

## Information for parents and students about bullying

### INTRODUCTION

#### How does it feel to be bullied?

Victims of bullying can feel powerless, angry, intimidated, depressed, alone, scared, humiliated, unwanted, aggressive, revengeful, worthless, neglected and embarrassed. They can blame themselves, suffer low self-esteem or become a bully themselves. In extreme cases, bullying can lead to lifelong trauma or suicide.

#### What happens when someone is being bullied?

A victim of bullying may:

- avoid social contact with others,
- have a loss of self-esteem and confidence,
- have difficulty in expressing emotions.
- Their schoolwork may be affected, and their home life may be disrupted.

#### What roles can students play in bullying behaviours?

Not all students play a clear role as either the student who is bullying or the student who is being bullied. Students may take on different roles in different circumstances. For example, a student who is being bullied in one context may do the bullying in another, or a student who acts as a bystander may intervene and act as a protector if the ringleader is not around.

### ADVICE FOR STUDENTS

What should students or others do if they have been bullied or have observed bullying?

If a student is being bullied, it is important that they talk to an adult (class teacher, Year Coordinator, Director of Student Wellbeing, Assistant Principal, Head of Primary or Head of Secondary, College Chaplain, tutor, parents, support staff or a counsellor with whom they feel comfortable).

There can be a reluctance to report bullying because of fear of being labelled a 'dobber' and going against an unwritten code of student behaviour. This concern is understandable, but must not prevent students from reporting bullying behaviour. Most students dislike bullying and would support attempts to stop it.

### ADVICE FOR PARENTS

#### What to do if your child is being bullied.

It is not always easy to tell if a young person is being bullied, as sometimes they do not want to disclose what has been happening to them.

If you notice a significant change in your child's behaviour it could be a cause for concern. Other signs can include changes in mood, eating and/or sleep patterns; withdrawal from family, social groups or friends; decline in school performance or unwillingness to attend; lost, torn or broken belongings; scratches or bruises; or implausible excuses for any of the above.

If you think your child is being bullied or hear your child talk about bullying, you can:

- Listen calmly and get the full story
- Reassure your child that they are not to blame
- Ask your child what they want to do about it and how you can help
- Contact the college and inform the class teacher, tutor, Year Coordinator, College Counsellors or Chaplains, Director of Student Wellbeing, the Assistant Principal, Head of Primary or Head of Secondary.
- Check in regularly with your child
- Support your child in developing his/her talents and participating in sports and other activities that will build confidence and friendships
- Do NOT encourage your child to retaliate either physically or verbally
- Do NOT contact the student(s) you believe to be bullying your child.

### **What to do if your child is bullying others**

[The National Centre Against Bullying](#) (NCAB) recommends that parents of students who have been found to bully others should:

- Stay calm. Remember, the behaviour is at fault, rather than the child
- Make sure your child knows bullying behaviour is inappropriate and why
- Try to understand the reasons why your child has behaved in this way and look for ways to address problems
- Encourage your child to look at it from the other's perspective, asking for example 'how would you feel if...'
- Help your child to think of alternate paths of action
- Provide appropriate boundaries for their behaviour
- Contact the college **(02) 6651 5644** and inform the Director of Student Wellbeing, Head of Primary or Secondary.

### **Resources available at the College:**

Contact the school immediately if you have a concern about your child's safety: **(02) 6651 5644**.

- Ask to meet with your child's teacher, or Head of Primary or Head of Secondary
- If you need to, ask to speak with the with the Director, Student Wellbeing or the Principal.

### **Wellbeing Centre**

- Wellbeing program
- Counselling services (individual, family, advocacy and referral)
- Group Work programs

**College Nurse** - Collaboration is key at Bishop Druitt College, and the college Nurses work closely with teaching and support staff, as well as the Student Wellbeing Team.

**Chaplaincy** - Chaplaincy seeks to promote a deeper understanding of Christian faith and spirituality in the life of the college. Students, parents and staff are welcome to access chaplaincy.

### **External Resources**

- [National Centre Against Bullying](#)
- [Bullying No Way](#)
- [Dolly's Dream](#)
- [eSmart](#) – Alannah and Madeline foundation
- [eSafety Commissioner](#) – online safety issues
- [Kids Help Line](#)
- [Student Wellbeing Hub](#)