



SUNSHINE COAST
GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Student Anti-Bullying Policy

(to be read in conjunction with 'Understanding & Dealing with Bullying' also included in this policy)

1 Rationale

1.1 Introduction

The Presbyterian and Methodist Schools Association (PMSA) is aware of its duty of care and responsibility for the welfare and well-being of the students of all its schools, and recognises the need to protect children from bullying by members of the school community.

This policy is available to students, parents and staff of Sunshine Coast Grammar School via the school's website, and by display on at least one noticeboard in each staff room. The attention of parents, students and staff will be drawn to the policy each term via the School newsletters, at assemblies and year level meetings. The Principal will ensure that a copy of this policy is always available from administration. The policy will be directed to the attention of all staff through the staff handbook, and in particular, on the first Staff Professional Development Day of each school year and to all new staff at the time of appointment. Both teaching and corporate staff will be provided with appropriate training on bullying issues on an annual basis.

The purpose of this policy is to provide written processes about the appropriate conduct of school staff and students that accord with legislation in Queensland about the care and protection of children.

1.2 Objectives

The main objective of this Anti-Bullying Policy is to support a safe, supportive and caring School Community. In any form, bullying is not acceptable behaviour and results in hurt, fear, loss of self-esteem, decreased social effectiveness for the victim and the increase of inappropriate behaviour of the students bullying. This policy seeks to:

- a. Raise awareness among staff, students and parents about bullying
- b. Actively counter bullying at the School
- c. Develop in students respect and concern for others, of all race, creed and gender
- d. Foster a culture of inclusivity and celebrate difference
- e. Develop in students an understanding that they must take responsibility for their own behaviour
- f. Develop in students effective thinking and life-skills related to leading a healthy life-style such as conflict resolution skills and problem solving skills
- g. Create a climate where it is okay to talk about bullying and ask for help (see **Understanding & Dealing with Bullying**)
- h. Develop a community environment that nurtures and promotes student self-esteem, self-confidence, resilience and spiritual wellbeing

1.3 Definitions

Bullying is the misuse of power by an individual or group seeking to pressure, control, humiliate or harass another person or persons. Such behaviour causes stress and anxiety to others.

Bullying has the following features:

- It is intentional, uninvited and chosen
- It is a persistent and ongoing pattern of behaviour
- It may be emotional, verbal, physical or organizational

Examples of Bullying

TYPE	DIRECT	INDIRECT
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hitting ▪ Kicking ▪ Pushing ▪ Spitting, biting ▪ Pinching, scratching ▪ Throwing things at people ▪ Exposure to items known to cause allergic reaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coercing another person to harm someone
Verbal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mean and hurtful name calling ▪ Hurtful teasing ▪ Demanding money or possessions ▪ Forcing another to do homework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Spreading nasty rumours ▪ Trying to get other students to dislike another student
Social intimidation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Threatening and/or obscene gestures ▪ Racist or sexist remarks ▪ Isolation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Deliberate exclusion from a group or activity ▪ Removing, hiding and/or damaging another's property ▪ Spreading nasty rumours
Cyber (email, SMS, phone and internet mediums)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mean, belittling and hurtful name calling ▪ Threatening and/or obscene language ▪ Offensive images ▪ Repeated messages ▪ Unwanted photo or video usage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Spreading nasty rumours ▪ Trying to get other students to dislike another student ▪ Using another student's password or phone to communicate inappropriate language/images

2 Rights and Responsibilities

2.1 Rights

- a. Every person has the right to feel safe. Any person who bullies another is denying them that right. This means we have to think about others in the classroom, in the playground, and in our online interactions. The right to feel safe means we have a responsibility to consider how we speak and act towards others. Bullying takes away a person's sense of security. The right to safety means that any bullying of any kind is unacceptable.
- b. Every person has the right to be treated with fairness and respect. This means we show respect to other people, and their property, in the class and in the playground. The right to receive respect and fair treatment requires from us the responsibility to show manners and courtesy towards each other.
- c. Every person has the right to learn. This means we do not adversely affect the learning of another student.

