



North Rockhampton State High School

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY 2015

Developing Positive Relationships

Philosophy

North Rockhampton State High School (NRSHS) will not tolerate bullying or harassment. We believe that all students have a right to feel safe and that it is the responsibility of all members of the school community to ensure that students are free to learn in a safe environment.

Rationale

All schools in Queensland are committed to taking action to protect students from bullying and to respond appropriately when bullying does occur. Child Protection Legislation 2009 mandates that each school must have a specific policy for handling bullying.

It is an essential part of schooling that students learn to relate to each other in a positive manner. This policy has been developed as a whole school approach towards developing responsible social behaviour and good interpersonal relationships within the school.

- It aims to significantly reduce any occurrence of bullying and/or harassment within the school.
- It outlines the rights and responsibilities of all those involved.
- It outlines clear steps and procedures to be followed if any such events occur.
- It also outlines the various methods, which will be used to support individuals in developing better interpersonal relationships.

School community beliefs about bullying

It is important that students, staff and parents/carers have a shared understanding of what bullying is, how it impacts on people and how bullying is responded to at NRSHS.

WholeSchool Definition of Bullying Behaviours

Dr Ken Rigby (Rigby, 2010) defines bullying in the following way:

*“Bullying is a systematic and **repeated** abuse of power. In general bullying may be defined as:*

- *dominating or hurting someone*
- *unfair action by the perpetrator(s) and an imbalance of power*
- *a lack of adequate defence by the target and feelings of oppression and humiliation.”*

(Rigby, 2010)

Refer to the detailed explanation of bullying behaviours on the following page.

Students who make a complaint and proceed to the written report stage of that complaint will need to be willing to sign their name to the Bullying Report and to agree that the incident does meet the definition of bullying.

Note that harassment, although similar to bullying, may not involve such imbalance of power.

School community beliefs about bullying (continued)

BULLYING BEHAVIOURS

1. Physical bullying

- This is when a person (or group of people) uses physical actions to bully, such as hitting, poking, tripping, pushing or kicking.
- Repeatedly and intentionally damaging someone's belongings.
- Interfering with another person's property (eg bag, phone, IPOD). May include vandalism of personal items.
- Stealing personal items (which may include hiding/damaging them).

2. Verbal bullying

- Repeated or systematic name calling, insults, teasing, racist remarks or verbal abuse (not made jokingly, but with the intent of hurting someone's feelings), which may relate to:
 - race, religion or culture
 - appearance or health conditions
 - sexual orientation
 - home and family circumstances
 - learning needs or disabilities
 - gender
 - hobbies
 - habits
 - academic ability/grades
- Groups of students targeting smaller groups (in person or using social media).
- Using derogatory language/swearing, directed at individual students.

3. Social bullying

- Lying about someone or spreading rumours.
- Playing a nasty joke that makes the person feel humiliated or powerless.
- Mimicking or deliberately excluding someone.
- Writing offensive notes or graffiti.
- Attempting to force someone to do something they would not normally choose to do.

4. Psychological bullying

- Threatening, manipulating or stalking someone.
- Pressuring someone for money or food.
- Making offensive faces or gestures.
- Making negative comments/put downs.
- Preventing students from fully participating (eg sport, competitions).

5. Cyber bullying

- Using technology, such as email, mobile phones, chat rooms, social networking sites to bully verbally, socially or psychologically. Examples:
 - repeatedly sending nasty, mean or insulting messages.
 - posting or sending gossip or rumours about a person to damage his/her reputation or friendships
 - sharing someone's secrets or embarrassing information or images online
 - repeated, intense harassment that includes threats.
 - posting videos of students on YouTube without their permission.
 - fraudulently accessing someone else's Facebook account and uploading inappropriate information or images, or changing details on their profile.
 - accessing a person's school network account and changing/adding files or changing passwords.
 - Repeatedly sending threatening/annoying texts.

BEHAVIOURS WHICH ARE NOT BULLYING?

