

# Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy and Guidelines

## Overview

The policy applies to all student bullying behaviour, including cyber bullying that occurs in and off school premises and outside of school hours where there is a clear and close relationship between the school and the conduct of the student.

## Policy

Kamaroi Rudolf Steiner School works with the indications given by Rudolf Steiner aiming to create a safe and caring environment which promotes personal growth and positive self-esteem for all.

Bullying behaviour in any form does not belong in such an environment where positive assertive communication is promoted and difference is valued.

No student, employee, parent, caregiver or community member should experience bullying within the learning or working environments of Kamaroi Rudolf Steiner School.

In any bullying incident there are likely to be three parties involved: the bully, the person being bullied, and bystanders.

Kamaroi Rudolf Steiner School recognises its duty to students to provide a safe and positive learning environment where individual differences and diversity within the school is respected and accepted.

- Bullying is not tolerated at Kamaroi Rudolf Steiner School.
- If bullying behavior is occurring, staff take responsibility to meet with families to gain information. The school then investigates.
- Once it is ascertained that bullying behavior is occurring teachers meet with the children and parents of children involved.
- Bullying will be managed through a 'whole of school community' approach involving students, staff and parents/carers;
- Bullying prevention strategies be implemented within the school on a continuous basis with a focus on teaching age appropriate skills and strategies to empower staff, students and parents/carers to recognise bullying and respond appropriately;
- Bullying response strategies be tailored to the circumstances of each incident;
- Staff establish positive role models emphasising our no-bullying culture.
- Bullying prevention and intervention strategies are reviewed on an annual basis against best practice

## **Bullying can take many forms including:**

**Physical bullying** which involves physical actions such as hitting, pushing, obstructing or being used to hurt or intimidate someone. Damaging, stealing or hiding personal belongings is also a form of physical bullying.

**Psychological bullying** is when words or actions are used to cause psychological harm. Examples of psychological bullying include name calling, teasing or making fun of someone because of their actions, appearance, physical characteristics or cultural background.

**Indirect bullying** is when deliberate acts of exclusion or spreading of untrue stories are used to hurt or intimidate someone.

**Cyber bullying** is the ongoing abuse of power to threaten or harm another person using technology. Cyber bullying can occur in chat rooms, on social networking sites, through emails or on mobile phones.

## **There are many negative situations which, whilst being potentially distressing for students, are not bullying. These include:**

**Mutual Conflict Situations** which arise where there is disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Mutual conflict situations need to be closely monitored as they may evolve into a bullying situation; or

**One Off Acts** (of aggression or meanness) including single incidents of loss of temper, shouting or swearing do not normally constitute bullying.

## **Major behaviour changes in a student may be indicative of bullying. Such behavioural changes may include:**

- Crying at night and having nightmares;
- Refusing to talk when asked "What's wrong?";
- Having unexplained bruises, cuts or scratches;
- 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;
- Beginning to bully siblings; and
- Acting unreasonably.

Parents/carers are encouraged to recognise signs of bullying and notify the school through a trusted staff member immediately (such as a class teacher), if they suspect their child is a victim of bullying.

## **Bullying Prevention Strategies**

Kamaroi Rudolf Steiner School recognises that the implementation of whole school prevention strategies is the most effective way of eliminating, or at least minimising incidents of bullying within our community.

## **The following initiatives form part of our overall bullying prevention strategy and our strategy to create a 'no bullying' culture within the school:**

- A structured curriculum and peer group support system, that provides age appropriate information and skills relating to bullying (including cyber bullying) and bullying prevention, to students over the course of the academic year;
- Education, training and professional development of staff in bullying prevention and response strategies;
- Regular provision of information to parents/carers, to raise awareness of bullying as a school community issue to equip them to recognise signs of bullying, as well as to provide them with clear paths for raising any concerns they may have relating to bullying directly with the school;
- Promotion of a supportive environment that encourages the development of positive relationships and communication between staff, students and parents/carers;

