Clifton Hill Primary School acknowledges that bullying will occur within our school on occasions. Acknowledging the likelihood that bullying will occur at times does not make it acceptable in our school. This acknowledgement is central to our approach, meaning that we provide a framework and a range of specific interventions to prevent and respond to bullying.

This handbook provides detailed strategies to assist all members of the school community to prevent and respond to bullying. It demonstrates that our approach is strategic, comprehensive and embedded. Student wellbeing is the core ethos of our teaching strategy. Our policies and their implementation are reflective of a whole-school approach where there is consistency between the understandings of staff, students, parents and the school’s leadership team about student wellbeing.

Any situation where a member of our school community feels unsafe at school due to bullying or any form of unacceptable behaviour such as harassment, discrimination or a threat or act of violence is not tolerated at CHPS.

Creating and maintaining a respectful and safe environment is a priority for our school. We expect that every student will thrive, learn and grow to enjoy a productive, rewarding and fulfilling life, while contributing to their local and global communities. A respectful and safe learning environment is an essential characteristic of our school, a place that is engaging and inclusive of a diverse range of learners.

Geoff Warren and Megan Smith
Chapter 1

What is bullying?

Bullying is when someone (or a group of people*) with more power than you intentionally uses negative words and/or actions against you, which causes you distress and risks your wellbeing. These behaviours are typically repeated. Bullying can be very harmful and it should not be part of a child’s development. Bullying may take different forms:

1. **Physical bullying**
   Using physical actions to bully, such as hitting, poking, tripping, pushing or repeatedly and intentionally damaging someone’s belongings.

2. **Verbal bullying**
   Using negative words, repeatedly and intentionally to upset someone. This includes name-calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks and verbal abuse.

3. **Social bullying**
   Lying, spreading rumours, playing a nasty joke, repeatedly mimicking someone or deliberately excluding someone.

4. **Cyber bullying**
   The use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others (Belsey, 2004).

* Distressing acts, when committed by more than one person (even when not collectively coordinated or premeditated) against an individual or a group are classified as group bullying.

What is not bullying?

Other forms of hurtful behaviour are often mistaken for bullying. Upsetting and harmful things may happen, but not all of them are bullying.

**Mutual arguments and disagreements**

Mutual arguments or disagreements are upsetting, but usually everyone involved wants to solve the problem. A mutual argument or disagreement is not bullying.
Chapter 2
What underpins our approach?

Effective Whole-School Behaviour Management
Our school has an effective whole-school behaviour management system, as outlined in our Student Engagement Policy. This policy aims to develop a culture:

- That is firm about unacceptable behaviour and provides incentives for acceptable behaviour
- With high levels of staff satisfaction and morale. With a low rate of staff turnover we develop more consistency and connectedness
- Where teachers are supported by a fair behaviour management system
- Where teachers are prepared to trial and ‘where appropriate’ implement new wellbeing and anti-bullying initiatives and
- Where teachers have adequate time available to undertake personal and social learning activities with their students.

Bullying in our school community

We recognise that any person at CHPS (students, parents, staff members or any other member of the school community) may bully and/or be affected by bullying behaviours. Any instance of bullying in our school community is unacceptable. Any instances of adults being involved in bullying will immediately be referred to and handled by the school principal.

Not liking someone
Unless you deliberately and repeatedly try to cause someone distress, exclude them or encourage others to dislike them, not liking someone is not bullying.

Random or one-off events
Acts of meanness, spite, conflict, rejection, exclusion, physical harm and emotional aggression hurt people and can cause great distress, but are not automatically classified as bullying. Bullying involves deliberately causing this distress. These acts are typically repeated before being classified as bullying.

The definitions of bullying presented above have been developed and are predominantly informed by The National Centre Against Bullying (NCAB, 2011a; NCAB, 2011b and NCAB, 2011c).

School Pride, High Expectations and Enjoyment
CHPS has a strong sense of school pride amongst teachers, students and the wider school community. We set very high expectations for teachers and students. We have a strong commitment to fostering student interests and engagement in a variety of ways and students speak enthusiastically about their enjoyment of school.

Research has identified the above factors as helping students feel safe at school and reducing the incidence of bullying (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2010).
Chapter 3

Prevention

Bullying prevention at CHPS involves a range of practices and approaches, including social-emotional learning, staff development and collaboration, and fostering student connectedness through leadership and multi-age opportunities.

At the beginning of every school year all teachers discuss our values with their class and establish agreed behavioural expectations.