At Sunshine Coast Grammar School, it is everyone's responsibility to take the necessary steps to stop bullying behaviour. The School will not tolerate any action that undermines a person's right to feel safe, respected and to learn.

2.2 Responsibilities

2.2.1 Staff, students and parents have the following responsibilities:

The Principal of the School will:

- a. Support, promote, enact, maintain and review the Anti-Bullying Policy

2. All Staff will:

- a. Be familiar with the School's Anti-Bullying Policy
- b. Be models of caring and supportive behaviour
- c. Listen and act upon reports of bullying
- d. Inform the relevant staff of alleged bullying incidents
- e. Protect the person being bullied from further harm
- f. Act to stop the behaviour recurring
- g. Record identified bullying incidents

3. **Teacher Aides will:**
 - a. Work closely with teachers to report incidents of bullying
4. **Students will:**
 - a. Not bully others, and treat everyone with respect
 - b. Help others who are being bullied
 - c. Talk to an adult, teacher, parent, who can help address the bullying

2.2.2 Students who are being bullied need to report the incidents to a teacher or staff member.

1. **Student bystanders to bullying should:**
 - a. Intervene by speaking firmly to the bullying student if they are able to
 - b. Seek teacher assistance
 - c. Document the incident if requested
2. **Parents should:**
 - a. Listen sympathetically to reports of bullying
 - b. Speak to relevant School personnel (not the alleged student/s concerned)
 - c. Work with the School in seeking an appropriate solution
3. **Parent witnesses should:**
 - a. Be limited to verbal intervention
 - b. Seek teacher assistance
 - c. Document the incident if requested by the School staff

3 Management of Bullying Incidents

To prevent or minimise bullying, a proactive approach is implemented.

3.1 Proactive Approach

Our School seeks to ensure that we foster an environment where bullying is minimized and prevented. A positive and proactive whole-school approach is a part of our School policy by incorporating processes where:

1. All staff are made aware of bullying issues, the need to take action, their role in implementing the policy and the need to provide careful supervision in class and in the playground.
2. Staff members are trained to recognise the nature of bullying behaviour and its effects. Staff members who regularly deal with the direct effects of bullying are to access regular professional development.
3. The Anti-Bullying Policy is clearly articulated to staff, students and parents on a regular basis.
4. The broader School community is informed about the School's Anti-Bullying Policy by providing information through a range of communication strategies.
5. Students are taught how to respond to bullying when it is noticed. Students are taught that there are never any innocent spectators.
6. Students are taught preventative strategies to build resilience.
7. Support under the direction of the appropriate Dean of Students is available for victims and perpetrators of bullying.
8. There are standardised reporting and recording systems in place for bullying incidents.
9. Incidents of bullying are reported to parents of the students involved.
10. The policy, training and reporting procedures are reviewed regularly.
11. The bullying procedures are compatible with the policies contained in the Child Protection Policy and in the Staff Handbook.
12. **The following strategies are enforced:**
 - a) There is some informal playground segregation into group areas (Prep, Year 1-3, Year 4-6, and Secondary students) and at eating areas (Prep, Year 1-2, Year 3-6 and Secondary students).
 - b) Playground duty teachers are to be actively patrolling at all times. Incident reports are to be filled out no matter how minor the bullying and returned to the appropriate staff member. Relevant Head of Sub-School informed of repeat offenders.
13. The Anti-Bullying Policy is to be introduced and explained to all new members of the community (staff and families).

3.2 Dealing with Reports of Bullying

The following steps are a guide to dealing with reports of bullying:

1. If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident should be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached, to ensure the student's safety. It is **never** acceptable to turn a blind eye to bullying. An incident may be reported by any member of our community. An incident may have occurred on campus or off campus such as on a bus or excursion.
2. A clear account of the incident is to be recorded on an '**Incident Report Form**' (**Appendix 1**) and handed to the appropriate Head of Year (Secondary) or Dean of Students (Primary). The Head of Year or Dean of Students (Primary) will ensure that all Incident Report Forms are logged and filed for further reference.
3. The Head of Year or Dean of Students (Primary) will then investigate the incident.
4. Sunshine Coast Grammar School reserves the right to investigate alleged reports of bullying to the level they judge appropriate.
5. The Principal must be kept informed of all serious bullying cases.