- Mutual arguments and disagreements (where there is no power imbalance).
- Not liking someone or single acts of social rejection.
- One-off acts of meanness or spite.
- Random acts of aggression or intimidation.
- Feedback and performance discussions with teachers.
- Attention seeking behaviours which are not aimed at an individual.
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(National Centre Against Bullying, www.ncab.org.au)

Educational Programs

It is important that students, staff and parents/carers understand what bullying is, how it impacts on people and how bullying is responded to at NRSHS. At NRSHS, we use the following educational strategies.

- Resilience programs for victims.
- Anti-Bullying Policy included in school induction program for Years 8, 9 and 10 students.
- Explicit teaching of language skills, social skills, assertiveness, coping strategies, group mechanisms, motives for bullying and being effective bystanders.
 - Bullying topic in Ethics Program for Year 8 and 9 students, to promote personal development and address all forms of bullying.
 - Whole staff professional development sessions.
- Newsletter articles.
- Anti-Bullying Policy published on the school website.
- Cyber-bullying prevention strategies published in the school newsletter and intranet.

Prevention Programs

Effective social skills and positive relationships act to prevent bullying. At NRSHS we promote effective social skills and positive relationships by:

- Mediation.
- Restorative justice conferencing (via a facilitated conversation) to help students:
 - recognize the impact on the victim
 - accept responsibility for their actions
 - recognize the need to take action to repair the harm caused
 - make use of opportunities to demonstrate their remorse.

Responses to bullying

Reports of bullying will be investigated and acted upon. Responses to bullying might include support for targets of bullying and perpetrators and/or disciplinary measures.

In most cases, the student who is doing the bullying will think that they are only “having fun”, “mucking around”, “having a joke” etc. They will often be surprised that their actions have been interpreted as bullying. It is important in such cases to point out that bullying is recipient defined. What matters most is how the person being bullied views the incident.

At NRSHS we support targets and perpetrators in the following ways:

- All incidents are treated promptly and seriously.
- Thorough investigation of the incident.
- Mediation.
- Follow-up actions to monitor the incident, eg:
 - Informal follow up with the victim and perpetrator.
 - Formal feedback from parents/carers and the student to check whether the intervention has prevented any further bullying from occurring (standard review letter).
 - Further intervention if required.

At NRSHS the consequences for bullying might include the following:

- Investigation by the Year Co-ordinator.
- Counselling by the Year Co-ordinator.
- Informing parents/carers of both parties.
- The victim will be offered resilience counselling.
- The perpetrator will be given restorative justice conferencing.

At NRSHS reports of bullying are taken seriously. Students and parents/carers may report bullying in the following ways:

- Student makes a complaint to their classroom teacher or Year Co-ordinator.
- Parent makes a complaint to the Year Co-ordinator.
- Student completes a Bullying Form (available from Student Services, Year Co-ordinator, Guidance Officer, or their classroom teacher).

Reporting and monitoring bullying

Following the NRSHS Definition of Bullying Behaviours, a teacher or Year Co-ordinator will use their professional judgement to determine whether the incident is of a bullying nature.

- If an incident is physically violent enough to be classified as assault, do not complete a Bullying Form with a student.
Refer the situation immediately to the Year Level Deputy, as per the NRSHS Code of Behaviour.
- If an incident is a single, isolated incident, complete a Bullying Form with the student. Deal with the incident using professional judgement and the NRSHS Code of Behaviour.
- If the incident meets the NRSHS Definition of Bullying Behaviours, complete a Bullying Form with the student, as follows:

Bullying and Harassment outside the classroom

- Reports are made to the student's Year Co-ordinator.
- The student doing the reporting needs to know the name of the person they are reporting or find out the full name with the help of their own Year Co-ordinator. If students from other year levels are involved, the Year Co-ordinator is to work with the Administration member responsible for that year level, to investigate the situation and speak to all students involved.
- Reports are completed individually. One person can complete more than one report if several students were involved.
- To complete a Bullying Report, a student needs to be willing to sign his or her own name to it and to agree that the incident does meet the definition of bullying.
- It is the Year Co-ordinator's responsibility to deal with the situation appropriately at the time, or refer it to the relevant Deputy Principal for assistance if required.