Social-Emotional Learning
All class teachers focus on social-emotional learning and respond to student behavioural needs and issues as they arise. Social-emotional learning may cover (but is not limited to) the following topics:

- Making friends
- Being friends
- Taking turns
- Sharing
- Listening to our friends and classmates
- Being assertive
- Cooperating
- Compromising
- Handling anger
- Resolving conflict

Habits of Mind
Habits of Mind are 16 habits (or dispositions), originally identified by Dr. Arthur L. Costa and further developed by Costa with Bena Kallick. A Habit of Mind means having a disposition toward behaving intelligently when confronted with problems, the answers to which are not immediately known. Habits of Mind is a resource that is available across the whole school.

Staff development and support

Mentoring of new school staff
To provide an adequate introduction to our school and its culture and policies, all new staff members at Clifton Hill Primary School are mentored by an experienced employee with expertise in their area. This includes all new classroom and specialist teaching staff (not only graduate teachers) as well as integration aides and other employees.

Providing a supportive learning environment for all new members of staff is a vital component in our school’s broader approach to wellbeing. This mentoring provides an ideal environment for staff members to discuss behaviour management strategies and promotes consistency and collaboration across the school in our approach to preventing and responding to bullying.

Strong Staff Collaboration
Evidence suggests that strong staff collaboration is a protective factor in increasing safety at school (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2010). At CHPS teachers work collaboratively to support each other, to develop and implement curriculum and to develop policies and practices that promote effective teaching and learning as well as student and staff wellbeing.

Monitoring
At CHPS bullying incidents are recorded and this data is used to inform our approach. Teachers are proactive in recording social-emotional concerns which highlight:

- Issues specific to the needs of the grade
- Recurring issues (specifically those occurring in the schoolyard)
- Social isolation
- Social conflict
- Suspected bullying
- Violence/anger management issues
- Combinations of friends that cause problems
- Consequences of behaviour
Student Connectedness

Student Leadership and Ownership
Student leadership and ownership of decision-making processes is another important protective factor in improving student safety and wellbeing at school (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2010). We value and involve students in decision-making processes in our school.

Junior School Council
Junior School Council involves elected student representatives from grades One to Six who meet fortnightly to discuss a range of school issues. It provides opportunities for students to work collaboratively with cross-age peers. It also provides a formal structure for all students’ voices to be heard and valued within our school, and an important forum for the development of student leadership skills.

Peer Activity Leaders (PAL)
PAL is a program that works to promote physical activity, school connectedness and social competency in junior students. It also develops leadership skills, responsibility and community awareness in senior students. Grade Six students are trained to take on the role of Peer Activity Leaders. These students plan and run lunchtime games and activities for younger students.

A key aspect of the program is increasing participation among those who may be isolated at school or not normally involved in physical activity. This is achieved through the targeting of specific participants, the skills of the young leaders and the games and activities chosen.

Many schools report a range of changes after implementing PAL (OzChild, 2011):
- Increased physical activity of students
- Reduced bullying and suspensions
- Increased peer relationships, a safer school environment and positive changes in school culture
- Increased participation by young people previously excluded
- Increased motivation and involvement by senior students in the school

For student leaders PAL provides opportunities to develop:
- Leadership skills such as communication, decision making, organisation, managing groups and peer support
- Social skills including planning, initiative, cooperation, self-esteem, confidence, relationship building, teamwork, peer support and skills to increase the participation of younger students
- Satisfaction through assisting younger students.

For student participants PAL provides opportunities to develop:
- Increased participation in physical activity and increased fitness and skills
- Skills through modeling behaviour from senior students
- Increased confidence, resilience and a sense of teamwork
- Increased interaction with older school students
- Their relationships with peers.

All students in Prep, Grade One and Grade Two are invited to participate in PAL. This program operates at lunchtime, with students supervised by a teacher and a Peer Activity Leader.

Other cross-age and multi-age activities
The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (2010), identifies cross-age and multi-age interaction as an effective method to promote positive student-to-student relationships. The provision of a wide range of extra-curricular activities has several other positive effects:
- Students involved in productions, clubs and teams get to work and form relationships with a wide range of same-age and cross-age peers. This changes the culture of the school and can result in less bullying of younger students by older students
- Many extra-curricular activities are offered during lunchtimes (e.g. choir, chess club, student newspaper etc.) providing a range of stimulating activities that can support students who may be experiencing difficulties in the playground.
The following initiatives are offered to students at CHPS. Such activities may vary from year to year.

Buddying
Our school has run a buddy program for many years. Buddy systems can help to promote friendship and support between older and younger peers through regular collaboration between their classes, which fosters a sense of whole-school community. The key characteristic of our buddy system is the participation of older students in positive, supportive, structured and facilitated one-on-one relationships with younger students.