3.3 Guidelines for Dealing with Incidents of Bullying:

3.3.1 The response to students who *have been bullied* is to proceed through the following guidelines:

1. Offer an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a member of staff of their choice
2. Be aware that probing questions may increase stress. In addition, be aware that victims may deny that there is a problem
3. Reassure the student by offering continuous support and assurance that a determined effort will be made to stop the bullying
4. Discuss strategies the student might use to avoid being bullied in the future
5. Provide encouragement to form and maintain friendships with other students
6. The student may be referred to the School Psychologist

3.3.2 The response from the appropriate Head of Year or Dean of Students (Primary), to students who *have bullied another*, is to proceed through the following guidelines:

1. Investigate what happened using the information recorded on the Incident Report Form and from any discussion with the person who recorded the incident
2. Interview the student who was bullied and record information
3. Interview alleged bully and inform relevant teachers
4. Interview the bystanders and discuss alternative strategies that could positively influence the situation
5. Outline the disciplinary consequences imposed and the consequences that will be imposed if the bullying continues. Support all students throughout the process
6. Enlist the support of parents/caregivers to help change the behaviour and attitude of the student, where appropriate
7. Further follow up with student and family by relevant Head of Year and/or Dean of Students.
8. Inform parents
9. Where appropriate conduct a meeting between all stakeholders
10. Where appropriate speak to the class/year level involved without using any names
11. A copy of any documents is to be given to the Principal or Head of Sub-School, who will ensure all documentation is appropriately filed

3.3.3 Challenging Students:

1. The Executive will set up collaborative case management of students with persistent aggression problems
2. The Principal reserves the right to ask students with continuing challenging behaviour to leave the school

3.3.4 School Actions:

1. The School reserves the right to instigate the following consequences:
 - i) Detention and Counselling
 - ii) Suspension (internal and external)
 - iii) Termination of Enrolment

Appendix 1 – Anti-Bullying Incident Report Form

Anti-Bullying Incident Report Form



SUNSHINE COAST
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Staff member making the report:							
Date:		Time:		Room/Location:			
Student(s) initiating Bullying:							
Name:		Year Level:		Class:			
Name:		Year Level:		Class:			
Student(s) affected:							
Name:		Year Level:		Class:			
Name:		Year Level:		Class:			
Type of alleged Bullying:							
<input type="checkbox"/> Physical <input type="checkbox"/> Verbal <input type="checkbox"/> Social Intimidation <input type="checkbox"/> Cyber							
Provide information of alleged incidents:							
Witnesses present:							
Name:		Year Level:		Class:			
Name:		Year Level:		Class:			
Physical evidence:	<input type="checkbox"/> Injury <input type="checkbox"/> Graffiti <input type="checkbox"/> Notes <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Websites <input type="checkbox"/> Video/audio tape						
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other If other, please advise:						
Staff Member Signature:							
Head of Sub-School:							
Parent(s) contacted:	Date:		Time:				
Administrative Response Taken (Head of Year/Dean of Students):							
Further Follow Up Required:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			Date:			
Head of Sub-School Informed:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			Date:			
Principal Informed:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			Date:			

Document Number: SCGS-FOR-002 | Document Name: Anti-Bullying Incident Report Form | Document Owner: Principal | Authorised by: Principal |
 Authorisation Date: 17/09/2018 | Next Review Date: 17/09/2019 | Review Period: Annual
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UNDERSTANDING AND DEALING WITH BULLYING



SUNSHINE COAST
GRAMMAR SCHOOL

A Definition for Children

Bullying is when these things happen more than once (however, a serious incident may happen just once) to someone and it is hard for the student being bullied to stop these things from happening:

- Being ignored, left out on purpose, or not allowed to join in
- Being made fun of and teased in a mean and hurtful way
- Lies or nasty stories told about someone to make other children not like them.
- Being made afraid of getting hurt
- Forcing someone to do things they don't want to
- Being hit, kicked or pushed around
- Continual aggression and/or intimidation online

How is bullying different to other forms of aggression?

