

Advice for students and parents

What to do if you're bullied

- 1) If it is minor and it doesn't bother you, ignore it.
- 2) If the bullying continues, tell the bully that you do not like what is happening and you want it to stop. Use an assertive, confident sounding voice.
- 3) If the bullying continues past this point, tell your Head of Year. He or she will investigate the problem and have a talk to the bully
- 4) If the bullying continues, tell your Head of Year. He or she will notify the DP and a restorative conference will take place.
- 5) Any bullying behavior that continues after this takes place after this conference should be reported immediately to the DP.

What to do if you see bullying happening

- If you feel able, ask the bully to lay off
- Provide support for the victim by staying with them and encouraging them to leave the area
- Encourage the victim to report the bullying to the Head of Year
- Keep an eye out for any more bullying incidents that may occur

What can parents do?

As parents you are the most influential models for your child.

- 1) Take an active interest in what your child does at school and in their social life
- 2) Foster a tolerant home life by:
 - Encouraging your child to bring friends home
 - Accept and tolerate differences within others
 - Set firm but fair boundaries
 - Demonstrate care and consideration for others
- 3) Discuss Bullying
 - Talk about the schools' expectations
 - Advise that retaliation does not solve the problem
 - Report incidents of bullying to the Head of Year
 - Explain what to do if your child witnesses bullying occurring



Bullying Myths

MYTH 1:
Bullying has and always will be a normal part of growing up.

FACT 1

Research has shown that peer abuse can be as traumatic as other types of abuse perpetrated against children and that it can cause or exacerbate serious mental health problems.

There is nothing whatsoever that is normal or desirable about bullying. The majority of students surveyed have said that they dislike bullying in schools and want programs to stop bullying.

MYTH 2: It is easy for teachers to pick who are the bullies in the school.

FACT 2

There is a general expectation that bullying is physical and visible. Bullying, however, can be subtle and involve a range of behaviours that make the victim extremely uncomfortable.

Many students who bully are socially adept and are able to conceal their aggressive motives and behaviour from others. Furthermore, colluders in the bully's peer group may actually carry out a great deal of the bullying on behalf of the ringleader.

Anti-Bullying policy



What is bullying?

Mandurah Baptist College aims to address the problem of bullying and aims to provide sound support structures for victims of bullying. All staff of the College have a duty of care to students, ensuring a safe and non-threatening environment for all students. Bullying is now more pervasive with new technologies such as text messaging, email and the internet. These covert psychological methods also allow the person bullying to be even further removed from the person they are bullying and the direct consequences of their actions

Definition of bullying:

Bullying is a behaviour which can be defined as the repeated attack, physical, psychological, social or verbal, which is formally or situationally defined, on those who are powerless to resist, with the intention of causing distress for their own gain or gratification.

Teasing

Some children seem to enjoy teasing. What children often don't know is when to stop. Something that appears to be good natured and fun can turn into feeling uncomfortable for the receiver. It is at this point that the receiver needs to be able to ask for the teasing to stop. If it continues, this would be considered bullying.

Types of Bullying

Physical

eg. hitting, punching, kicking the victim, taking or damaging the victim's property.

Verbal

constant teasing in a sarcastic and offensive manner, name-calling and offensive nick names, swearing to unsettle or upset others, homophobic comments to cause distress, racist or sexist comments

Emotional

eg. excluding peers from groups, spreading rumours, stalking, interference with, or damage to personal property.

Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying involves the use of information and communication technologies such as e-mail, mobile phone, instant messaging, and defamatory personal web-sites, to support the repeated, harmful and negative behaviour by an individual or group towards another individual or group.

MYTH 3: Victims will take bullying with them wherever they go.

FACT 3

Although the behaviour of some victims may appear to justify the negative reactions they receive from peers, victimisation for the most part is situational and unrelated to the dispositional characteristics of the victim.

MYTH 4: Intervention by teachers in bullying usually results in matters becoming worse for the victim.

FACT 4

Bullying is a form of behaviour that needs correction, not necessarily punishment. There are well established techniques for teachers to respond to bullying situations which do not involve repercussions for the victim.

Despite this, bullying is highly unreported by victimised students. Only 5-10% of victims report they are willing to seek help from teachers.

