



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Purpose:	This Policy sets out the school wide approach for addressing bullying.		
Scope:	This Policy is to be adhered to by all stakeholders which include all staff, directors, managers, workers, parents, students, volunteers, contractors, suppliers and visitors to the College.		
References and Legislation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulations 2017</i>• <i>Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (Qld)</i>• <i>Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2017 (Qld)</i>• <i>Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld)</i>• <i>Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)</i>• <i>Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1996 (Cth)</i>• <i>Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)</i>• <i>Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)</i>• <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)</i>• <i>Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)</i>		
Ormiston College Related Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workplace Health and Safety Policy• Workplace Harassment Prevention Policy• Child Protection Policy• Expectations and Behaviour Code (Student Handbook)		
Policy Owner	College Governing Body	Version	V230824
Status	Approved	Supersedes:	V170822
To Be Reviewed:	Annually	Next Review Date:	August 2025
Authorised by:	BRETT WEBSTER	Date of Authorisation:	3/12/2024
Signature:			

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RATIONALE

Ormiston College does not tolerate any form of harassment, including bullying. All members of the College Community are committed to ensuring a safe and caring environment that promotes personal growth and positive self-esteem for all. This will be facilitated via the College's commitment on taking action to protect students from bullying and to respond appropriately when bullying does occur.

The College will take a proactive approach to bullying by establishing processes to educate and inform students, parents and staff about bullying and procedures to follow in the event that a student is being bullied.

An important consideration for all members of the Ormiston College community is that overcoming bullying is neither simple nor quick. Ormiston College will constantly reinforce the fact that bullying is not acceptable and remind students and staff how to counteract bullying, as well as offering programs to enhance self-esteem and resilience. Students need to be aware of their responsibilities not to bully and not condone bullying by being bystanders. Parents need to be confident to approach the College with their concerns and encouraged to work with the College in a non-blame situation, so that their children are protected.

DEFINITIONS

What is Bullying?

Ormiston College has adopted the national definition of bullying for Australian schools as defined below.

Bullying is the ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/ or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening.

Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records).

Bullying of any form or for any reason can have immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.

Bullying can take many forms.

1. **Physical Bullying** – Physical bullying includes hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching and pushing or damaging property. Physical bullying causes both short term and long term damage.
2. **Verbal Bullying** – Verbal bullying includes name calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, homophobic or racist remarks, or verbal abuse. While verbal bullying can start off harmless, it can escalate to levels which start affecting the individual target.

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3. **Social Bullying** – Social bullying, sometimes referred to as covert bullying, is often harder to recognise and can be carried out behind the bullied person's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and / or cause humiliation.

Social bullying can include:

- lying and spreading rumours
- negative facial or physical gestures, menacing or contemptuous looks
- playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
- mimicking unkindly
- encouraging others to socially exclude someone
- damaging someone's social reputation or social acceptance.

4. **Cyber Bullying** – The Cyber Bullying Research Centre defines cyber bullying as: Intentional and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, phones and other electronic devices.

Cyber bullying can be overt or covert bullying behaviours using digital technologies including hardware such as computers and smartphones, and software such as social media, instant messaging, texts, websites and other online platforms.

Cyber bullying can happen at any time. It can be in public or in private and sometimes only known to the target and the person bullying.

Cyber bullying can include:

- abusive or hurtful texts, emails or posts, images or videos
- deliberately excluding others online
- nasty gossip or rumours
- imitating others online or using their log-in.

What Behaviours are not Bullying?

While it is important to understand and define what bullying is, it is also important to be clear to the College community, what behaviours are NOT bullying.

- mutual arguments and disagreements (where there is no power imbalance)
- not liking someone or a single act of social rejection
- one-off acts of meanness or spite
- isolated incidents of aggression, intimidation or violence.

Such occurrences may still be serious and require intervention or management, however they do not (as single incidents) meet the threshold of a behaviour that can be described as bullying.

RESPONSIBILITIES

School and Staff Responsibilities

As a community, we have a responsibility to not allow cases of bullying to go unreported. In order to enjoy the rights associated with being a member of the College's community we must have the courage to speak up, even if this involves some personal risk.