Like other forms of aggressive behaviour, bullying involves the intention of an individual or group to cause harm to one or more others. However, bullying has the following unique characteristics:

- The aggressive act is unprovoked by the victim or perceived as unjustified by others
- The action is repeated between the same individuals

Is fighting bullying?

While fighting between two students of equal power is of concern, it is not necessarily bullying. It is the presence of a power imbalance that distinguishes bullying from fighting, conflict, violence and disagreement. It is this imbalance that makes mistreatment of the victim possible.

Is teasing bullying?

Teasing, done in mutual fun and jest, where all individuals are involved and feel capable of responding, is not bullying. However, teasing that is done in a mean and hurtful way, that involves a power imbalance whereby one individual feels powerless to respond or to stop what is happening, is bullying.

The importance of language

It is important that bullying is seen as behaviour and not personalised in the form of a 'bully'. The message students receive should be that bullying is an unacceptable behaviour. A school-based program should not focus on 'busting' the bullies. This focus promotes force and exclusion as a means of getting one's way, in other words, exactly what bullying is. It also labels students who engage in bullying as 'bullies' and may marginalise and exclude them from behaviour change activities, because the message they receive is that they, as a 'bully', are not wanted or valued.

Activities to reduce and prevent bullying should promote the message that all students are valued, but engaging in bullying behaviour is unacceptable. Written information and policy should reflect this by referring to 'students who engage in bullying' or 'students who bully others' and 'students who are bullied' or 'students who are the target of bullying'.

Types of Bullying Used by Students

Physical

This type of bullying includes, but not exclusively, hitting or kicking, or taking or damaging a person's property. This is the least sophisticated type of bullying because it is easy to identify.

Verbal

This bullying behaviour involves, but not limited to, the use of words to hurt or humiliate another person. Verbal bullying includes name-calling, insults, making racist comments and constant teasing. This type of bullying is the easiest and quickest to inflict on other students. Its effects can be more devastating because there are no visible 'scars'.

Social intimidation

Social or relational bullying usually involves leaving out or convincing peers to exclude or reject a certain person or people from their social connections. This type of bullying is linked to verbal bullying and usually occurs when children spread nasty rumours about others or exclude a student from the peer group.

The most serious effect of this type of bullying is rejection by the peer group at a time when children most need their social connections.

Cyber bullying or *online bullying* is a term used to refer to bullying over electronic media, usually through social media. Other terms for cyber bullying are **electronic bullying, electronic harassment, e-bullying, SMS bullying, mobile bullying, online bullying, digital bullying, or Internet bullying (Snapchat etc).**

While the School recognises most cyber-bullying occurs away from the school setting, the School has a duty of care to all Grammar students. The actions/behaviours instigated online can transfer into the classroom/playground and other situations that involve Grammar students.

Levels of Severity of Bullying Situations

The severity of the situation can be judged based on a few factors:

- The duration of behaviour
- The frequency of behaviour
- The type of bullying behaviour

Least severe - Low Level

This behaviour generally involves thoughtless acts that happen occasionally. Bullying behaviour of low severity needs to be dealt with by informal discussion as it can escalate to become more serious. These discussions should address:

- Teaching of School values and beliefs
- Awareness of School rules
- Empathy for feelings of the person being bullied
- Examples of appropriate ways to behave, and
- Strategies to deal with difficult situations

Students need to be monitored to maintain positive behaviour change and all bullying incidents needs to be reported and recorded.

Serious – Medium Level

The behaviour is considered serious when it has been going on for some time and has become systematic and hurtful to the person being bullied. Bullying behaviours at this level need to be dealt with by behaviour support strategies. The School's Child Protection Policy should be utilised for serious cases and the stages or steps followed. This process should include consequences for actions and behaviour support to assist the child with behaviour change. The Principal and appropriate Head of Sub-School are usually involved at this level.

Severe – High Level

When the behaviours are extended over a period of time and are intensely cruel and threatening, it is considered severe. These behaviours are constant, threatening and can cause the person being bullied to be severely distressed. Severe cases are usually referred to the Principal, who needs to ensure the safety of all involved. Interviews need to be conducted with all individuals involved including the person bullying, the person being bullied and bystanders. Parents need to be involved in the process of discussion and decision-making. The Principal and Executive should also be involved in individual case management. It is possible for a student who continues to be involved in high level bullying to be excluded from the School.

