Respectful Relationship Policy

Procedures for Preventing and Responding to Incidents of Bullying (including Cyberbullying)

1. Statement of Purpose

Forest Lake State High School strives to create positive, predictable environments for all students at all times of the day. The productive and supportive teaching environment that we are creating is essential to:

- achieving overall school improvement, including the effectiveness and efficiency of our student support procedures
- raising achievement and attendance
- promoting equality and diversity and
- ensuring the safety and well-being of all members of the school community.

The national definition of bullying for Australian schools says:

> *Bullying is an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more persons. Bullying can happen in person or online, and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.*
> *Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, while not defined as bullying will still be followed up and actioned according to this plan.*

There is no place for bullying in Forest Lake State High School. Research indicates that both those being bullied and those who bully are at risk for behavioural, emotional and academic problems. These outcomes are in direct contradiction to our school community's goals and efforts for supporting all students.
Bullying behaviours that will not be tolerated at Forest Lake State High School include name-calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments, kicking, hitting, pushing, taking belongings, inappropriate text messaging, sending offensive or degrading images by phone or internet, producing offensive graffiti, gossiping, excluding people from groups, and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours.
Bullying may be related to:

- race, religion or culture
- disability
- appearance or health conditions
- sexual orientation
- sexist or sexual language
- young carers or children in care.

2. Rationale

Research indicates that many problem behaviours happen between friendship groups and groups of peers. Sometimes, peers react to bullying in ways that may increase the likelihood of it occurring again in the future. Reactions include joining in, laughing, or simply standing and watching, rather than intervening to help the person being bullied. Whilst our school would never encourage students to place themselves at risk, our anti-bullying procedures involve teaching the entire school a set of safe and effective response to all inappropriate behaviour, including bullying, in such a way that perpetrators are not socially reinforced for demonstrating it.

The anti-bullying procedures at Forest Lake State High School are an addition to our already research-validated school wide positive behaviour support processes. This means that all students are being explicitly taught the expected school behaviours and receiving high levels of social acknowledgement for doing so. Adding lessons on bullying and how to prevent and respond to it is a subset of procedures that our students are already accustomed to.

3. Prevention

Attempting to address specific problem behaviours will not be successful if the general level of disruptive behaviour in all areas of our school is not kept to a low level. Therefore, our schoolwide universal behaviour support practices will be maintained at all times. This will ensure that:

- Our universal behaviour support processes will always remain the primary strategy for preventing problem behaviour, including preventing the subset of bullying behaviour
- All students know the 5 school PRIDE expectations and have been taught the expected behaviours attached to each rule in all areas of the school
- All students have been or are being taught the specific routines in the non-classroom areas, from exiting the classroom, conducting themselves in accordance with the school expectations in the playground and other areas, to re-entering their classrooms
- All students are receiving high levels of positive reinforcement for demonstrating expected behaviours, including those associated with following our routines, from all staff in the non-classroom areas of the school
- A high level of quality active supervision is expected as a permanent staff routine in the non-classroom areas. This means that duty staff members are easily identifiable and are constantly moving, scanning and positively interacting as they move through the designated supervision sectors of the non-classroom areas.

Cyberbullying often does not occur at school. Students are explicitly taught Cybersafety for example how to safely conduct and internet search, what cyberbullying is and what they should do if they receive unwanted messages including for example:

- Not to respond to messages but keep them to report to parents and/or teachers immediately
- Report any instances they see as a bystander of cyberbullying to parents and/or teachers immediately.
- Report to social media platforms and block offenders.

Forest Lake State High School will follow up reports of bullying and refer to the Queensland Police Service as necessary.

The student curriculum modules of the anti-bullying process consist of lessons taught by all teachers in all classrooms to a schoolwide schedule of instruction. At all times simultaneous instruction is our goal, in order to maintain consistency of skill acquisition across the school.

An initial introductory lesson is delivered, which teaches the 3-step Stop-Walk-Talk process to be used by all students when experiencing bullying behaviour either as a person being bullied, the person bullying or bystander.

The introductory lesson is followed by several shorter lessons, each of which focuses on one of the bullying behaviours that the school has identified and defined. These lessons include instruction on how to approach adults and also on what reactions and systemic responses they should expect from adults.

Forest Lake State High School will support the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence every year. This is to highlight the importance of bullying issues within our school community and what our school is doing to prevent this.

Research indicates that a common outcome of anti-bullying programming is an improvement in understanding of bullying but little change in the frequency or nature of actual bullying behaviour. One of the reasons cited for this outcome is the lack of behavioural rehearsal in the programming. The Respectful Relationships Curriculum at Forest Lake State High School takes care to combine knowledge with practice in a process of active learning, so that students understand by 'doing' as much as by 'knowing'.

Forest Lake State High School uses behavioural data for decision-making. This data is entered into our database on a daily basis and can be recalled as summary reports at any time. This data informs the delivery of PRIDE instruction to the students.

Related resources

Respectful Relationships Education https://learningplace.eq.edu.au/cx/resources/file/a0ba1327-a69e-474d-a220-acfff7542960/1/parents/parents.html