education, Health and Physical Education curriculum students are also provided with opportunities to develop their social and emotional competencies.

Programs and School Based Initiatives

At the College, through Years 7-12, we encourage resilience, and social and emotional learning through a number of specific programs and school based initiatives. There is a strong focus on developing social and emotional learning in lower school through delivery of a variety of programs through the homeroom as well as whole cohort strategies such as "Drumbeat" "Protective Behaviours" and "Aussie Optimism". The school has a strong focus on educating students to be safe online and about cyber-bullying, including strategies for the promotion of positive cyber citizenship.

Whole School Classroom Strategies

Canning Vale College staff seek opportunities to build positive staff student relationships and elicit positive student behaviour. Staff are expected to create a classroom environment where appropriate behaviours are reinforced, encouraged and praised, drawing upon a range of Classroom Management and Instructional Strategies to achieve this. Staff explicitly teach and model positive social skills. Classroom teachers have the responsibility for student behaviour/ bullying incidents in their classroom, but will seek support from colleagues/ administration where appropriate to help resolve issues as required.

All School Community Members

All members of the school community have the right to expect that schools are safe and supportive learning environments. This expectation comes with a shared responsibility by the whole-school community to prevent and effectively respond to behaviours that have the potential to affect school safety and well-being, including bullying.

School Community Response to Bullying Behaviour

At Canning Vale College our shared understanding is that all forms of bullying are unacceptable and we believe, where necessary, it is important to support all students and families involved. This includes the person/s engaging in the bullying behaviour and the person/s being bullied.

As a College, we are also committed to providing staff with the support and training to confidently manage bullying situations as they occur. If bullying behaviour is identified we have clear processes established to ensure the behaviour is addressed appropriately, documented, and where necessary support is provided. See flow chart in appendix.

When responding to bullying behaviour we understand that, restorative approaches to bullying incidents are more likely to lead to pro-social changes in behaviour and the restoration of relationships. The appropriate staff will respond by using interventions that may include: Student interviews and parent case conferences, social problem solving approaches, Co-Late Model, Method of Shared concern etc.

Students

Students who are being bullied should:

- Walk away confidently – even if you are not feeling that way
- Try being assertive- speak firmly
- Get help from someone in your support group (Friend, Staff, Others)
- Discuss with your parents/ care giver

Students can help stop bullying by:

- Not standing and watching - get help. Let the person know they are bullying - refuse to join in
- Give sympathy and support to your friends that are experiencing the issue
- Encourage your friend to report the incidence
- See resource section for further information

Parents/ Care Givers

At Canning Vale College we recognise the importance of working together with families to encourage students to feel safe and supported while attending our college. If you suspect your child is experiencing bullying you can:

- Encourage your child to accept and respect differences in others
- Build your child's self-confidence by recognising and affirming their positive attributes
- Watch for signs of distress in your child. Unwillingness to attend school, onset of headaches, and or stomach ache. There may be other reasons why your child is unsettled at school, but bullying may be a possibility
- If you suspect your child is being bullied or involved in bullying others please inform Student Services
- Listen to your child and encourage them to explain what has happened, if appropriate collect evidence
- Ask them if they would like your help or if anyone else has helped them in the school

- Help your child identify someone they can talk to, their support group (friends, staff, others)
- Inform the school. The student service team will work with you and your child in devising strategies to support them
- In cases of bullying please do not encourage your child to retaliate
- See resources section for further information

Student Services Team

Whilst we adopt a whole-school positive approach to student behaviour based on the teaching and recognition of respectful and pro-social behaviour, we also have a Student Services team committed to working together with the school community to prevent, and when necessary respond to reported incidents of bullying to restore relationships.

Resources

More information for may be available at the following websites:

- www.bullyingnoway.com.au - *Safe and Supportive School Communities (SSSC) Project*; Queensland Department of Education, Training and Employment on behalf of the Australian Education Authorities (2013)
- www.friendlyschools.com.au - *Friendly Schools Plus (2012)*; Child Health Promotion Research Centre, Edith Cowen University
- www.mceecdya.edu.au - for the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (2008)*; Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs
- www.mindmatters.edu.au - *Mind Matters Plus*; Australian Government Department of Health and Aging; Commonwealth of Australia
- www.ncab.org.au - National Centre Against Bullying
- www.safeschoolshub.edu.au - Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations; Commonwealth of Australia (2013)
- www.thinkuknow.org.au - *ThinkUKnow Internet Safety Program*; UK Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre. ThinkUKnow Australia developed by the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and Microsoft Australia
- www.esafety.gov.au - Office of Children's safety Commissioner
- www.acma.gov.au - The Australian Communications and Media Authority