Statement on Bullying

What is Bullying? The dictionary describes bullying as; the use of superior strength or influence to intimidate (someone). Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuses of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons.

What Bullying is not: The occasional fight with another student, the one-off bad remark between students or an incident that occurs with another child once. I often say to students when these occur - do you fight with your brother or sister at home? The answer is usually yes! Do you love your brother or sister at home? The answer is usually yes? Like at home, children at school spend a lot of hours with each other. Because of this they are likely to have upsets with each other from time to time. When these issues occur they need to be dealt with by the teacher and/or Principal, but these incidents do not mean your child is a victim of bullying.

How does Bethel deal with bullying situations? We recognize that there are many characters in a bullying situation. When an incident occurs we will talk to all characters involved - the aggressor, the victim and the bystanders. Situations that occur become learning situations where we can train children in the way they should go. We don’t want students forming a victim mentality and we don’t want students developing bullying tendencies. We also don’t want to see groups of students standing by encouraging bad behaviour or ignoring it.

Individual situations that occur will then also be dealt with through strategies outlined in the school Behaviour and Discipline policy.

At Bethel we also use programs such as ‘Peacewise’, ‘The Overcomers’, ‘Choose Respect’ and ‘Seasons for Growth’ to equip our students with skills necessary to work through incidents that occur.

We also provide ‘one on one’ support or small group support for students needing extra help. This is provided through the school Chaplains, Form and Class teachers, Leadership Team Members and the Principal.

The Principal, Class teachers and all Bethel staff are committed to seeing that individual children are cared for to the best of our ability at Bethel Christian School.

Parent’s Role in Dealing with Difficult Situations:
1.) Partner with the school. Through contacting the school as soon as a situation arises, incidents can be dealt with quickly and effectively. This will make sure that little problems don’t grow into big problems.
2.) All families are given a ‘Peace Pack’ that outlines great advice, language to use with your children and procedures to follow when wanting to deal with an issue.
3.) Parents can follow the ‘Complaints and Disputes’ procedure to ensure that everyone is protected through an issue.
4.) Parents need to protect both their children and the child they are having a problem with, by following the correct procedures, seeking help quickly and guiding their child through ‘Peacewise’ principles.
What students need to do in a bullying/conflict situation:
1.) Recognise their part. (Which character are they?)
2.) Remove themselves from the conflict and report the incident to a teacher or adult in the school.
3.) Do not retaliate by physical or verbal means as this will only make the situation worse.
4.) Communicate with the teacher, duty teacher, Principal or office staff.
5.) Be truthful - quite often when a story is told to the staff member only half the story is told.
6.) Work through the situation with the aim of overcoming the problem.
7.) If they see someone else being treated badly report the incident straight away. It may be appropriate to tell the bully to stop, but avoid confrontational means of getting the bully to stop.

Our schools aim is to encourage children not to become victims, but to overcome their difficulties and learn some great skills along the way that they can use as adults.

At Bethel Christian School we see the following behaviours as unacceptable and we will endeavour to discipline and counsel students who are exhibiting these behaviours.
- Makes hurtful, sexist or racist remarks.
- Excludes others.
- Hitting, punching, pushing, bumping, tripping or any other inappropriate physical contact.
- Teasing others.
- Gossip/ slander and other nasty talk.
- Damaging property.
- Threatening others.
- Any other actions that cause distress to another student.

Consequences may include:
- Loss of good standing points.
- Awareness-raising letter sent home to parents.
- Parents contacted.
- Lunch time detentions.
- Exclusion from option classes.
- In-school suspension.
- A conditional enrolment being put in place.
- Exclusion from Bethel Christian school.
- Individual student contracts.
- Behaviour cards.

Pastoral Care of Students:
Bethel Christian School's main strategy for dealing with bullying situations and conflict will be pastoral care and counselling. We recognise that “Hurting people hurt others!”, therefore we have an obligation to the person who has been wronged as well as the person demonstrating the wrong actions.

Pastoral care will be provided in the following ways:
1.) One-on-one conversations with Principal/Leadership Team member or a class teacher.
2.) Small group sessions for discussions.
3.) Appointments with the School Chaplain.
4.) Involvement in programs such as ‘Seasons’, ‘The Overcomers’ and ‘Peacewise’.
5.) Addressing of issues through Form classes and Biblical Instruction classes.