



CRANBROOK JUNIOR SCHOOL

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

18 June, 2007

1. WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is any individual or group action or words that use strength or power to coerce, threaten, persecute or oppress others repeatedly.

N.B.: When speaking with Junior School boys, the following definition is to be used:

Bullying is repeated intimidation of a person, using actions or words.

Simplifying the definition in this way makes it both comprehensible and memorable for the boys.

2. TYPES OF BULLYING

Bullying may be classified into three broad categories: **direct physical bullying**, **direct verbal bullying**, and **indirect bullying**. Examples of these are outlined below.

Direct physical bullying: Hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.

Direct verbal bullying: Name calling, insults, prejudiced remarks and verbal abuse.

Indirect bullying: This is more difficult to identify and is often designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. This includes, but is not limited to: lying and spreading rumours, playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate, mimicking, encouraging others to socially exclude someone, damaging someone's social reputation and social acceptance, and cyber-bullying which involves the use of email, text messages or chat rooms to humiliate and distress.

3. POSSIBLE SIGNS OF BULLYING OBSERVED AT SCHOOL OR AT HOME

Some signs that parents or teachers may observe when a child may be being bullied include:

- An unwillingness or refusal to go to school;
- Feeling ill in the mornings;
- A decline in quality of school work;
- Becoming withdrawn and lacking confidence;
- Crying at night, having nightmares;
- Asking for money or starting to steal (to pay the bully);
- Refusing to talk about what's wrong;
- Having unexplained bruises, cuts, scratches;
- Beginning to bully other children or siblings;
- Becoming aggressive and unreasonable.

When one or a combination of these signs is observed, it is helpful to approach the child about this privately and in a supportive manner in order to encourage the child to share what the cause of these signs are. These may not be related to bullying or the child may not want to discuss this initially. However, it is important that the opportunity is left open for the child to discuss the situation at a later time when they are ready.

4. WHAT BULLYING IS NOT

There are many negative behaviours which, although being distressing to those involved, are not classified as bullying. These instances often may require teacher intervention and management. The following situations are often confused with bullying:

Mutual conflict: In mutual conflict situations, there is an argument or disagreement between students, but not an imbalance of power. Mutual conflict may evolve into a bullying situation at some point if it is not resolved; for example, when one person becomes targeted repeatedly for 'retaliation' in a one-sided way.

Social rejection or dislike: Unless the social rejection is directed towards someone specific and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others, it is not bullying.

Single-episode acts of nastiness or meanness, or random acts of aggression or intimidation: Single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If a student is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion, this does not constitute being bullied. This does not, however, lessen the seriousness of the incident or the subsequent consequences.

5. INITIATIVES TO MINIMISE BULLYING WITHIN THE SCHOOL

There is an acknowledgement within the School that bullying should not be accepted as normal schoolyard banter or behaviour. It has been well documented that the experience of being bullied can contribute to outcomes such as low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, psychosomatic symptoms and school refusal. This can lead to negative educational and social outcomes. There is evidence that a whole-school approach to bullying education and intervention that involves parents, students and teachers from various parts of the school, is effective when implemented consistently. Cranbrook Junior School aims to achieve this consistency in attitudes and understanding of the issue of bullying through a multi-modal approach. This consists of the education of staff, students and parents, the utilisation of preventative programs, intervention and mediation through a Bullying Reference Group.

Education: Parents, teachers, and students are to be alerted to this policy. Regular professional development of staff on the topic of bullying will take place. This will be organised by and/or facilitated through the School Counsellor.

Prevention: Preventative programs are to be conducted that address current issues reflected in the literature. The 'Bounce Back' program is currently utilised K-6. This evidence-based program addresses issues related to bullying at each year level. A specific program targeting Year 5 students will concentrate on training students in the Helpful Bystander approach in addition to addressing issues of controlling anger and providing practically-based strategies to do so. This program will be delivered by the School Counsellor across one School term.

