

# ACADEMY PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS OF BULLYING



All staff should come prepared with options for how to respond to incidents of bullying in a planned, deliberate and positive way.

## The Importance of Having a Positive Mindset

Confronting students who have bullied requires a high amount of self-control as well as preparation to know what to say and do. The following are important ingredients to having a positive mindset.

- “Be Calm”** - In order to respond effectively to incidents of bullying, it is very important to be clear thinking and emotionally in control.
- “Be Positive”** - When confronted with an incident of bullying, have in mind the importance of maintaining a positive relationship with the student. A student is much more likely to modify his/her behaviour if he/she perceives that a teacher cares.
- “Be Assertive”** - When a student through bullying behaviour violates the right of one or more students to be safe, it is very important that teachers directly and clearly express their thoughts, feelings and expectations concerning the need for the student to not only stop bullying, but also to make restitution with the “target”.
- “Be Confident”** - While interacting with a student who has bullied another, it is important to have trust in yourself that you will be successful in implementing practices that can have an impact on the student’s future behaviour.

## Teacher Practices for Responding to Incidents of Bullying

It is important to be able to choose from options of things to say and do when faced with an incident of bullying. The following list of practices should **not** be seen as representing, sequential steps but rather are different options.

**When mild bullying behaviour is beginning to be displayed by a student**, the following non-confrontational, indirect influence strategies may be used:

- Practice 1. Physical Proximity.** Walk over and stand next to the student while you continue your class.
- Practice 2. Non-Verbal Prompting.** Walk past the student and touch the student’s work or gently tap the student’s chair.
- Practice 3. Offer Learning Support.** Quietly say, “You seem like you are struggling. Can I give you some help or can you handle this?”
- Practice 4. Re-Direction.** Change task that the student is doing that has immediately preceded the student’s bullying behaviour (e.g: Say: “Rather than finishing reading this article, can you use the computer to find some more references on this topic?”)

## Teacher Practices for Responding to Incidents of Bullying (cont)

**When an incident of bullying is observed or confirmed**, one or more of the following practices can be implemented that suits the student's characteristics including the reasons for the bullying behaviour, who is being bullied, the type of severity of bullying behaviour and the student's history of bullying.

**Practice 5. Assertive Communication of Zero Tolerance of Bullying with Follow-Up Reminder of Academy Expectations.**

Intervene immediately in a calm but firm (assertive) way to stop the bullying and reassure the student being bullied that actions will be taken to stop bullying. Remind the perpetrator of Academy expectations and consequences for continued bullying behaviour. If the bullying is minor, this practice can be implemented at a later time so that the target of bullying is not humiliated or embarrassed.

**Practice 6. Academy-Wide Monitoring of Safety.**

All teachers are asked to monitor the behaviour of the perpetrator and the safety of the target on a Academy-wide basis. "Safe havens" are identified.

**Practice 7. Restorative Questioning.**

On the spot, engage the student who has bullied another student in a series of self-reflective, restorative questions (e.g: "How has the person been affected by your behaviour?") directed at increasing empathy and having the student who bullies take responsibility for making the situation better for the "target" (e.g: "What do you think you need to do to make things right?")

**Practice 8. Thinking Time.**

During break or lunchtime, student asked to respond to a series of structured questions involving what happened, who was responsible, impact of their behaviour on other student(s) and new, positive behavioural choices reviewed.

**Practice 9. Hold a Private Conference.**

When a strong positive relationship exists between a teacher and the student who is bullying, a meeting can be organised where the student is asked by the teacher to make changes in his/her behaviour because of the harm it is doing to another and because of the negative consequences it ultimately has on the student who is bullying.

**Practice 10. Expectation Discussion.**

Meet with the student and ask student about the Academy's rule or expectation about how to treat other people and what he/she plans to do in the future with regards to the student he/she has bullied.

## Teacher Practices for Responding to Incidents of Bullying (cont)

### Practice 11. Shared Control Discussion.

In a discussion, enable the student to choose how he/she will respond to your request for a cessation of bullying behaviour while being aware of the consequences which his/her choice will have (e.g: “You can continue to make harmful comments and I’ll make a note in your diary or you can be more respectful and you can stay out of trouble.”)

### Practice 12. Hold a Problem Solving Classroom Meeting (‘Circle Time’, ‘No Blame’ conferences)

If classroom meetings are a regular feature of the classroom, a meeting can be held to air opinions and to brainstorm solutions to the problem.

### Practice 13. Impose Consequences.

If the bullying behaviour of the student is being repeated – especially after reminders and conferences have not influenced behaviour – impose immediate consequences the “severity” of which suit the nature and frequency of the bullying behaviour.

### Practice 14. Parent Involvement (this practice may also be implemented by Mr Lyall Behaviour & Inclusion Manager).

Parents/carers of perpetrator are informed of incident of bullying with option of conference and provided with suggestions for how to influence the bullying behaviour of their child.

## Student Welfare Practices

**When bullying behaviour persists or a serious incident of bullying occurs**, the student should be referred to Mr Lyall Behaviour & Inclusion Manager who may implement one or more of the following practices.

### Behaviour Contract.

Student who has bullied meets with Mr Lyall Behaviour & Inclusion Manager to develop a “behaviour contract” that outlines a plan of positive action that helps student to move towards acceptable and responsible behaviour.

### Social and Emotional Education.

Student who has bullied meets with Mr Lyall Behaviour & Inclusion Manager who provides social and emotional learning experiences and skill building in empathy, conflict resolution and resilience.

### Non-Punitive Problem-Solving Meetings.

Problem-solving meetings can be held with the Target of bullying as well as the student who has bullied to provide support on the one hand and to develop empathy, resilience and conflict resolution skills on the other hand.

### Parent/Carer Conferencing.

Where the instance of bullying is severe, Mr Lyall Behaviour & Inclusion Manager may elect to conduct more in-depth sessions with parents/carers covering different issues (e.g: parent-child relationship and topics (e.g: discipline strategies).