MYTH 5: Schools have to “get tough on bullies”.

FACT 5

Schools that have established a ‘get tough’ approach to bullies have found that the bullying can become more subtle and underhand.

Everyone, staff, students, parents and community members need to take responsibility for establishing positive peer relations.



What does MBC do about bullying?

Mandurah Baptist College’s approach to bullying falls into 3 categories: Prevention, Early intervention and Intensive intervention.

Prevention

The key to preventing bullying from occurring is to create a culture at the College where students respect each other and enjoy learning together in a safe and supportive environment . There are several ways to ensure this happens:

- 1) **Expectation**
All students at MBC are aware of the expectations that we have of them regarding their behavior. Most of our students live up to these expectations and as a result, we have had relatively minor problems with bullying at the school.
- 2) **Education**
At Mandurah Baptist College, our students participate in a structured Social and Emotional Learning program called, “You Can Do It”. This program teaches students the keys of: **Resilience, Confidence, Persistence, Getting Along and Organisation.**

As part of this program, students are encouraged to deal with conflict in constructive ways, to communicate in more effective ways and to examine their thinking processes in order to find more rational ways of dealing with difficult situations or people. This helps to “up-skill” both the bully and the victim.

- 3) **Adequate and active supervision**
Staff actively patrol the school grounds during all breaks including before and after school. Administration have made sure that there are no

‘blind-spots’ in the school grounds due to lack of supervision. There are also plenty of ‘safe’ areas such as the library.

- 4) **Peer support programs**
Students are provided with training that teaches them how to mentor and provide support for younger students. This gives students additional support if they are feeling vulnerable.

Early-intervention

- 1) **Student Council Involvement**
Members of Student Council have been given training to intervene and assist students who are victims of bullying. This gives victims of bullying additional support in reporting bullying and assisting in on-going support for the victim
- 2) **By-stander behavior**
Students are encouraged to act on behalf of a victim if they notice a student being bullied. This may include talking to the bullies, reporting it to a teacher and providing support to the victim.



4) Restorative conferencing

When bullying is identified, rather than impose punishment on the bully, which may lead to further repercussions for the victim, we ask the victim and the bully to meet together with the DP to discuss the problem and find ways to restore the broken relationship. Without the threat of punishment hanging over the bully, students will usually find a way to resolve the conflict to the satisfaction of all involved.

5) Record-keeping

All bullying incidents are documented and kept on file so that we can track students who are the victims or perpetrators of bullying incidents. Parents and teachers (if necessary) are also contacted if the bullying reaches the restorative conference stage.



Intensive-intervention

- 1) **Intervention Plan**
Creation of an intervention plan involving the bully, their parents, the Deputy Principal, Head of Year and the School Psychologist.
- 2) **Sanctions**
For involvement in on-going bullying after a restorative conferencing meeting or staff 1st stop intervention the student would be suspended for one day. Any further bullying would result in their exclusion from the College.

What can the College do when the bullying happens off-campus, like on the internet or at the shopping centre?

If a student or students who attend Mandurah Baptist College engage in bullying behaviour towards other students from the College outside school this will obviously have a negative impact on the victim’s relationship with those students whilst at the College. For this reason Mandurah Baptist College reserves the right to apply the bullying policy including imposing formal sanctions when any act



takes place on or off-campus that causes or threatens to cause a substantial and material disruption or interference with the rights of students to feel safe and secure. This includes bullying or intimidation at shopping centres, on buses, on the internet or via mobile phones. These sanctions may include suspension or exclusion from the College.

MYTH 6: It will be impossible to get students to disclose bullying because of the ‘don’t dob’ culture.

FACT 6

Schools are able to engender confidence in students by responding effectively to bullying incidents.

Students can learn that asking for help is different to dobbing and that all students have the right to feel safe and valued at the school. Students can also become supportive bystanders for bullied students and seek adult help on that student’s behalf.

MYTH 7: Bullying problems can be solved through awareness raising and the curriculum.

FACT 7

It has been found that one off lessons on bullying have a short term effect only. Research shows that an on-going and active whole school approach dealing with preventative, early intervention and intervention strategies to deal with bullying in schools is essential for lasting results.