

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY

Date Approved:	4/12/2020
Date Effective:	1/01/2021
Scheduled Review Date:	11/11/2022
Policy Category:	Wellbeing & Child Safety
Policy Owner:	Assistant Principal

1. Context

It is a priority of SEDA College WA (the College) to build a safe and supportive culture that fosters caring, positive and respectful relationships between all involved in the College community.

The Bullying Prevention Policy focusses predominantly on bullying behaviours and conduct exhibited by students towards other students. Claims of adults bullying students are treated as child abuse. Further information on child abuse can be found in the below College policies:

- Child Safety and Mandatory Reporting Policy,
- Staff Code of Conduct, and
- Staff Handbook.

The College's priority is to provide students with positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour and conduct and are given opportunities to interact and develop respectful and positive relationships with each other and with staff members and volunteers.

SEDA College explicitly forbids the use of any form of child abuse, corporal punishment or other degrading punishment.

2. Terms and Definitions

Bullying

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Bullying is an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more persons.

Bullying can happen in person or online, and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.

In defining what 'Bullying' is, it is easier to recognise what it is not, a single incident and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online. However, these conflicts still need to be addressed and resolved to the best of our abilities.

We recognise that 'Bullying' occurs outside of school, whether out in the public or over social media, where it becomes challenging to address at school without proper evidence. In these instances, parents/guardians are fully in their right to contact the authorities.

Bullying involves: Verbal bullying; Social/relations bullying; physical bullying; cyberbullying and bystanders.

Child Abuse

Four forms of child abuse are covered by Western Australian law:

1. Physical abuse occurs when a child is severely and/or persistently hurt or injured by an adult or a child's caregiver.
2. Sexual abuse, in relation to a child, includes sexual behaviour in circumstances where:
 - a) the child is the subject of bribery, coercion, a threat, exploitation or violence;
 - b) the child has less power than another person involved in the behaviour; or
 - c) there is a significant disparity in the developmental function or maturity of the child and another person involved in the behaviour.
3. Emotional abuse includes:
 - a) psychological abuse; and
 - b) being exposed to an act of family and domestic violence.
4. Neglect includes failure by a child's parents to provide, arrange or allow the provision of:
 - a) adequate care for the child; or
 - b) effective medical, therapeutic or remedial treatment for the child.

Cyberbullying

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Cyberbullying is the use of technology to bully a person or group with the intent to hurt them socially, psychologically or even physically.

Cyberbullying can occur in many ways, including:

- abusive texts and emails
- hurtful messages, images or videos
- imitating others online
- excluding others online
- humiliating others online
- nasty online gossip and chat.

The internet can open a world of connectivity and learning for young people, but to help them have enjoyable online experiences, it is critical that College staff are attuned to any signs of cyberbullying.

Corporal Punishment

Any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, forcing the child to stay in an uncomfortable position or completing physical tasks that are over and above what someone is capable of doing. It does not include the use of reasonable physical restraint to protect the child or others from harm.

Degrading Punishment

Any punishment which is incompatible with respect for human dignity, including corporal punishment and non-physical punishment which belittles, humiliates, denigrates, scapegoats, threatens, scares or ridicules the child.

A Child Safe Environment

SEDA College WA is committed to creating a Child Safe Environment. This includes the arrangement of the venue/campus and implementation of policies and procedures enables the provision of a child safe environment which assists to deter inappropriate interactions and facilitate detection. The College is committed to detecting and eliminating opportunities for grooming behaviour, bullying and harassment, child abuse, assaults and self-harm to occur.

The Australian Student Wellbeing Framework (ASWF)

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The College utilise and implement the five (5) elements of the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework when assessing and facilitating a child safe environment. The five (5) elements are:

- **LEADERSHIP:** Visible leadership to inspire positive schools
- **INCLUSION:** Inclusive and connected school culture
- **STUDENT VOICE:** Authentic student participation
- **PARTNERSHIPS:** Effective family in community partnerships
- **SUPPORT:** Wellbeing and support for positive behaviour

3. Legislation

Listed below include the legislation that impose types of duties and obligations upon schools:

- School Education Act 1999 (WA);
- Criminal Code 1913 (WA); Child Safe Organisations National Principals 2019 (Commonwealth); School Education Regulations 2000 (WA);
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth);
- Disability Standards for Education 2005;
- Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA); And,
- State Records Act 2000(WA).

4. Related Policies

Listed below are the College Policies that relate to the Bullying Prevention Policy:

- Behaviour Management Policy,
- Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting Policy,
- Student Code of Conduct,
- Staff Code of Conduct,
- Staff Handbook,
- Student Handbook,
- Anti-discrimination Harassment and Bullying Policy,
- Social Media Policy,
- Values and Mission of the College.

5. Recognising the Effects of Bullying

Each individual student who is being bullied or is bullying others will respond and act differently. A student's behaviours and moods can also change for a variety of reasons. Much bullying behaviour occurs out of sight of adults; however, a staff member is well placed to notice behaviour changes in a student they know, which may indicate the effects of bullying, including cyber bullying.

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Signs a teacher may notice:

- becomes aggressive and unreasonable
- change in student's demeanour/ engagement/ attendance
- starts or getting into fights
- refuses to talk about what is wrong
- student displays change in personality, for example more withdrawn, anxious, sad, angry etc...
- unexpected changes in their friendship groups
- excessive sleepiness or lack of focus in the classroom and in other activities
- higher levels of absenteeism
- decline in school work
- suicidal thoughts – these should be reported to leadership and parents/carers immediately.

Sometimes bullying can be less obvious. Signs can include:

- student is often alone or excluded from friendship groups at school
- student is a frequent target for teasing, mimicking or ridicule at school
- change in the student's ability or willingness to speak up in class and appears insecure or frightened.

Signs a parent may report:

- doesn't want to go to school
- changes in their method or route to school or are frightened of walking to school
- changes in sleep patterns
- changes in eating patterns
- frequent tears, anger, mood swings
- unexplained bruises, cuts, scratches
- missing or damaged belongings or clothes
- decline in physical health
- arriving home hungry.

Students who are more likely to be bullied are also more likely to:

- feel disconnected from school and not liking school
- lack of quality friendships at school
- displaying high levels of emotionality that indicate vulnerability and low levels of resilience
- be less accepted by peers, avoid conflict and be socially withdrawn
- have low self-esteem or negative self-perception
- be relatively non-assertive

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While all of the above are signs of possible bullying, they may also be signs that something else is happening with the child. Referral to the appropriate school personnel (Program Coordinator, Student Wellbeing Coordinator and/or Assistant Principal) to determine the cause of the issues is recommended.

6. Management of Bullying

For the management of bullying, College staff are to refer to the *Behaviour Management Policy* (located on mySEDA).

7. Responses to Bullying shown not to be effective

There are many beliefs about bullying and ways of dealing with behaviour that have been shown, through research, to be far less effective than whole-school positive behaviour support approaches. These include:

- zero tolerance and ‘get tough’ suspensions and exclusions in the absence of positive and preventative approaches
- rigid control of student behaviour
- belief that students must receive punitive and negative consequences in all cases
- increased security measures
- unfair and inconsistent use of discipline
- punishment without support
- responses which disempower students
- anti-bullying programs without complementary resilience building programs

8. Conclusion

SEDA College WA recognises that ‘Bullying’ is a major societal issue and will commit our staff in reducing and addressing bullying issues in a quick, non-judgemental way in order to support our students success in their final years of schooling.

9. Policy History

Version	Policy Owner	Approval Date	Effective Date	Summary of Changes

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