The College will:

- Seek feedback from students, staff and parents on its Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Provide training and information sessions to students and parents of its Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Identify one or more members of staff as a Bullying Contact Person and communicate this to students, staff and parents.
- Ensure all staff are familiar with the College's Anti-Bullying Policy and provide appropriate professional development on a regular basis, including at the time of induction of new staff members.
- Provide an agreed definition of bullying that is communicated to all students, staff and parents.
- Provide processes for reporting bullying incidents for staff and students.
- Ensure complaints of bullying are investigated promptly. If the complaint is substantiated, appropriate sanctions on the perpetrator will be imposed.
- Keep adequate records of all complaints of bullying and the process undertaken by the College in response.
- Offer support strategies for individuals who experience bullying.
- Deliver appropriate behavioural support and consequences for those students who behave inappropriately.
- Provide preventative strategies.
- Arrange for the periodic review of all processes to ensure they are effective or where possible need to be improved.

Staff Members will:

- Watch for early signs of distress in students. This could be evident in any aspect of school life.
- Ensure they are familiar with the College's Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Address bullying in their curriculum and explicitly teach students about conflict and bullying.
- Implement resilience and anti-bullying programs that help students become more confident.
- Educate students regarding their responsibilities as bystanders to a bullying incident.
- Endeavour to remove occasions for bullying by active patrolling during supervision duty.
- Where bullying is observed, intervene immediately to stop the bullying.
- Offer the victim immediate support and help, and outline what will now happen.
- Report suspected incidents to the appropriate staff member such as the Deputy Head of Junior School, Head of Junior School, Wellbeing Teacher, Year Level Coordinator, Deputy Head of Secondary Years (Wellbeing), Head of Middle Years, Head of Secondary School, who will follow the designated procedures.
- Ensure they do not model bullying behaviour in interactions they have with students, parents or other staff members.

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In situations where bullying occurs, staff at the College may also:

- Assist students to develop more appropriate social skills. i.e. Teach students how to cooperate and “get on” with others.
- Run anti-bullying workshops.
- Initiate an intervention strategy.
- Conduct mediation or conflict resolution sessions.
- Implement a behaviour management plan or playground plan for individual students.
- Apply disciplinary consequences including detentions, suspensions or exclusions to students who bully others.

Student Responsibilities

If students who are being bullied have the courage to speak out, they may help to reduce pain for themselves and other potential victims.

The use of Stymie allows for anonymous reporting of bullying in the College.

Students should:

- Report all incidents of bullying to a trusted Senior School student, teacher, Year Level Coordinator, Counsellor or other staff member.
- Actively support students they know are being bullied.
- Refuse to become involved in bullying, including as a bystander.

If you are being bullied:

- Stay calm.
- Tell the bully to stop.
- Move away from the situation.
- Talk to someone you trust about what has happened, for example a parent/carer, teacher or friend, and get them to help you to take the right steps to stop the bullying.

When talking about what has happened make sure you tell them:

- What the person/s has been doing.
- Who has been involved.
- Where have the incident/s occurred.
- Anyone who has seen the bullying behaviour.
- How often has it happened.
- What have you already done about it.

Keep on talking until someone listens to you and the bullying stops.

Do not blame yourself for what is happening.

If you see someone being bullied (in person or online), keep safe and choose your response to match the situation:

- Speak up and let the person doing the bullying know that what they are doing is bullying.
- Refuse to join in with the bullying (including as a bystander) and walk away.
- Help the student who is being bullied to ask for help.
- Ask a teacher or support person for help.
- Report what happened.

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Parent Responsibilities

The College recommends that parents should:

- Watch for signs of distress in their child, such as, unwillingness to attend school, a pattern of headaches or stomach aches, equipment that has gone missing, request for extra pocket money, damaged clothing or bruising. Early contact is essential at this point.
- Take an active interest in their children's social life and acquaintances.
- Advise their children to tell a staff member about any incidence. If possible, allow their children to report and deal with the problem themselves. Respect can be gained through taking the initiative and dealing with the problem without parental involvement.
- Ensure they do not model bullying behaviour in interactions they have with the College staff.