Bullying and Harassment inside the classroom

- Reports are made to the classroom teacher.
- If the incident is a one-off event, limited to that class, the teacher may choose to mediate with the students involved and take no further action outside the classroom. It may be preferable to meet with the student outside class time to complete the report (eg so the student(s) involved feel more relaxed). The student who has been bullied still has the right to file a written report about the bullying incident.
- Some reports may lead to a student or students being sent to the Head of Department, as some incidents of bullying will be evident as classroom disruptions.
- If the bullying has occurred in the classroom, but the event has not caused a disruption to the class, the student has the right to inform their teacher and to file a written report about the incident. Their teacher still needs to deal with the situation in an appropriate manner and speak to all students who are involved in the incident.
- All classroom teachers are to be involved in the process if events occur within their room.
- Reports are completed individually. One person can complete more than one report if several students were involved.
- To complete a Bullying Report, a student needs to be willing to sign his or her own name to it and to agree that the incident does meet the definition of bullying.

Reports of bullying will be collated and monitored to inform the school community about the extent of bullying and to identify particular areas of concern for future action.

Filing

Reports are filed under the name of the bully. When a report is received on an individual for the first time, a file is then created under the name of that person.

Reports will be filed at the office by either the Deputy Principal or Year Co-ordinator.

Teachers and Year Co-ordinators will need copies of Bullying Report forms in staff rooms.

Year Co-ordinators will monitor these reports for patterns and trends and consult the relevant Deputy Principal for appropriate action if required.

Staff Responsibilities

Responsibilities of Support Staff

- Interviewing students reported as bullies when a third report is made on the one individual (Year Co-ordinator or HOD to contact support staff member to arrange this). Interviews can be arranged with either the Guidance Officer, School Nurse or School Chaplain. Interview notes need to be taken at the time of this interview and left in the common room pigeon hole for filing.
- Following up student work on anti-bullying that is completed as a consequence of a student reaching level 4 in the process with individual counselling.
- Developing and implementing programs to help prevent bullying or harassment by promoting healthy relationships and social skilling.
- Identifying students who appear to be regular victims of bullying and supporting these students either through individual or group counselling.

Responsibilities of Administration Staff

- Handling students who are reported for the fourth or subsequent times. Applying suitable consequences to suit these situations.
- Assisting Year Co-ordinators and teachers with difficult bullying situations.



NORTH ROCKHAMPTON STATE HIGH SCHOOL

INSTRUCTIONS: Please place this form in the appropriate Year Level Co-ordinator's pigeon hole in the Staff Common Room.

REPORT OF BULLYING INCIDENT

DATE:

BULLY: _____ YEAR LEVEL: _____

- 1. You MUST complete the FIRST AND LAST NAMES of the student being reported
2. For filing purposes - One name per form - provide photo-copies if more than one student is involved in incident.

Name of Teacher assisting student:

Student making statement: _____ Year Level: _____

First and last names please

STUDENT STATEMENT:

I have read the definition of bullying below and believe that this incident fits the definition. I also have given my approval for this incident to be referred to the relevant authorities should it be deemed necessary.

BULLYING:

- 1. A repetitive attack causing distress not only at the time of the attack, but also by the threat of future attacks.
2. Dominating or hurting someone.
3. Unfair action by another student(s) and an imbalance of power.
4. Can be physical, verbal, social, psychological or cyber bullying.

Student's signature: _____

DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT (S):

Multiple horizontal dotted lines for describing the incident.

If more space is required, please use back of this form

Witness(es):

Where incident occurred: (If inside a classroom, name the class, subject and Teacher).

