

MICHAEL PARK SCHOOL PROCEDURE BULLYING PREVENTION

Rationale

In accordance with NAG 5 it the Board has a responsibility to ensure a physically and emotionally safe learning environment.

Definition

Michael Park School defines bullying as the use of aggressive behaviour towards others with the intention of causing harm to them. Bullying can be physical, verbal, emotional, sexual, racial, homophobic and cyber misuse and includes targeting and harassing an individual (see Signs of Bullying, below). Students who are victims of bullying face physical harm and emotional stress that may result in reduced learning opportunities, long term damage, or withdrawal or worse. Bullies themselves also may suffer long term harm. The school seeks to foster a climate of trust where students feel able to inform others of bullying in the knowledge that it will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

Purpose

It is this school's aim that:

1. all members of the school community – board, teachers, non-teaching staff, students and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
2. all members of the school community should know what the school policy is regarding bullying and follow the school bullying prevention procedure when bullying is reported.
3. all students and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
4. bullying will not be tolerated.

Procedure

A victim of bullying may report the incident to any member of staff, a peer mediator or a friend.

Reporting Bullying:

1. Anybody who has bullying reported to them first or second hand has a responsibility to inform the appropriate Class teacher or kaitiaki who will inform the Section Leader (Lower School) or Dean (High School)
2. All cases of alleged bullying will be recorded by the Section Leader or Dean who are responsible for handling the issue and they will inform the Principal immediately.
3. Parents of students involved will be informed and asked to attend a meeting to discuss the problem.
4. If necessary, at the discretion of the Principal, external agencies may be involved as appropriate.
5. The school will investigate alleged bullying that occurs both within and out of school and will include cases of alleged cyber-bullying.

Interventions:

6. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying will be promptly investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
7. Reasonable attempts will be made to assist identified bullies to change their behaviour.
8. In cases of serious violence or extreme emotional harm the school has authority, and may exercise this authority, to stand-down, suspend or exclude in accordance with its behaviour management policy and Ministry of Education guidelines.

Guidelines

In implementing this procedure school management will:

- ensure that it is widely and regularly communicated to the school community
- always act in a consistent, professional and fair manner in dealing promptly with complaints of bullying
- take all necessary and reasonable steps to prove cases of bullying and to ensure that they cease
- provide appropriate training for staff and student leaders in identifying and reporting on bullying (see Signs of Bullying below)
- use a range of proven techniques in enhancing the physical and emotional safety of the school. At Michael Park School this includes peer mediation, the Horizon programme (High School), counselling and use of curriculum content.
- provide support for students and awareness material for parents to assist them in recognising cases of suspected bullying
- survey students and parents periodically to evaluate the effectiveness of the bullying prevention programme
- monitor and review the procedure annually

Signs of Bullying

This section is added in order to assist with implementation. Students may indicate by a series of signs that they are being bullied. There are generally four main type of bullying that are commonly identified and in all cases the common ingredient is targeted, repeated behaviour rather than a one-off act of aggression:

- **Verbal** (e.g. repeated mocking, name calling, unwanted teasing, homophobic or racist remarks, put-downs)
- **Physical** (e.g. repeated hitting, or kicking, taking or threatening to take someone's possessions)
- **Social, indirect or relational** (e.g. repeated exclusion of peers from games, spreading rumours or gossiping, withholding friendship, pulling faces)
- **Cyber** (e.g. repeated threats, criticisms or unkind remarks sent electronically by text, email or posted on social networking sites)

The school should investigate when any of the above are suspected and when a student:

- is afraid when walking to or from school
- is reluctant to go to school
- doesn't want to go on the school bus, begs to be taken to school
- appears to change from usual routine
- starts to truant

- seems to be withdrawn, anxious or lacking confidence
- starts to stammer
- runs away, threatens or attempts suicide
- has nightmares or cries in bed
- begins to underachieve at school
- complains of illness before school
- comes home with clothes torn or possessions damaged, graffiti on books etc
- asks for or starts stealing money
- frequently 'loses' money
- has unexplained injuries
- comes home hungry
- shows signs of aggression or disruption out of character
- is bullying a sibling
- is afraid or reluctant to admit what is wrong
- gives unlikely excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use internet or mobile phone
- appears nervous or anxious when a cyber-message is received or regarding social networking
- frequent put-downs in class / playground from peers