- Promotion of responsible bystander behaviour amongst students, staff and parents/carers;
- Reporting of incidents of alleged bullying by students, bystanders, parents/carers and staff are encouraged, and made easy through the establishment of multiple reporting channels (as specified below);
- Regular risk assessments of bullying within the school are undertaken by surveying students to identify bullying issues that may ordinarily go unnoticed by staff;
- Records of reported bullying incidents are maintained and analysed, in order to identify persistent bullies and/or victims and to implement targeted prevention strategies where appropriate;
- Promotion of student awareness and a 'no bullying' environment by participating in events

## Reporting Bullying

Students and their parents/carers are sometimes reluctant to pursue bullying incidents, for fear that it will only make matters worse.

A key part of Kamaroi Rudolf Steiner School's bullying prevention and intervention strategy is to encourage reporting of bullying incidents as well providing assurance to students who experience bullying (and parents/carers) that:

- Bullying is not tolerated within the school;
- Their concerns will be taken seriously; and
- The school has a clear strategy for dealing with bullying issues.

**Bullying incidents can be advised to the school verbally (or in writing) through any of the following avenues:**

- Informing a trusted teacher;
- Informing the Student Liaison Officer
- Informing the Principal

**Bullying behaviours vary enormously in their extent and intent and, as a consequence, each incident needs to be dealt with on its facts.**

**In all circumstances the school:**

- Takes bullying incidents seriously;
- Provides assurance to the victim that they are not at fault and their confidentiality will be respected;
- Takes time to properly investigate the facts including discussing the incident with the victim, the bully and any bystanders;
- Takes time to understand any concerns of individuals involved;
- Works with parents/caregivers to communicate relevant information shared by the bully or victim.
- Maintains records of reported bullying incidents; and
- Will escalate its response when dealing with persistent bullies and/or severe incidents.

## **Actions that may be taken when responding to bullying include:**

- Notification of/Consultation with parents/carers;
- Offering counselling to persistent bullies/victims;
- Implementing effective follow up strategies; and

Disciplinary action at the Principal's discretion including suspension and expulsion of persistent bullies, or in cases of severe incidents.

## **School Liaison Police and/or Youth Liaison Officers, and other support services available to the School community**

### **Youth Liaison Officers**

Youth Liaison Officers are NSW Police Force members who are responsible for administering the Young Offenders Act 1997 (NSW). They are responsible for delivering cautions, referring children to youth justice conferences, and implementing strategies to reduce crime by juveniles in the community.

The Youth Liaison Officer allocated to Kamaroi Rudolf Steiner School is Robyn Jennings. The Youth Liaison Officer can be contacted on 02 99713341.

### **School Liaison Police**

School Liaison Police are NSW Police officers who work with schools to reduce crime, violence and anti-social behaviour. School Liaison Police are a point of contact for the school community and the NSW Police Force. Our students are encouraged to contact the School Liaison police if they have any concerns.

Our School Liaison Police Officer is Darren Cairnes. The School Liaison Police Officer can be contact on 02 99713341.

### **Other Support Services**

Kamaroi Rudolf Steiner School also provides access to **Counselling Services (Student)**.

## **All Staff are responsible to:**

- Model appropriate behaviour at all times;
- Deal with all reported and observed incidents of bullying in accordance with this policy;
- Ensure that any incident of bullying that they observe or is reported to them, is recorded appropriately;
- Be vigilant in monitoring students that have been identified as either persistent bullies or victims; and
- Acknowledge the right of parents/carers to speak with school authorities if they believe their child is being bullied.

## Implementation

This policy is implemented through a combination of:

- Staff training;
- Student and parent/carer education and information;
- Effective incident reporting procedures;
- Effective management of bullying incidents when reported;
- The creation of a 'no bullying' culture within the school community;
- Effective record keeping procedures; and
- Initiation of corrective actions where necessary.

Bullying prevention and intervention strategies are reviewed on an annual basis against best practice. For further information on our policies relating to Bullying please contact the School Office.