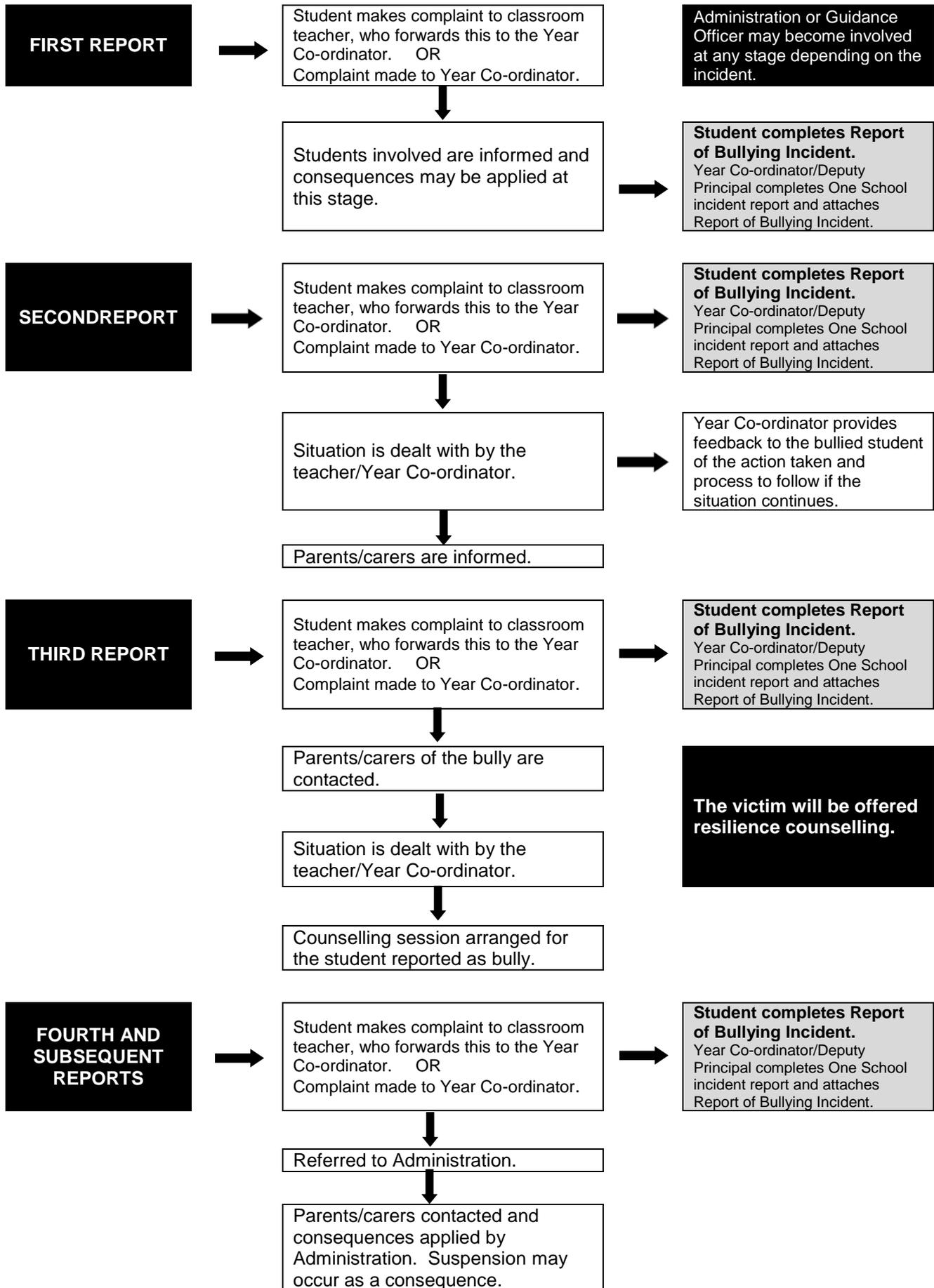
Who have you contacted/informed?

Do you need to be individually counselled regarding this incident? YES / NO (CIRCLE ONE)

ACTION TAKEN BY STAFF MEMBER TO WHOM THIS INCIDENT WAS REPORTED:

Three horizontal dotted lines for describing the action taken.