Choir
The school choir practise one lunchtime a week throughout the school year. Choir is open to all interested students from grades Two - Six. The school choir attends and performs at concerts with other school choirs (through the Boite concerts), performs at community and other events (e.g. nursing homes) and performs at school assemblies and the school’s annual fete. The choir is also an integral component of all school performances and productions.

Music Ensembles
The school offers interested students from grades Two - Six who play a musical instrument the opportunity to join a music ensemble. These ensembles often rehearse during class times and/or lunch times. Our music ensembles perform at community and other events (e.g. nursing homes) and perform at school assemblies and the school’s annual fete. The music ensembles are also an integral component of all school performances and productions.

Chess Club
Chess Club operates at lunch times once each week. This is an activity that is heavily subscribed, with places in the program filling quickly each term.

Student Newspaper
Since 2008, our school has published a student newspaper The Clifton Hill Chronicle, once per term. Students from grades 2-6 work collaboratively to write articles and features for the newspaper.

Teachers are alert to other possible activities for students that may assist in the development of social skills and the prevention of bullying as new clubs or activities arise over time.

Chapter 4
Responding to bullying

Being informed before responding
Prior to taking any action to intervene in response to bullying, classroom teachers aim to become informed about the nature of these behaviours. This may include:

- Meeting (individually or in groups) with suspected bullies, students who may have witnessed bullying behaviours and students who have been bullied
- Anonymously surveying their class about bullying (an anonymous survey may include information about locations where students are bullied, students who bully, students who are bullied, frequency of bullying, duration of bullying, etc.)

Where teachers suspect bullying is taking place amongst their students, intervention rarely takes place without consultation and collaboration with colleagues. A classroom teacher is most likely to discuss bullying with some (or all) of the following colleagues prior to (and during) any intervention:

- Colleagues teaching in the same year-level
- An integration aide working within their class
- Their section leader
- Assistant Principal or Principal
- A mentor or other respected colleague
- A member of the school’s leadership team
- Specialist teachers

CHPS utilises a range of different approaches, depending upon the context of the bullying situation. These approaches are:

The Traditional Disciplinary Approach
This approach is reliant on establishing the culpability of suspected bullies and then administering appropriate and effective sanctions as a punishment and a deterrent.

Whilst this approach may have limited success in changing behaviours, it is considered appropriate for our school on some occasions. When dealing with severe behaviours (for example violent or illegal acts), it is appropriate for sanctions to be imposed. When dealing with students in the early years of schooling (for whom the other approaches may not be appropriate), clear sanctions that reinforce the need for more desirable behaviours may be most effective. Finally, when dealing with very minor incidents, a short, sharp sanction may be all that is needed to stop or reduce specific behaviours.
Chapter 5
Cyber Bullying

Definition:
The definitions of cyber bullying vary among researchers but usually include four component parts; malicious intention, aggression, repetitiveness and a power imbalance. Belsey (2004) defined cyber bullying as “the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others.” Similarly, Smith et al. (2008) defined cyber bullying as an aggressive intentional act carried out by an individual or group, using electronic media repeated over time. The definition was extended to include a victim who was not able to easily defend themselves.

Common examples of cyber bullying:
Among primary aged children cyber bullying may take the form of excluding another child from an online game. Children may ignore someone in a game or deny them access to play a game in which mutual friends are involved. It is also common that children divulge their passwords to their close friends. In some instances, particularly if the friendship breaks down, the friend may enter their online accounts from the hacked account. Other forms of cyber bullying typical in a primary school setting include sending unkind or threatening messages from mobile devices, anonymous email account, or through using the chat function in games.

Prevention:
CHPS is committed to providing cyber safety education to students, parents and teachers. Our psychologist, who is completing a doctorate in the field of cyber safety and runs cyber safety education programs nationally to schools, conducts these workshops, delivered to students, teachers and parents. Teachers at all year levels provide cyber safety education to their students.

Our school has a comprehensive approach to Cyber Safety. We recognise the need to promote healthy and respectful use of technology, both at and away from school. We recognise that whilst our responses to cyber bullying may differ depending on where these behaviours occur, the necessity to educate our students about safe and respectful online behaviours remains.

Strengthening the Victim
This approach involves training the person who has been bullied to act assertively in all interactions with their peers. This approach is almost always one of the responses considered appropriate at CHPS.

The Support Group Method
This approach seeks to develop empathy from those who have been involved in bullying. A meeting is held with all students involved in the bullying behaviour, as well as other students, with the aim of improving the situation.

