



*Policy Statement on Bullying*

John Willcock College respects the rights of all people to be free from all forms of bullying and harassment. Care, courtesy, consideration are expected and encouraged at John Willcock College and they form the basis for all our dealings with one another.

John Willcock College :

- Expects a high standard of behaviour at all times.
- Is committed to providing a safe, caring and inclusive learning environment for everyone.
- Maintains that everyone has the right to be free from all forms of bullying and harassment.
- Encourages and positively reinforces behaviours which show care, courtesy and consideration.
- Has a policy for identifying, preventing and dealing with bullying.
- Empowers students and parents about issues related to bullying.
- Offers support to all students through its pastoral care system and the pastoral care role of all teachers.
- Promotes Restorative Practice processes.

### **WHAT IS BULLYING?**

Bullying is any ongoing wilful, conscious behaviour intended to hurt another person, either physically or emotionally. It may also be part of an ongoing series of incidents.

Bullying is a form of abuse in that it is repetitive, often hidden and involves a misuse of power against an individual or group.

Bullying can be direct and observable or indirect and difficult to identify. Any student can be engaged in bullying or be bullied as the reasons vary for each situation. The “nice” student can be just as involved in bullying as a student who has obvious social skills issues.

Bullying can take many forms including:

**Social/relational:** eg. ostracising, rumours, social exclusion

**Physical:** eg. kick, pinch, physical and sexual assault

**Mental/psychological:** eg. stalking, threats, sexual harassment

**Verbal:** eg. name-calling, swearing, put downs

**Cyber:** eg. inappropriate SMS messaging, emails.

Bullying can involve harassment towards others including racism, sexual harassment and homophobia.

Some students may be vulnerable to bullying due to disability, appearance or in some cases jealousy related to achievement or popularity (“tall poppy syndrome”).

### **BULLYING IS A SERIOUS ISSUE**

Bullying is not “OK”. John Willcock College does not tolerate bullying. Bullying leads to emotional and/or physical pain and stress for the person being bullied. Sometimes, those of us who remain passive onlookers can unintentionally encourage bullying behaviour. This tradition of silence reinforces bullying and this silence is a barrier that must be broken down.

**As a student of JWC, it is your right and your responsibility to report bullying to any member of staff, whether it happens to you or to someone else.**

## **WHAT CAN YOU DO IF YOU ARE A WITNESS TO BULLYING**

**You should care enough to want to do something: “Lend a Hand”**

- Take action as the bullying occurs by saying “Leave him/her alone”.
- Report the incident to a member of staff as soon as you can. It is OK to ask for privacy and confidentiality, or make an anonymous report that will alert the staff to a trouble spot or a bullying incident.
- Offer support to the person being bullied. Make suggestions about handling it. Encourage him/her to get help from an adult, a friend or his family.
- Refer to the brochure **“What to do if I see someone else being bullied”**.

## **WHAT CAN YOU DO IF YOU ARE BULLIED**

**Recognise that you can take positive action. “Take a Stand”. Often bullies want a reaction. A solution can take time. Seek assistance and be assured that there are many people who will help.**

**There is a range of possible options.**

- Be assertive, acknowledge your rights. State “Leave me alone!”
- Do not retaliate with physical or verbal aggression
- Ignore it. If you show that you are not upset, the harassment may stop.
- Laugh it off, use humour.
- Build your own protection by establishing friends.
- Be smart about avoiding high risk places and times.
- Talk about it with others who can help you decide how to handle the situation eg. your family, friends, peer skills students.
- Talk about it with those who can take action, eg. Teachers, Sub School Leaders, Student Services Manager, Chaplain, Nurse, School Psychologist, AIEO’s Associate Principal, or Principal.
- Refer to the brochure **“What to do if I am being bullied”**.

**WE TAKE BULLYING SERIOUSLY AND WANT TO STOP IT. No one deserves to be bullied and we are going to do everything we can to stop it.**

## **CONSEQUENCES**

In the event that a student (who has been found to be bullying) does not change their behaviour after steps outlined in this document have been followed, then any or all of the following consequences may be applied:

- Detention and/or withdrawal from class and school events.
- Consultation with parents.
- Restorative Justice Conference between both parties.
- Reparations for any damage caused.
- Supervised formal apology to the victim as part of the Restorative Justice Process.
- Referral to Student Services Manager and/or Associate Principal.
- Suspension from school, resuming only with the clear undertaking by the student that they will demonstrate positive behaviour in place of the unacceptable bullying behaviour.
- Police charges can also be made in the event of physical bullying.
- Exclusion.

The message for people who bully is ***“your behaviour is inappropriate and must be stopped and we will take steps to ensure that it does stop”!***

## **PARENTS – YOU CAN HELP!**

### **Positive parental support and influence is vital**

- You are influential models in your child’s life.

### **Build a welcoming and inclusive home environment**

- Encourage your child to bring friends home.
- Acknowledge and accept differences in others.

### **Encourage your child’s self esteem**

- Value your child for who they are.
- Be positive in your words and actions.
- Nurture your child’s positive qualities.

### **Discuss social, community and relationship issues openly**

- Discuss John Willcock College’s expectations about behaviour.
- Discuss how your child could best respond if bullied.
- Discuss what your son/daughter could do as a witness to bullying.

### **Be observant. Look out for tell-tale signs such as:**

- Unwillingness to attend school.
- Wanting to be driven to or from school.
- Declining academic performance.
- Loss of interest in sporting or social events.
- Frequent loss of possessions and/or money.
- Asking for or stealing money.
- Unexplained bruises, scratches or torn clothing.
- Change in eating or sleeping patterns.
- Refusal to say what the problem is.

Sometimes, students are reluctant to talk over such matters with parents because they fear that decisions will be taken out of their hands and that “nothing can be done!” It is important to maintain trust by respecting your child’s right to judge what action to take.

Refer to the JWC brochure **“What to do if my child is bullied”?** and visit the websites

[www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov](http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov) and [www.bullyingnoway.com.au](http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au)