Bullying and Harassment Summary of the Process



Frequently Asked Questions

1. Where do I find the bullying forms?

They are available in all staffrooms. Spare copies are available in the staff common room.

2. Is it important for me to know which level a student has reached?

As a classroom teacher, it is not important. You need to deal with each incident as it arises and ensure that reports are written and passed on through the appropriate channels for filing. Determination of the levels a student has reached will be made at that point and the appropriate communication will occur.

3. Can teachers fill out bullying forms on students or students fill out the forms on teachers?

This policy is related to Student – Student relationships. It is not intended to apply to Teacher – Student relationships. If a student claims a teacher has been bullying them or a staff member feels that a student has been doing this to them, they would need to see the relevant administration staff member or deal with such incidents following the normal Code of Behaviour guidelines.

4. When do students get a fresh start?

At the beginning of the new school year, the students all start at the beginning of the process again. Old reports will be archived.

5. What do I do if a student clearly is being bullied but won't make a Report?

Encourage the student quietly after class to make a Report or to see their Year Co-ordinator. If they will not, suggest that the Guidance Officer might wish to see the student.

6. How will we look after victims?

On a regular basis one member of the support staff will peruse the bullying reports and identify any students who are perpetual 'victims' or who are making an excessive number of reports. Such students will be dealt with or assisted by support staff members. There are several useful resources that students can have access to which will help them understand the nature of bullying and some strategies they can employ to help them cope. Small group sessions may be run should the need arise so that students can also support each other. In some cases, the Peer Mentors may be brought in to assist individuals.

7. What do we do if a particular teacher is unwilling to be involved?

Students should have the opportunity to report bullying in all or any of their classes. If any teacher is unwilling to fill in a form, this is a matter for discussion between administration, the relevant HOD and that teacher. Such a teacher would not be fulfilling their professional obligations and duty of care.

8. How will this information be disseminated to students?

At the beginning of each semester, Year Co-ordinator and Deputy Principal will discuss it on year parades. The process will be made very clear to students. In Years 8 and 9, there will be particular sessions in classes devoted to understanding bullying and to activities related to reducing bullying. This will happen in Year 8 and 9 parade time. Home group teachers will also have a role to play in communicating the process to students and in working through particular examples and issues with individuals.

9. Where do I put completed Reports from students in my class?

All completed Report of Bullying Incident forms are to be placed in the appropriate Year Level Co-ordinator's pigeon hole in the Staff Common Room.

Any staff member who keeps reports will create a problem for the process, as we will not be able to monitor across subjects if individuals keep reports on their desks.

10. What can I do if I have a class where bullying is rampant?

You need to take a proactive and forceful approach in your classroom. Contact the Administration member responsible for your year level for support. There are several activities which are available which directly relate to bullying. Such a class probably needs some intense work on the topic. Support staff are happy to try to assist the classroom teacher by breaking the class into smaller groups and running activities related to trying to reduce bullying.

11. What is the worst advice a teacher can give regarding bullying?

Telling students to ignore the bullying has proven in past research to be useless advice. Bullying does not stop until something is done to make it stop. Some students decide to ignore themselves as a tactic but generally, this is not useful advice for a student who is needing to find a way to cope with bullying.

Instead it is better to refer such a student to support staff via the red referral form or suggest they make an appointment with the guidance officer themselves. It is also useful to encourage the student to take some ownership of the problem and to clearly tell the bully that they don't like or appreciate the behaviour and that it needs to stop.

13. What proactive programs are in place to try to prevent bullying and build positive relationships?

Our Ethics program includes specific lessons which address bullying, resiliency and assertiveness, consisting of a Bullying and Conflict Resolution unit in Year 8 and a Personal Safety unit in Year 9. The Peer Mentors are also able to assist students work through problems and resolve conflicts.

Other useful strategies for classrooms include:

- Taking time out to discuss coping strategies, relationships, conflict resolution when issues arise.
- Selecting novels and articles which deal with relationship issues where appropriate
- Drama/role plays.
- Incorporating activities from Mind Matters into units eg. SOSE Level 5.