The Method of Shared Concern
This approach aims to resolve a problem by involving all participants — first as individuals and then as group members — to work towards a shared solution.

Both of the above two approaches have been used successfully at Clifton Hill Primary School. These approaches have been successful in helping to resolve or improve bullying situations with students from Grade One to Grade Six. These approaches are non-punitive in nature; they seek to develop empathy and to involve participants in actively solving the problem, rather than seeking blame and punishment.

A measured response
At times where our response has not produced a change in bullying behaviours, it is appropriate to escalate this situation to more senior members of staff and to insist upon the involvement of parents. This approach is often non-punitive in nature, but allows for a graduated, measured response when previous interventions have not produced a safe school environment. Our school’s Student Engagement Policy outlines steps involved in responding to bullying.
How parents can support students at home
There are many ways you can support your child to navigate the online world:

- Talking to your child about their use of online games and sites will help you to develop shared understandings with them about safe use. The most powerful tool you have in protecting your child whilst they are online is your success in developing trusting, open communication so that your child promptly shares with you their concerns about unsafe, unwanted or inappropriate content.
- Encourage children to keep their passwords private, as peers can enter their accounts, impersonate them and sometimes send bullying messages on their behalf.
- Encourage children to avoid clicking on popup ads as these can download viruses to your computer. Children may also be tempted to play games that appear on popup ads, which promise prizes for winning. However, in order to claim this prize they must enter credit card details or your mobile phone number. Entering these details may unwittingly authorise a charge to your credit card or mobile phone.
- Empower yourself and familiarise yourself with the games your child uses so you understand both their benefits and potential pitfalls.

Chapter 6
What can parents do?

Encouraging children to help someone who is being bullied
Children can do constructive things to counter bullying and its effects, such as:

- Expressing disapproval by refusing to be amused at what is happening; even walking away is better than just standing there.
- Informing adults when an incident of bullying occurs. It is not ‘dobbing’ to tell a teacher or carer. Children who are being bullied need to be helped by adults.
- Helping to resolve conflicts between children when they arise. Conflicts can sometimes lead to bullying.
- Offering comfort and support afterwards to a child who has been bullied.

Helping a child who is being bullied
Parents can help by being observant and noticing changes in mood and behaviour. Younger children may find it difficult to explain what is wrong. Talking it over with your child’s teacher may lead to a better understanding of what is happening.

Simply listening sympathetically helps. Such support can reduce the pain and upset. It never helps to say it’s your child’s problem and that he or she must simply stand up to bullying behaviour, whatever the situation. Sometimes this course of action is impractical, especially if a group is involved. Nor does it help if a parent is over-protective, for example, by saying, ‘Never mind. I will look after you. You don’t have to go to school’.

Here are some suggestions for talking with your child and trying to understand the situation from their point of view:

- Find out what has been happening and how your child has been reacting and feeling.
- Suggest things to do when he or she is picked on. Sometimes by acting assertively or not over-reacting, the bullying can be stopped. It is always much better if children, with a bit of good advice, can do something to help themselves.
- Explore with your child what leads to the bullying. Sometimes a child may be provoking others by annoying or irritating them, and can learn not to do so.
- Sometimes it is wise to discuss what places it might be best to avoid, and, on occasions, whom to stay close to in threatening situations.
- Make a realistic assessment of the seriousness of the bullying and plan accordingly.
Some children who bully feel hurt themselves, sometimes because of unkind treatment they have experienced, and seek to take it out on somebody who they can bully. In some cases, children bully because they are trying to get even with somebody. It could be a person who used to be a friend against whom they now have a grudge.

A child may bully because he or she believes that members of some groups deserve to be treated badly, because of their race, ethnicity, interests or appearance. Such prejudice is at the root of much bullying. Some children may bully because they get admired for bossing people around and it makes them feel good and safe from being bullied themselves.

Sometimes (but not always) they are impulsive children who find it hard to control their anger. They may lack the social skills to get on with people, although some are clever and manipulative.

Among children who bully there are some who are very unhappy. Often they have not learned to be cooperative and responsible individuals. Knowing why a child bullies never excuses bullying behaviour, but it can sometimes help parents know how best to change the way the child behaves.

A child’s bullying behaviour at school may come as a surprise to parents because the child may act differently at home. Parents of children who bully others should think carefully about why their child does so. The possible reasons listed above may provide some clues.

Parents should not assume they are to blame for their child’s misbehaviour, especially as the child gets older. But at the same time, they should ask whether they or someone in the family ever model bullying behaviour, and whether the child is copying this behaviour. Consider whether the child who bullies feels very frustrated in the home and wants to hurt others as a consequence.