Why should we be concerned about bullying?

In order to support students to give and be their best, students must perceive their learning environment to be a safe and secure place.

Students who are bullied:

- Feel unhappier at school
- Dislike school

- View school as not a good place to be
- View school as an unsafe place
- Feel lonelier
- Want to avoid the school environment
- Demonstrate lower academic competence
- Have higher rates of absenteeism

Students who are bullied can have:

- More physical complaints
- Lower self-esteem
- Greater feelings of ineffectiveness and more interpersonal difficulties
- Higher levels of depression and suicidal thoughts
- Higher levels of anxiety and worry

Of further concern is research that suggests that these effects can be long lasting.

Students who bully others:

- Feel unhappy at school
- Dislike school
- View school as not a nice place to be
- Demonstrate lower academic competence

Furthermore, students who engage in bullying can:

- Have a greater incidence of mental health challenges
- Experience greater negative health symptoms
- Experience higher levels of depression, suicidal thoughts and attempts to self-harm

Possible signs of bullying

The following symptoms have been associated with students experiencing bullying behaviour. These students may:

- Have a decreased interest in school
- Feel reluctant to go to school, and have higher absenteeism from school
- Perform below their ability at school
- Frequently complain of headaches or stomach aches
- Want to be taken to and from school or to go a new route
- Have frequent damage to or a loss of items such as clothing, property or school work
- Have frequent injuries such as bruises or cuts
- Be withdrawn and seem reluctant to say why
- Have difficulty sleeping, wet the bed or have nightmares
- Frequently come home hungry
- Ask for extra lunch or pocket money and/or have money going missing from the house
- Appear generally unhappy, miserable, moody and/or irritable
- Be reluctant to eat or play properly
- Threaten or attempt to harm themselves
- Have no friends to share free time with
- Be rarely invited to parties or other social activities with peers

Why do Children Bully?

Children bully:

- To get what they want
- To solve their problems
- To feel better about themselves
- To be popular and admired
- To cope with the fear of being the one left out
- Because of jealousy of others
- Because it seems like fun / boredom
- Because it has worked for them before
- Because they enjoy the power
- Because they see it as their role, e.g. leader
- Because their significant role models display bullying behaviours

Some of the factors contributing to the development of bullying include:

- Observation of aggressive behaviour – Children who have significant role models who bully are more likely to imitate this behaviour
- Harsh physical punishment at home – Children can bully smaller, weaker children to re-enact what happens to them at home
- Peers who bully – Children may follow the lead of their peers if they bully or they feel they have to bully as well to fit in
- Not enough supervision – Children who do not have enough supervision may get the idea that it is all right to use bullying behaviour to get what you want. Children need to be taught that bullying is never acceptable behaviour
- The behaviour works for them – When adults give in to children who use their power, aggression or bad behaviour to get what they want, the child learns to use this type of behaviour to get what they want
- Pre-emptive behaviour – Some children feel that they need to strike first for fear of being bullied. They feel that if they use their power and assume a hostile stance it will discourage other children from bullying them
- Getting attention – These children feel that they need to use negative behaviour to attract attention. This behaviour makes them feel powerful and noticed by adults and their peers

Bystanders to Bullying

Bullying as a social relationship

Bullying is more than a relationship between students who bully and students who are bullied. It is a social relationship involving group values and group standards of behaviour that requires consistent action across the School community to achieve positive change. Most students are not directly involved in bullying although many can be affected as bystanders. However, these students can play a vital role in the prevention of bullying by supporting students who are bullied, telling someone to seek help for that person and influencing their peer group to refrain from bullying others.

How students respond to bullying

Student attitudes toward bullying can be grouped into three areas:

- A desire to support victims
- A tendency to reject students who are bullied for being weak
- A readiness to justify bullying and support the bully

Other research findings are as follows:

- Most students are in favour of positively supporting students who are bullied and wanting action taken to stop bullying

Classroom learning and whole-school responses to bullying should build upon the student's pro-social desires for bullying to stop and their inclinations to help victims.