If your child tells you they are being bullied or you suspect this is the case. Parents should:

- Help your child to identify the bullying behaviour and ask them:
 - What has been happening?
 - Who has been involved?
 - Where have the incidents occurred?
 - Has anyone else seen the bullying behaviour?
- Discuss with your child some immediate strategies. Make a plan to deal with the bullying. Encourage them to:
 - Talk with the teacher
 - Walk away
 - Firmly say "No!"
- Report to the College's Executive or any other member of school staff if they know, or think, their child is being bullied.
- Check that your child has spoken to someone about the problem and arrange a meeting if necessary to address the situation.
- Be clear about what you expect the College to do to help your child.
- Keep a written record if the bullying persists: who, what, where and when?
- Do not encourage retaliation.
- Communicate to their children that parental involvement, if necessary, will be appropriate for the situation.
- Be willing to attend interviews at the College if their child is involved in any bullying incident.
- Be willing to inform the College of any cases of suspected bullying even if their own child is not directly affected.

When staff, students and parents work together we create a more caring environment at Ormiston College.

IMPLEMENTATION

Educational and Prevention Programs

Ormiston College is a community that greatly values the development of effective social skills and positive relationships across all areas of school life. As such, it is important that students, staff and parents/carers understand what bullying is, how it affects people and how bullying is responded to at Ormiston College. All students will be educated about the College's Anti-Bullying Policy.

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Response to Bullying

Whilst reports of bullying will be investigated and acted upon, Ormiston College has a range of responses that may be implemented. Some responses may include support for targets of bullying and perpetrators, the use of specific interventions and/or disciplinary measures.

It must be noted that during the investigation process an assessment will be made as to whether given behaviours are consistent with the definitions contained within this Policy. It is important that the Ormiston College Anti-Bullying Policy is not seen as an entity that is separated from the rest of the College's structure, activities and policies. For example, if bullying amounts to harm as referred to in the College's Child Protection Policy then the matter must be dealt with under the Child Protection Policy.

When circumstances allow, a member of staff will deal with the problem on the spot, in order to defuse the immediate conflict. Once the immediate issues have been dealt with, the steps to manage a bullying situation are listed in the flow chart at Appendix A.

If cyber bullying is of a serious and threatening nature it may become a legal issue and students and parents should seek advice by reporting the matter to the police.

Reporting and Points of Contact

At Ormiston College, reports of bullying are taken seriously. The members of the College community involved in the management of bullying situations are listed in the diagrams at Appendix B.

Intervention Strategies

Ormiston College utilises a number of intervention strategies in responding to bullying incidents. In cases of serious bullying, careful investigation may need to be undertaken, leading to planned or systematic treatment involving the bully or bullies and, in some cases, others such as the victim of the bullying, bystanders and parents/carers.

The nature of the bullying incidents will help to determine which method is most appropriate, as does the availability of school resources, including trained practitioners. Nevertheless, in cases where initial attempts to deal with bullying behaviour have resulted in the bullying continuing, "The Method of Shared Concern" is generally the intervention to be initiated.

The Method of Shared Concern:

This is a non-punitive approach. It involves first working with the suspected bullies and with the target, in one-to-one meetings. When progress has been made, a meeting is held with the suspected bullies as a group to plan how the problem might be resolved. Subsequently the victim joins them and an agreed solution is negotiated. Although this approach can be time-consuming, outcomes are overwhelmingly positive and it is uniquely appropriate for dealing with cases of group bullying in which the target has behaved provocatively; this occurs in about 20 per cent of cases. Violent or criminal behaviour is normally not handled using this approach (Rigby, 2010a).

Further details can be found at Appendix C.