Intervention: Regular surveying of students will take place, to identify significant friendship or bullying issues within the school that may ordinarily go unnoticed by staff members. Within this process, it is possible to identify those children who are victims of bullying and offer support through small intervention groups, utilising the 'Confident Kids' program developed by Caroline Hunt and Kathryn Berry (University of Sydney). This program aims to enhance coping skills and prevent further psychological injury. The School Counsellor will be responsible for organising the administration of the surveys (with the assistance of the Deputy Head of Junior School) and conducting the intervention groups.

The Bullying Reference Group:

As in the Senior School, a Bullying Reference Group exists within the Junior School to address matters of a bullying nature that may arise. This group consists of several staff members, namely, the Head and Deputy Head of Junior School, the School Counsellor for the Junior School, and the Physical Education Teacher in the Junior School, in addition to the School Counsellor for the

Senior School and the Sportsmaster K-12 (to facilitate a whole-school approach). Matters of bullying will be dealt with in a timely fashion, unless there are exceptional circumstances which prevent this. The purpose of this group is to provide a forum for bullying issues that may arise. Only cases of bullying are referred to the reference group (see section: ‘What bullying is not’). Parents are to be contacted once students have been interviewed by one or more members of the Group. The aim of this group is to resolve issues in a non-judgemental environment, utilising a mediation process. A period of time is given to the student who has been engaging in the bullying behaviour in which to stop. If this behaviour is still evident at the end of the specified period, sanctions will be applied. If the bullying behaviour begins at any later stage, sanctions will be applied immediately. These sanctions will be, typically, at the level of an in-school suspension. Records will be kept by the Deputy Head of Junior School of all issues arising and their outcomes. All records will be passed on to the Senior School as students move into Year 7. N.B.: The process for dealing with bullying is depicted in Figure 1, below.

The Mediation Process

This process aims to support all students who have been bullied and those who have been engaging in bullying behaviour towards others. The primary goal of this process is to resolve conflicts through social problem solving and promote positive peer relations. The process encourages students to take responsibility for their behaviour as well as understand the other’s thoughts and feelings about the conflict. When the matter is referred to the Bullying Reference Group, the first step is to interview the victim and the student engaging in the bullying behaviour. A group meeting is then arranged with all the students involved, in addition to bystanders and supporters. During this meeting, both parties are encouraged to describe what the problem is and how it makes them feel. It is put upon the students to come up with several options for resolving the situation and consequences are discussed. Consensus is sought between all members of the group (including the staff members involved) as to which option to choose. Another meeting is arranged for a set time period to review the students’ progress and to assess whether the bullying behaviour has stopped. If the behaviour has not ceased, sanctions will be applied to the student(s) engaging in the bullying behaviour. It is explained that further sanctions may be applied if the behaviour continues.

6. WHAT TO DO IF BULLYING IS SUSPECTED

Staff

Report the matter to a member of the Bullying Reference Group. Do not assume that it is just teasing; it is mandatory to discuss any matter of this nature with the Bullying Reference Group, as there may be some history that is unknown to you.

Parents and Students

Report any suspected bullying behaviour to the School immediately. You may wish to contact a member of the Bullying Reference Group. However, it is advisable to speak to the Classroom Teacher first. Do not contact the parents of the boy engaging in the bullying behaviour. This may lead to further confrontation and restrict the effectiveness of the Bullying Reference Group in the mediation process.

If you would just like some advice on dealing with bullying at School, you may wish to contact the School Counsellor on 9327 9419 during term time.

