Anti Bullying Policy

Rationale

Woree State High School practises a ‘zero tolerance’ approach to bullying in all its forms, in line with Education Queensland’s policy and the provisions of the Child Protection Act. Our school and school community endorses the right to safety of all school community members. Bullying undermines this right and prevents students from achieving their full potential in the educational and social setting. Bullying affects all members of the school community, not simply the bully or the victim, and can damage the supportive environment of the class and of the school in general. For these reasons, bullying cannot be tolerated and must be addressed with immediacy and consistency.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to clearly outline the Anti Bullying Policy including the procedures for reporting bullying.

Relevance to Related Legislation and DETE Policy

LEGISLATION

- Education (General Provisions) Act 2006
- Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2006

RELEVANT POLICY

- SMS-PR-021: Safe, Supportive and Disciplined School Environment
- 2016-2019 Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students – Woree State High School

Operation of the Policy

DEFINITIONS OF BULLYING

As defined in Education Queensland’s Child Protection Act,

‘Bullying involves the abuse of power with the intention of causing distress to the other person(s), or for personal gain or gratification. Behaviours may include repeated behaviour that can be covert and subtle, and be social, psychological, verbal, physical and/or sexual in nature.’ (The definition includes all forms of harassment.)

For ease of student understanding and identification of bullying, Woree State High School has defined bullying for students and staff in the following definition:

“Bullying is a behaviour by an individual or group, that is repeated and hurts another, either physically or emotionally.” (Woree State High School 2011)

Further, Woree State High School has developed definitions for:

1. Physical Bullying - When a person or group uses physical actions to bully – pinching, pushing, shoving, fighting or any unwelcome physical contact used intentionally to intimidate or hurt someone.
2. Verbal Bullying - Repeated name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, offensive language, put-downs.
3. Exclusion – deliberately being “left out” of games or peer groups, etc
4. Sexual Harassment – individuals or groups of one sex making physical or verbal derogatory comments about another individual or group of the opposite sex, etc
5. Rumour Bullying – Rumours, malicious gossip, untrue sexual comments, etc
6. Extortion Bullying – physically stronger and more powerful students forcing weaker students to hand over lunches, money, etc. Stealing games, balls and personal effects from others.
7. Gesture Bullying – includes body language or subtle facial expressions – all designed to intimidate, threaten or silence a victim, etc.
8. Cyber / Electronic Bullying - Using technology to bully verbally, socially or psychologically.
9. Bullying on the Ground of Disability – includes victimisation, harassment or bullying (of any of the types identified above) or a student with a disability, or of a student who has an associate with a disability, in relation to the disability.

EFFECTS OF BULLYING

Students may:
- Feel frightened, unsafe, embarrassed, intimidated, depressed or unfairly treated
- Find their ability to concentrate - work, sleep and health may suffer
- Experience deterioration in relationships with family and friends
- Become confused and unsure about what to do about the problem
- Avoid coming to school to escape the problem.

RIGHTS
- Everyone has the right to feel safe.
- Everyone has the right to an education without interference from others.

It is everyone’s responsibility NOT to harass or bully another person. Harassment, victimisation and bullying of any type is prohibited by Woree State High School.

If you are being bullied it is your responsibility to:
- Inform the perpetrator that you wish that type of behaviour to stop (STOP)
- Walk away from the perpetrator (WALK)
- Seek help if bullying behaviour persists (TALK)

REPORTING BULLYING

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

If you are being bullied and are not able to cope with the situation you are in, or if you witness repeated bullying, the next step is to report the incident(s) of bullying to one of the following:
- Classroom teacher
- Year Level Student Support Services Officer
- Student Support Services Team member
- Head of Department Support 4 Students
- Any other member of staff you feel comfortable talking to

When you report an incident of bullying, you will be asked to complete an Incident Statement. This report asks for details of the incident(s) which will be investigated by the Head of Department Support 4 Students.

The Head of Department Support 4 Students will:
- Listen to you
- Speak with you about your experience
- Discuss with you options to make sure you have adult support as well as ways for you to act self protectively where possible
- Action any necessary follow up with the student(s) identified in the incident report.

If a student OR students are found to be involved in incidents associated with bullying, the Head of Department Support 4 Students may:
- Implement Responsible Behaviour actions eg referral to Student Support Services Team member
- Contact parents
- Organize mediation
- Involve Queensland Police and other external agencies.