Restorative Practice:

The use of restorative approaches has proven effective in many schools. The aim of these approaches is to work with students rather than doing things to them or for them. Such approaches are underpinned by the principle of restorative justice whereby the student causing harm is held to account for his or her behaviour. This means:

- accepting responsibility for the harm caused to the individual being bullied
- accepting responsibility for the harm caused to others (e.g. staff, friends or family)
- recognising the need to take action to begin to repair the harm caused
- all those involved agreeing to a range of actions, which will be monitored over an agreed period.

There is a range of restorative approaches, from informal meetings with students where they can talk through their issues in a structured way, to, at the most formal end, a restorative conference with an independent facilitator. Restorative approaches can be effective when the requisite time and resources are invested, but it is important they are used in conjunction with, not in place of, disciplinary measures (Rigby, 2010a).

The Disciplinary Approach:

Disciplinary measures must be applied fairly, proportionately and consistently and take account of any reasonable adjustments students may require and the needs of vulnerable children.

Disciplinary measures have three main purposes:

- to impress on perpetrators that what they have done is unacceptable
- to deter them from repeating that behaviour
- to signal to other students the behaviour is unacceptable and deter them from doing it.

Disciplinary measures for bullying are intended to hold students who bully to account for their behaviour, and ensure they accept the harm they have caused and to learn from it. Disciplinary measures may also provide (as appropriate) an opportunity for the student to put right the harm they have caused.

When other strategies and disciplinary measures do not resolve the problem, the school leadership team may be required to apply disciplinary absence measures, as appropriate (Rigby, 2010a).