Deputy Head of Junior School	Nick Saunders	9327 9472
School Counsellor (Junior School)	Sophie Heseltine	9327 9419
School Counsellor (Senior School)	John McCormack	9327 9413
Head of Junior School	Michael Dunn	9327 9472
Physical Education Teacher (Junior School)	Lloyd Harde	9327 9472
Sportsmaster K-12	Peter Stokes	9327 6864

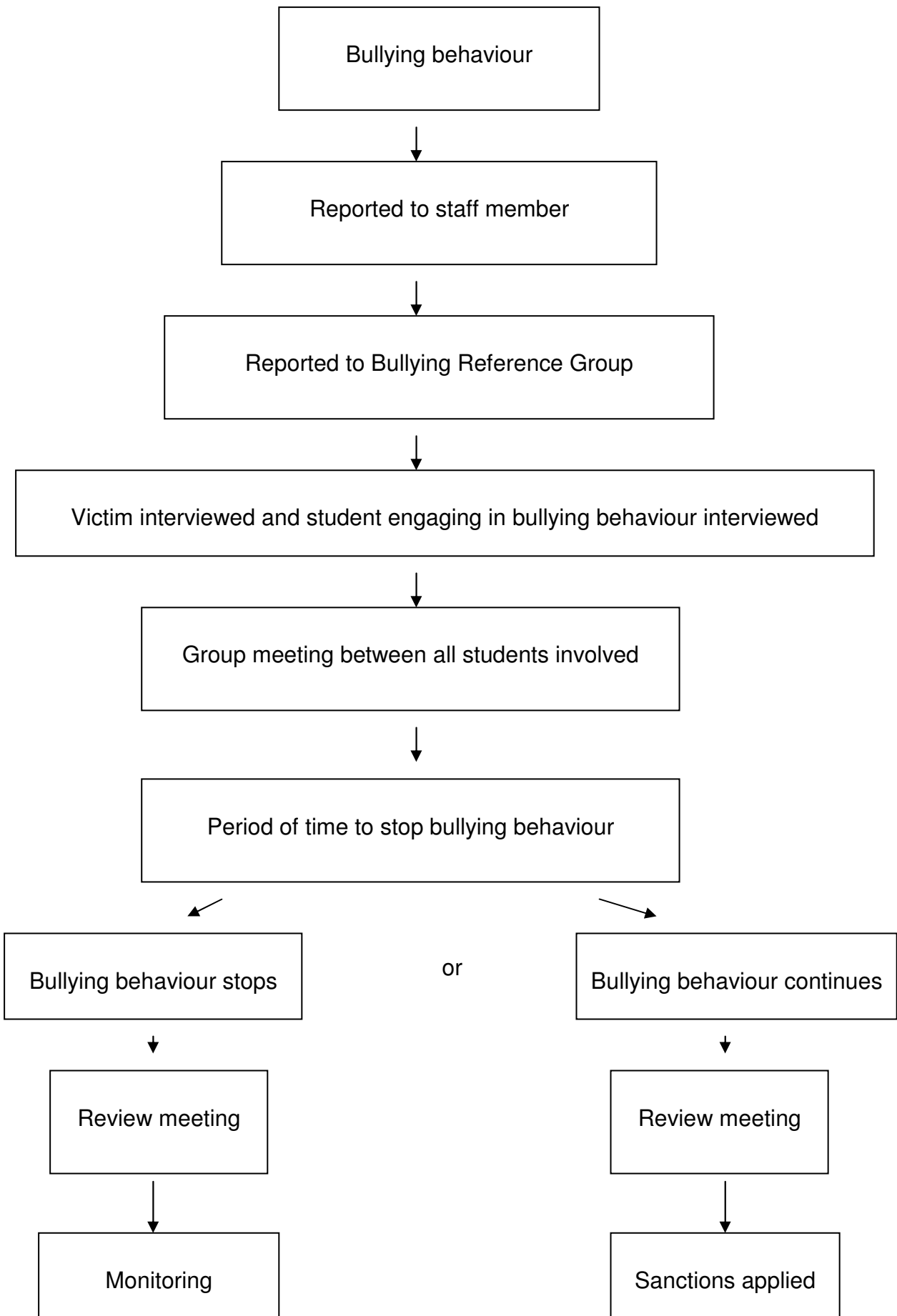


Figure 1: Process for Reporting and Dealing with Bullying Behaviour