If bullying continues after the investigation is actioned, you should immediately make another report which will again be investigated and actioned by the Head of Department Support 4 Students.
STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

A teacher must follow up if:
1. They notice a student in their class who has displayed a change in attitude and behavior which is uncharacteristic and displays some of the following:
   - Seems frightened, withdrawn and unsafe, embarrassed, intimidated, depressed or feel unfairly treated in the classroom
   - Seems unable to concentrate on school work and seems unusually tired
   - Experiences deterioration in relationships with family and friends. The student may not sit with their usual group of friends in the class
   - Avoid coming to school to escape the problem
2. A student does not approach the teacher, when the teacher feels that bullying may be occurring. The teacher should ask the student if everything is OK. If after the initial conversation the teacher feels there is something not quite right still, refer concerns to the Head of Department Support 4 Students.
3. A student reports an issue of bullying to them. The teacher will record the incident on OneSchool with a referral to the Head of Department Support 4 Students.

OTHER INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS and PARENTS

WHAT IS CYBERBULLYING?
Cyberbullying can include:
- spreading rumours online
- sending unwanted taunting, or threatening messages
- excluding individuals from social interaction online
- defacing images on or setting up fake profiles on social networking sites.

Anyone can be bullied online and the bully can act anonymously if he or she wants to. People can also be bullied online by groups of people such as class groups or collectively by members of an online community.

Using communication technologies
Here are some things to consider when using communication technologies such as websites, blogs and mobile phones. It is easy to underestimate the impact of what you say, write and do with these technologies.

Did you know that:
- Web blogging social networking community websites such as MySpace have the potential to be viewed by anyone, with almost no control over who has access to the content.
- The information sharing and broadcasting capabilities of the technologies mean that a large number of people can potentially access information very quickly
- The things that you post and send, especially about other people, may be seen as bullying or harassment
- 'Cyber bullying' is using mobile phones or other communication technologies to send insulting, threatening or unpleasant voice, text and picture messages, videos or posts or spreading malicious rumours
- Party invitations and or details posted on websites such as MySpace, or sent by email or SMS text messaging, can be accessed instantly by a huge number of people
- Sending large amounts of invitations by email and SMS text messaging greatly increases the chances of gatecrashers, uninvited and unwelcome guests, which increases the likelihood of violence at a party
- 'Happy slapping' is the video recording, usually with mobile phones, of violent and shameful acts and practical jokes that are shared with other people through email and websites such as YouTube
- Practical joke behaviour such as 'happy slapping' can be offensive
- ‘Happy slapping’ glorifies and encourages violent and degrading behaviour for entertainment. This type of violence can be serious and in some cases could even be classed as criminal behaviour, in which case it should be reported to the police.

For more useful information about using communication technology being cybersafe, sensibly and some interesting information about cyber bullying and web blogging. Visit the following websites:
1. www.cybersmart.gov.au
4. Bullying No Way www.takeastandtogether.gov.au

**Actions** Should students make a of report ‘cyberbullying’, Woree State High School will investigate and implement mediation between the parties involved. If a resolution is not achieved, then the matter will be passed to the School Based Police Officer for further follow-up.

**What should I do if I think that my child is being bullied?**
Children often do not tell their parents that they are being bullied because they are embarrassed or frightened. If you suspect your child is being bullied or your child brings it up, consider these steps:

1. **Talk with your child.** Focus on your child. Express your concern and make it clear that you want to help. Do not promise to keep it a secret, or that you will not report the problem.
2. **Empathize with your child.** Say bullying is wrong, that it is not their fault, and that you are glad they had the courage to tell you about it. Let them know that they are not alone.
3. **Work together to find solutions.** Ask your child what they think can be done to help. Be sure that your child knows that this situation will not get better on its own, and that appropriate adult intervention is needed.
4. **Document ongoing bullying.** Work with your child to keep a record of all bullying incidents. If it involves cyberbullying, keep a record of all messages or postings.
5. **Help your child develop strategies and skills for handling bullying.** Provide suggestions for ways to respond to bullying, and help your child gain confidence by rehearsing their responses. Woree State High School can help you with this.
6. **Be persistent.** Bullying may not be resolved overnight.

**Documentation**

- a) 2016-2019 Woree State High School Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students
- b) FLOWCHART – Bullying Incident Referral Procedures
- c) Posters- Anti Bullying
- d) Poster – Stop, Walk, Talk
- e) Incident Statement
If you feel that you are being bullied...

1. **STOP**
   - Make the ‘STOP’ sign and ask the person to stop their behaviour.

2. **WALK**
   - If the problem continues...
   - Walk away from the situation.

3. **TALK**
   - If the problem continues...
   - Talk!

“Bullying is a behaviour by an individual or group, that is repeated and hurts another, either physically or emotionally.”

_Woore State High School 2011_

- **Physical Bullying**
  - When a person or group uses physical actions to bully.

- **Verbal Bullying**
  - Repeated name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks.

- **Psychological Bullying**
  - Threats, stalking or manipulating someone.

- **Cyber Bullying**
  - Using technology to bully verbally, socially or psychologically.

- **Covert Bullying**
  - When a person or group lies about someone, spreads rumours or deliberately excludes someone.