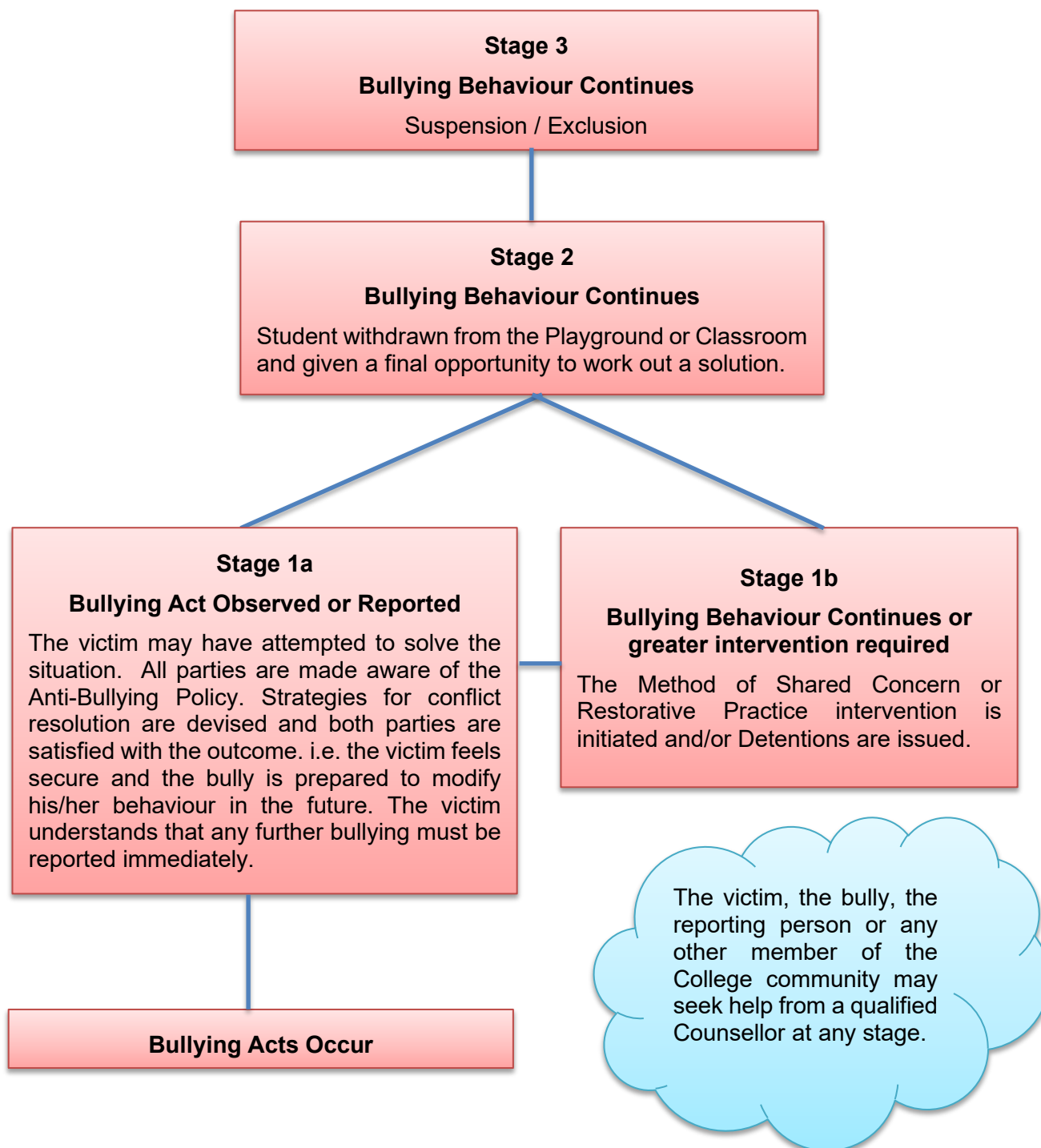
COMPLIANCE AND MONITORING

Reports of bullying will be collated and monitored to inform the College about the extent of bullying and to identify particular areas of concern for future action. This analysis will generally focus on major locations where bullying occurs, sex and age of victims and bullies, and strategies which have been successful. A review of the College's Policy is undertaken annually, taking into account this data.

RESPONSE TO BULLYING

Management Process

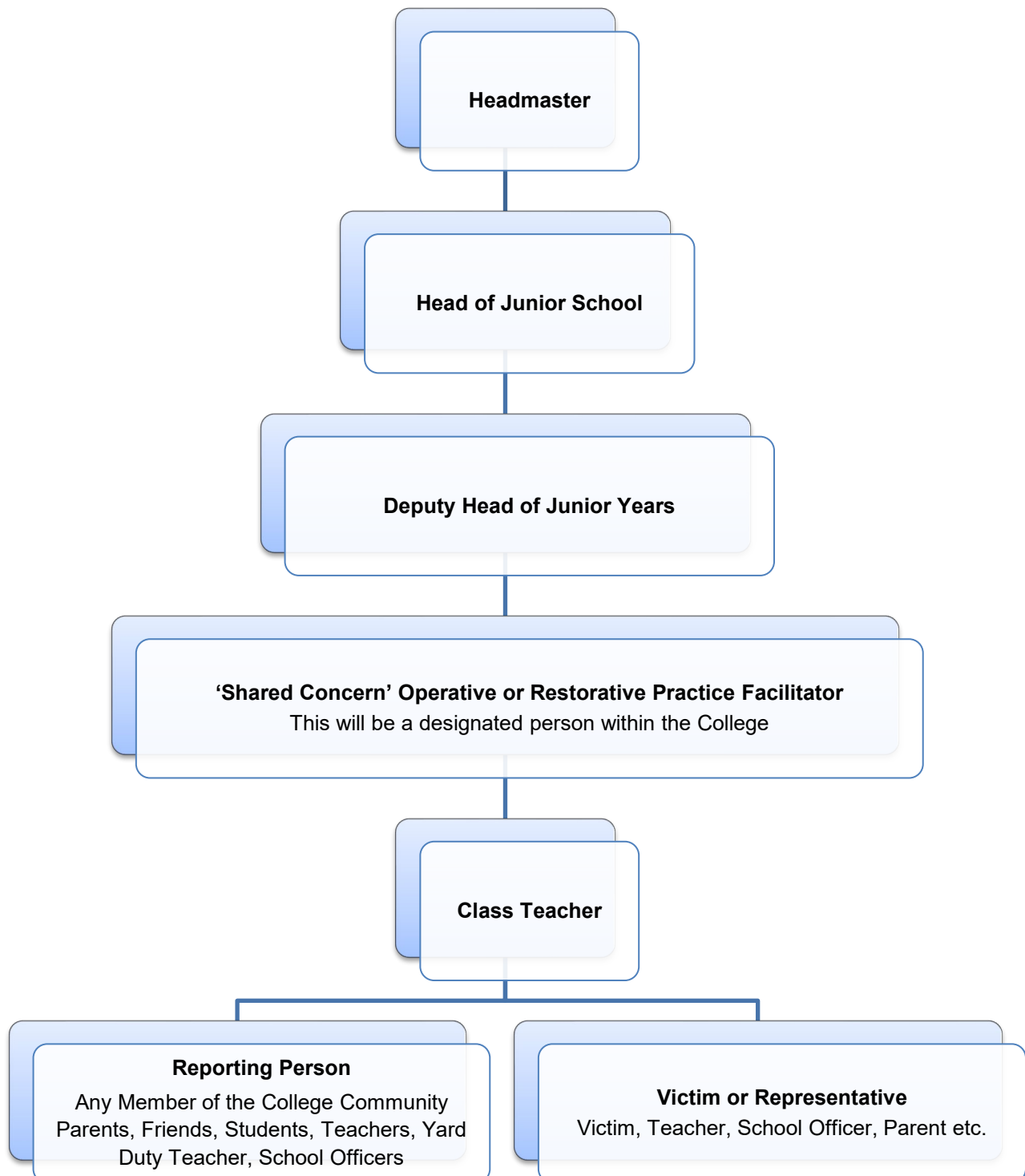
Please note – Due to the various and at times extenuating circumstances that are part of any behavioural incident, the following flow chart is to be read as a guide only.



