

## How Does Kuranui College Deal with Bullying?

Bullying regularly occurs in all sectors of our society so it is no wonder that it occurs in all schools. Kuranui College is no exception. Bullying does happen – the important thing is that the college has an effective planned approach to deal with bullying.

### What is bullying?

Bullying takes many forms. It can be overt (direct and easily observed) or covert (indirect, hidden or less easily observed). A great deal of bullying in schools is covert (hidden) and rarely takes place in front of adults. It is therefore important to take all allegations of bullying seriously and to make sure they are dealt with appropriately.

### Types of bullying

		Physical World			
Covert		Verbal – eg snide asides, threats, put-downs (hidden)	Verbal eg discriminatory remarks, threats, name-calling (in view)	Overt	
		Physical - eg standover behaviour, holding, hitting (hidden)	Physical eg standover behaviour, holding, hitting (in view)		
		Social / relational – eg spreading rumours, or personal information	Social / relational – eg openly excluding from peer group, ostracising		
		Verbal eg emails, texts, anonymous comments / postings	Verbal eg posting negative photos / comments on website		
		Physical eg anonymously defacing webpage or profile page	Physical eg defacing webpage or profile page		
		Social / relational eg posting negative material anonymously	Social / relational eg exclusion from activities or ostracising		
		Digital World (Cyberbullying)			

There are five identifying features of bullying:

- It is a deliberate, hurtful behaviour
- It is repeated over a period of time
- It is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves
- It may be difficult for those who bully to learn new social behaviours
- The bully has, and exercises, power inappropriately over the target

Bullying can take a number of forms:

- Physical, for example hitting and kicking
- Emotional or verbal, for example name calling, exclusion, threatening and coercion
- Damage to property, for example taking lunches or destroying books
- Cyberbullying

All forms of bullying can be damaging to the target (victim).

Inappropriate one off behaviours such as stealing, hitting, pushing and shoving, name calling are not bullying but will be dealt with using the college's usual disciplinary processes.

### **How can bullying affect students?**

Bullying can affect students' health, wellbeing and learning. (Students may experience depression and/or anxiety.) Students may be reluctant to go to school. If nothing is done to change sustained bullying, it can result in school refusal and severe health and mental health outcomes. If you notice this is happening, please let the college know and we will work with you to seek solutions.

Signs that your child may be being bullied include:

- Unwillingness to go to school
- Becoming socially withdrawn
- Showing signs of anxiety, fearfulness
- Changes in eating and sleeping patterns

### **Our response to bullying**

Our five key values are:

**Respect / Manaakitanga**  
**Integrity / Mana Tangata**  
**Empathy / Aroha**  
**Creativity / Auahatanga**  
**Determination / Te Hiringa**

We believe above all else that we should all be respectful toward each other. This means respecting each other's uniqueness and caring for each other – especially those who are vulnerable or “different” in some way.

### **The “No Blame” approach to bullying**

To deal with most bullying episodes, the college uses a technique known as the “No Blame” approach.

#### **How does this work?**

When bullying is reported, we speak first to the target in private. We ask them to tell us who is bullying them and to describe what has been happening, how often it happens and where it happens.

We then explain how we would like to proceed and seek their permission to do so.

Many students are afraid that bringing the bullying out in the open will only make matters worse. We explain that doing nothing means that they will remain unhappy. We further explain that their behaviour does not need to change but that of the bully does. What the bully is doing is not ok – and they may be doing it to other people. We explain that we need to help the bully to change their behaviour or they will remain a bully all of their lives.

If the target gives us permission to proceed we ask what is it that they want to happen. They usually say “Just ask the bully to stop.” We explain that we alone will next meet with the bully/ies. ie the target never meets with the bully/ies.

At our meeting we make it very clear to the bully that they are not in trouble – there is no blame. We then tell the bully what the target has told us. They will usually deny it or blame the target. We explain how the bullying is making the target feel and that they just want the bullying behaviour to stop. After discussing the behaviour for as long as it takes, we tell the bully that what they are doing is hurtful and that the victim wants them to stop. We ask them to agree to stop the bullying.

A short contract is drawn up in which the bully agrees to stop the behaviour. We ask the bully to sign the contract. We explain that if the bullying continues, they are breaking a contract with us which may become a disciplinary action.

To monitor the situation we make appointments to regularly meet with the target. They let us know if the bullying seems to have stopped, lessened, stayed the same or become worse.

- If it has stayed the same or become worse, we meet with the bully to warn them that they are not meeting the terms of the contract and that they may face disciplinary consequences. The monitoring continues until the bullying has ceased completely and the victim feels safe and happy.
- If the bullying continues it will be dealt with using disciplinary measures.

The “No Blame” approach to bullying is all about restoring the rights of the target and to a lesser extent, helping the bully become a respectful member of society. It works in most cases but it will not be appropriate to all situations. Other methods of dealing with bullying include: Restorative meetings, Circle of Friends and Secret Friends.

### **A safe school**

We are working hard to ensure that our college is a place in which students and staff feel safe and happy. We know that we are dealing with bullying effectively when the following happen:

1. The targets have confidence that if they tell someone about the bullying, something effective will be done.
2. Witnesses to bullying have confidence that they can report bullying without repercussions
3. All staff at the college take allegations of bullying seriously and report them to the Senior Leadership Team or the Counsellor.
4. Parents and whanau have confidence that if they inform the college of bullying, effective steps will be taken to deal with it.

### **Cyberbullying**

This form of bullying has become very common in this age of smartphones and tablets. If the cyber bullying is being done outside school hours it is very hard for us to deal with but we will do our best. Our school internet provider blocks all of the social media sites, but students can, of course, still access sites via their service provider such as Spark, Vodafone and 2 Degrees on their phones and devices.

Netsafe ([www.netsafe.org.nz](http://www.netsafe.org.nz) – Freephone 0508638723) is a government agency that can give advice and the service providers will help by blocking the incoming calls and messages from bullies' phone numbers.

Parents and whanau; we encourage you to talk to your children about cyber bullying. Encourage them to activate their privacy settings on social network sites and only let people they trust view their profile.

All of the telecommunications companies have created cyber-bullying resources:

<http://www.2degreesmobile.co.nz/bullying>

<http://www.vodafone.co.nz/help/mobile-safety/advice-for-parents>

<http://www.spark.co.nz/help/internet-data/manage/how-can-i-keep-my-kids-safe-online/>

Other useful advice can be found at [www.cyberbullying.org.nz](http://www.cyberbullying.org.nz)

In cases where ongoing cyberbullying is causing distress to a student the college may refer the matter to the NZ Police, Child Youth and Family (CYF) and / or take serious disciplinary action including stand down or suspension.