An important group: Bystanders

The role of the bystander is crucial to the prevention of bullying. The bystander is more often than not a peer of the student bullying or a peer of the victim of bullying. The attitudes and stance of the peer group have a powerful impact on the outcome of the incident. In the classroom, peers have been observed to be involved in 85% of bullying episodes, with this involvement ranging from actively participating to passively onlooking. Peers have also been observed to be present during most bullying incidents in the playground.

As bystanders, peers can either reinforce the bullying behaviour through their own behaviour or disdainfully move away or intervene to stop bullying. A bystander's influence can be utilised in a positive way to protect the person being bullied and to motivate students who bully to change their behaviour.

By mobilising positive peer influence against bullying behaviour, students who are bullied will feel supported and more confident in applying the skills they have learnt to the wider setting of the school environment. Training in assertive responses can also help to provide the skills necessary for bystanders to respond in a way that does not promote bullying, by helping them to resist group pressure to join in or do nothing.

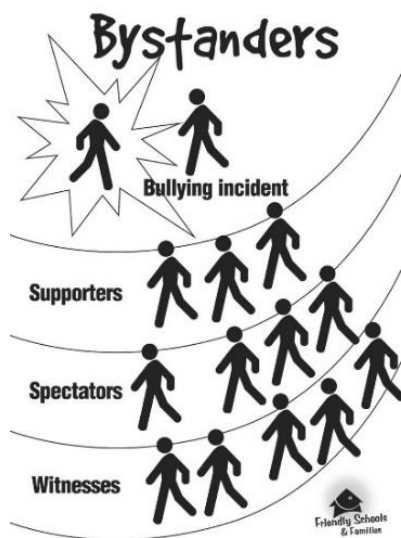
Different types of bullying and bullying situations require different responses. All behaviours should be linked with the consequences for action in the **Child Protection Policy**.

What can bystanders do?

If a child sees another child being bullied he or she could:

1. Refuse to join in with his or her bullying and walk away.
2. Make a stance and firmly tell the person doing the bullying that what they are doing is bullying and against the rules.
3. Ask a teacher or support person for help.
4. Support the student who is being bullied.
5. Support their friends and protect them from bullying in the future (children who are alone are more likely to be the target of bullying).

All students of the school will be taught about the dynamics of bystanders. Below is a brief outline:



Source: Adapted from Ken Rigby's, (2001) Stop the Bullying: A Handbook for Schools

Bystander: A bystander is someone who sees the bullying or knows that it is happening to someone else.

Bystanders can be identified in the following categories:

Supporters: Support the person bullying, either by helping the child to bully the other person or by encouraging the person bullying.

Spectators: Gather or deliberately stay to watch the incident (sometimes from concern and sometimes for enjoyment). There are no innocent spectators!

Witnesses: Are aware that the incident is occurring (know about the bullying or see it from a distance) and get help or are prepared to report the incident to a staff member.

Students are the key to a successful Anti-Bullying Campaign

Students have proven to be the key to a successful anti-bullying campaign because they usually know what is going on among the students long before the adults do. Students are most likely to support an anti-bullying campaign when they have been directly involved in determining the need for such a program, and deciding on its implementation. This includes developing bullying policies and school-wide or classroom strategies.

When it comes to discipline or punishment issues, most students strongly believe in fairness and therefore, welcome anti-bullying campaigns that encourage treating others with care and respect. It is necessary for students to promote the concept that caring for others is a valued quality, one that they accept and encourage.

Bullying Reduction and Prevention

When is a good time to begin bullying prevention?

Research suggests that interventions at the Primary School level are particularly important because:

- In general, younger children are bullied more often than older children
- Children are more supportive of victims at this age
- Children are most amenable to discussing bullying at ages ten and eleven

An important aspect of bullying interventions is to aid the person being bullied in developing alternative responses to aggression, such as assertion. Students who are active in responding positively to bullying report lower levels of stress and less negative effects of being bullied than those who are passive. Assertiveness training has been shown to increase a bullied student's self-esteem, increase a bullied student's confidence in the face of being bullied and reduce the amount of bullying experienced.