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RESPONSE TO BULLYING

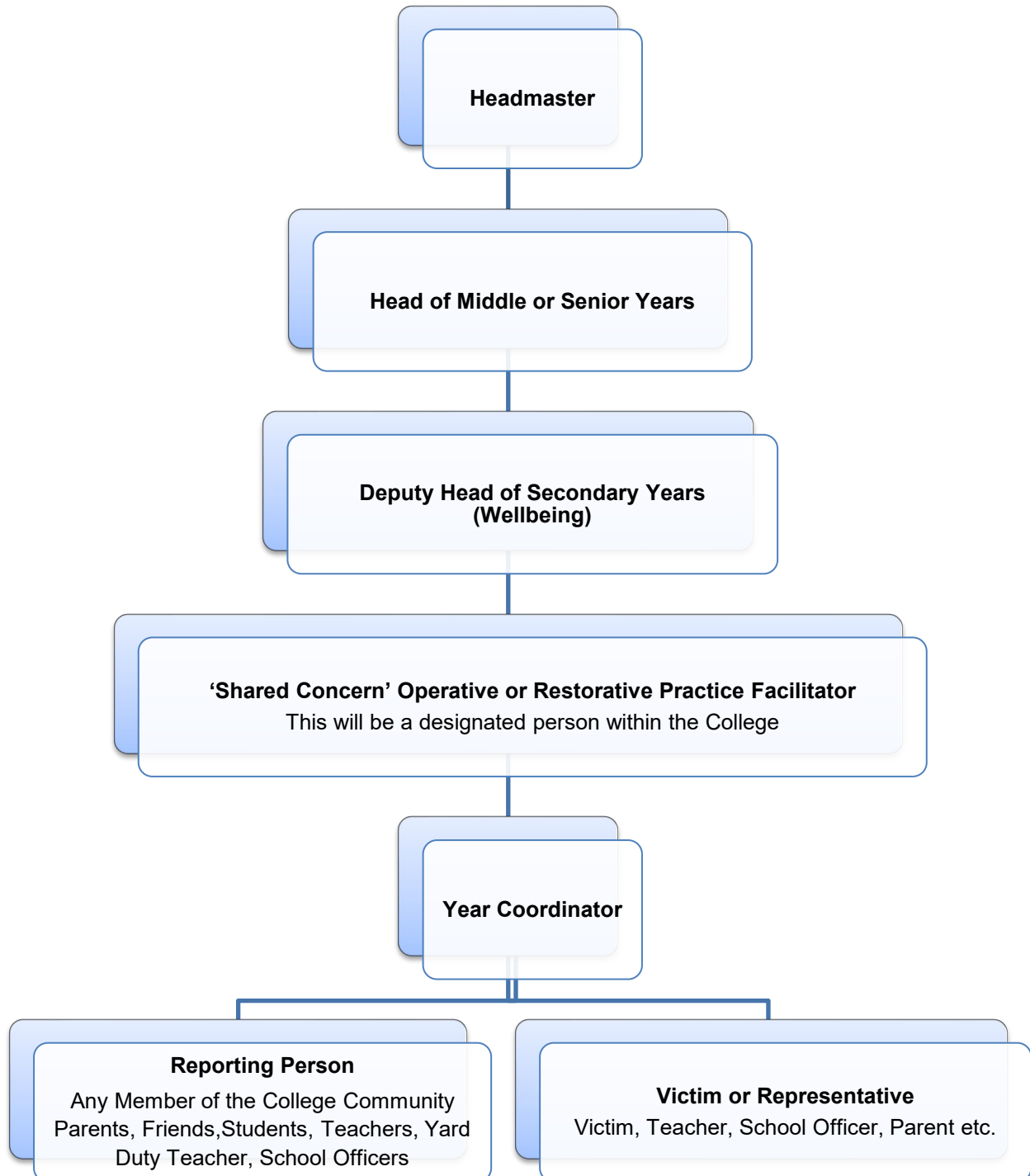
Junior School Chains of Responsibilities