When children start preschool or school they experience new pressures from peers and sometimes respond by trying to dominate whoever they can by bullying them. Whatever the reason, even if the child thinks it is ‘just fun’, parents should firmly disapprove and insist that bullying stop.

Rather than abuse or threaten a child who engages in bullying, parents may quietly share their concern for what has been happening to the victim and firmly insist that it must not happen again.
Parents working with teachers

Parents of children who have been bullied by their peers have a right to seek help. Teachers have a responsibility to do what they can to help. Parents of bullied children should be as clear as possible about when, where and how their child was bullied, how the child responded and how he or she was affected. It is a common (and understandable) mistake for parents to get angry and accuse the school of negligence. This often makes matters worse. Parents, however, have a right to a sympathetic hearing.

Parents and teachers need to cooperate to solve bullying problems. When meeting with parents, teachers will focus on what is being done to stop bullying. Often action is needed by both parties.

A few children who are bullied may actually provoke such treatment and will be helped to avoid doing so. Many more children, however, have done nothing to bring on the bullying. The school is prepared to take decisive action by confronting the bullying behaviour and involving the parents of children who bully.

This chapter has been significantly informed by Professor Ken Rigby’s (2003) Bullying among young children: A guide for parents.

BULlying RESOURCES

For Students, Parents and Teachers

Bullies Out
bulliesout.com
A UK charity organisation that offers a wide range of excellent resources about bullying.

Bully Blocking
Evelyn Field is one of Australia’s most respected bullying and social resilience experts and researchers. This is her website.

Bullying No Way
bullyingnoway.com.au/default.shtml
An anti-bullying resource developed by Australian education authorities.

Ken Rigby
kenrigby.net
This website has a wide range of resources from Dr. Ken Rigby. Dr. Rigby is one of Australia’s leading researchers and experts on bullying. In 2011, he presented professional development for teachers at Clifton Hill Primary School, as well as a Parent Information Evening. Dr. Rigby consulted with the school’s leadership about our approach to preventing and addressing bullying as well as advising on the development of this handbook.

Kidscape
kidscape.org.uk
Another UK site that offers some excellent resources on bullying and cyber safety.

The National Centre Against Bullying
ncab.org.au
An initiative of the Allarah and Madaline Foundation, this is an excellent resource on bullying and cyber safety.

CyBER safety RESOURCES

For Students, Parents and Teachers

Cybersmart
cybersmart.gov.au
Cybersmart provides activities, resources and practical advice to help young kids, kids, teens and parents safely enjoy the online world. Cybersmart also offers training and resources for schools and materials for library staff. Developed by the Australian Communications and Media Authority, Cybersmart is part of the Australian Government’s cybersafety program.

Headspace
headspace.org.au/its-it-just-me/find-information/cyberbullying
A resource launched in 2012 by the National Youth Mental Health Foundation.

The Easy Guide to Socialising Online
dbcke.gov.au/easyguide
A resource launched in 2012 by the Australian Government’s Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy.

NetSmartz Workshop
netsmartkids.org
NetSmart Workshop is an interactive, educational program of the United States National Center for Missing & Exploited Children® (NCMEC) that provides age-appropriate resources to help teach children how to be safer on- and offline. The program is designed for children ages 5-17, parents and guardians, educators, and law enforcement. With resources such as videos, games, activity cards, and presentations, NetSmart entertains while it educates.

Kidscape
kidscape.org.uk
A UK site that offers some excellent resources on bullying and cybersafety.

For Students

thinkuknow.org.au/kids
ThinkUKnow is an Internet safety program delivering resources to students across Australia. It targets students aged 11 years and older. Created by the UK Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre, ThinkUKnow Australia has been developed by the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and Microsoft Australia.

For Parents and Teachers

thinkuknow.org.au
ThinkUKnow is an Internet safety program delivering interactive training to parents, carers and teachers through primary and secondary schools across Australia using a network of accredited trainers. Created by the UK Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre, ThinkUKnow Australia has been developed by the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and Microsoft Australia.

For Parents

raisingchildren.net.au
By clicking on the Early Teens tab and then selecting Entertainment and Technology parents can access a range of excellent articles, videos and other resources.
For Teachers

Connect.ed
acma.janison.com/acma

Connect.ed is an innovative, self-paced cybersafety education program offered by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) as part of their Cybersmart resources. Connect.ed is designed for primary and secondary school teachers, casual relief teachers and support staff throughout Australia. Teachers who have attended a Cybersmart Outreach presentation can use this program to refresh, reinforce and build their cybersafety knowledge.

REFERENCES


NCAB – see National Centre Against Bullying