Helping students increase their social skills is likely to be most effective when it is done as part of a whole-school approach to address bullying. By implementing assertiveness training as part of a whole-school approach, the philosophy promoted is one in which bullying is not seen as just the bullied student's problem and something that they should manage on their own. By mobilising positive peer pressure against bullying behaviour at the same time, students who are bullied will feel supported and more confident in applying the skills they have learnt to the wider setting of the college environment.

Open Communication about Bullying

It is 'Okay' to talk about problems?

Student awareness that they have the right to seek help to resolve any bullying problems should be raised and regularly encouraged.

Dealing with Dobbing

'Dobbing' is when a person tries to get attention or to get someone else into trouble.

Asking for help is when someone feels the situation is out of their control and he or she is unable to deal with it alone and needs help.

Asking for help is always 'okay'

If anyone sees someone else in this situation they should also ask for help.

Responses to being bullied

All students, parents and staff need to work together and be provided with consistent information on how to deal with a bullying situation. Useful strategies, processes and information should be promoted through the:

- Bullying Policy
- classroom curriculum
- newsletter items
- classroom and playground posters

Friendship and social support

A child with a solid group of friends is less likely to be bullied than a child who is often alone or who just has one friend. Children who bully are careful to avoid those children who stand up for themselves and have supportive friends.

Bullying and self-esteem

Self-esteem is the way we feel about ourselves. We compare how we see ourselves, and how we believe others see us, with how we would like to be.

Research has found:

- Students with high self-esteem are as likely to have experienced bullying as those with low self-esteem
- However, those with low self-esteem report more extensive bullying, higher levels of stress as a result of being bullied, and more negative effects of this stress
- This suggests that high self-esteem acts as a buffer to the negative effects of bullying and that bullying interventions should work toward promoting student self-esteem

Students who bully others

- Despite popular belief, research does not support the notion that students who bully suffer from low self-esteem, rather, students who bully demonstrate about average self-esteem and a relatively positive perception of themselves.
- However, it may be that dominating and bullying others is a strategy for increasing or maintaining one's feeling of importance in the peer group, thus inflating one's self-esteem. The research doesn't tell us what the self-esteem of students who bully was like before they began to bully or what it would be like if they stopped bullying

Bystanders

- It is students with genuinely high self-esteem and high morals that are most likely to take sides with and defend students who are bullied

Cooperation

Low levels of cooperative behaviour have been shown to be characteristic of both boys and girls who engage in bullying and, to a lesser extent, of children who are bullied.

This suggests that increasing both the capacity and motivation of children to cooperate would be beneficial as a means of reducing bullying. Indeed, research with pre-schoolers has demonstrated that during cooperative games, cooperative behaviour increased and aggressive behaviour decreased; conversely, competitive games were characterised by an increase in aggressive behaviour and decreases in cooperative behaviour. But it must be also understood that competitive games can help build resilience in children by teaching them 'how to lose'.

Not only do schools vary with regard to the level of bullying reported, but there is also significant variation between classes. A major contributing factor to this variation is class ethos, that is, the atmosphere that is generated within the classroom that either supports and colludes with bullying and aggressive behaviour or challenges these behaviours.

A cooperative school curriculum can provide a positive means of preventing bullying, fostering an ethos in which bullying is less likely to occur in the first place. A cooperative school curriculum encourages commitment to values of trust and respect and a shared understanding of social rules and procedures. It increases the amount of positive social interaction experienced, promotes honest communication and the opportunity to learn to tolerate differing perspectives, and encourages both a positive sense of self and concern for one's own community.

Within such a cooperative classroom, peer approval is received for non-aggressive behaviour, but unacceptable behaviours, such as bullying, are met with rejection or challenge. Such an ethos empowers students as they experience a sense of control over bullying behaviour. Students who are bullied are more likely to seek the support of others as they will expect to receive this support. Students who bully are likely to feel uncomfortable because they are breaking group norms and unlikely to receive a fearful or satisfactory response from their chosen victim.