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RESPONSE TO BULLYING

Secondary School Chains of Responsibilities



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The Method of Shared Concern

The Method of Shared Concern facilitates the emergence of a solution to a bully/victim problem through the use of a series of interviews and discussions with the parties involved.

Rationale

The rationale behind using the Method of Shared Concern is as follows:

- Bullying behaviour is commonly (though not always) undertaken by, or with the support of, a peer group.
- Approached in a non-accusatory manner, individual members of such groups will typically acknowledge the distress of the victim and agree to act to reduce that distress.
- A minority of targeted children have in the past acted provocatively and need to recognise their part in the ensuing conflict.
- Once some individual members of the group have begun to act constructively, the group can be brought together to plan how they will finally resolve the matter with the person they have targeted.
- An agreed resolution involving all concerned is likely to be sustainable.

Application

The Method of Shared Concern can be appropriately and most successfully implemented as follows:

1. Cases are chosen in which a group of students are thought to be involved in bullying an individual student who as a consequence has become distressed.
2. Each of the suspected bullies is interviewed in turn, without any accusation, beginning with the student who seems most likely to fill the role of ringleader. The meeting takes place without other students present or able to observe the interaction. The interview begins with the practitioner sharing a concern about the plight of the victim. Once this is acknowledged, the suspected bully is required to say what he or she will do to improve the situation.
3. A further meeting is arranged several days later to assess progress with each of the suspected bullies individually.
4. The practitioner then meets with the target and offers support. The question may at some stage be raised as to whether the target could have provoked the bullying in some way. (Occasionally bullying is provoked).
5. Once progress has been confirmed, a group meeting is held with the suspected bullies to plan how they will finally resolve the problem when they meet with the target at the next meeting convened by the practitioner.
6. A final meeting is held with the target present to bring about an agreed and sustainable solution.

Limitations

- The method cannot be employed in cases of criminal behaviour for which sanctions are legally required.
- Pressure in the form of threats and punishment is incompatible with this approach which seeks unforced cooperation.
- This method involves working with groups of suspected bullies and does not lend itself to dealing with one-on-one bullying.
- More so than most methods it requires the training of suitable practitioners.
- To implement this approach effectively and produce a sustainable solution requires the careful selection of cases and the allocation of sufficient time to progress through the necessary stages.

Conclusion

Implemented rigorously, this method has been shown in several studies to have a high success rate and has considerable educational value for those involved.

References

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