

SAINT STEPHEN'S COLLEGE



STUDENT ANTI-BULLYING EDUCATION AND INTERVENTION POLICY

Rationale

Saint Stephen's College's 'Anti-Bullying Policy' is a component of the College's overall Behaviour Management Policy, which emphasises the proactive nature of managing student behaviour. As such, the College is committed from P-12 to providing an environment that is safe, supportive and one that nurtures individual students to achieve to his/her potential. The College has the responsibility to foster an educational environment where every attempt is made to eliminate barriers to learning and where all students feel safe and valued. As such, Saint Stephen's College does not tolerate bullying or harassment in any form. Students who bully or harass others and who do not respond to counselling and behaviour management strategies may ultimately be asked to leave the College.

Sections 3 and 10 of the Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2001 and Section 146B of the Education (General Provisions) Act 1989 as amended, and the Child Protection Act 1989 all provide that every non-state school must have in place the processes and policies concerning the health and safety of its students that accord with the relevant workplace health and safety legislation. These processes and policies must specifically include the process of reporting and dealing with harm caused to a student by bullying and/or other inappropriate behaviour including sexual abuse and/or sexual harassment.

Definition

(a) The following definitions should be referred to when identifying bullying:

'Bullying involves a desire to hurt, hurtful actions, a power imbalance (typically) repetition, an unjust use of power, evident by the aggressor and a sense of being oppressed on the part of the victim'.

(Ken Rigby <http://www.education.unisa.edu.au/bullying>)

'A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed repeatedly and over time to negative actions on the part of one or more students'.

(Olweus, 1993)

(b) The word **"Headmaster"** when used in this policy includes any person acting as the Headmaster for the time being and/or who for the time being has day to day management of the College.

(c) **"Department of Communities"** means and includes any alternative Department or Agency from time to time or at any time named in the *Child Protection Act* or any Regulation made there under including (but not limited to) the Department of Child Protection.

1. TYPES OF BULLYING, ITS EFFECTS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF OFFENDERS AND VICTIMS

Bullying covers a wide range of hurtful behaviours, encompassing physically injurious actions as well as verbal forms of harassment and indirect means of hurting others.

It generally causes “Harm” as defined in the College’s Child Protection Policy and as exemplified in this policy.

Categorising bullying behaviour into the following is helpful:

1.1 Direct

- Physical - hitting, kicking, taking or damaging someone’s property
- Verbal - name calling, insulting, making derogatory remarks, intimidation, teasing, sexist / racist remarks, offensive body language e.g. gesturing
- Threat to bully, physically or verbally.

Note: Direct physical bullying may also involve sexual harassment and/or sexual abuse or may otherwise cause harm. In such cases, it will be for the Headmaster, in the Headmaster’s sole discretion, to determine whether the allegations should be dealt with in terms of this policy or of the College’s Child Protection Policy.

The Antidiscrimination Act 1991 provides that sexual harassment can amount to unlawful discrimination.

1.2 Indirect

- exclusion – cutting off students from peer group / rejection
- rumour spreading
- graffiti, writing
- stalking
- extortion
- electronic

Bullying is

- persistent
- predatory
- often not apparent to casual observer
- is often considered an acceptable form of behaviour by the bully

1.3 Characteristics of Offenders

Possible existence of one/some characteristics does not necessarily guarantee bullying behaviour has occurred

- derive satisfaction from inflicting injury and suffering on others
- have little empathy with victims
- defiant or oppositional toward adults, anti-social and apt to break school rules
- defend their actions by saying that their victims provoked the offender's actions
- come from a background where abuse may be experienced
- are taught to strike back physically or verbally as a way to handle problems
- come from a background where parental involvement and warmth are frequently lacking

1.4 Characteristics of Victims

Possible existence of one/some characteristics does not necessarily guarantee bullying behaviour has occurred

- unexplained bruises and cuts
- torn clothes and belongings
- vague pains, headaches, stomach aches
- fear of walking to, and unwillingness to go to school
- deterioration in school work
- coming home hungry (because lunch or lunch money is stolen)
- 'loss' of possessions and pocket money
- few friends, rarely invited to parties
- behaviour changes (withdrawn, stammering, moody, irritable, temper upsets, unhappy, tearful, eating problems, suicide attempts)
- anxious, bed wetting, biting nails and sleeping poorly
- giving improbable explanations for above

1.5 Consequences of Bullying for Victim

Possible existence of one / some effects does not necessarily guarantee bullying behaviour has occurred

- a feeling of being unsupported, vulnerable and disempowered
- a decreased sense of safety and security
- a loss of trust in adults to protect them
- a sense of isolation
- a decreased ability to participate in learning

2. PREVENTION OF BULLYING IN SAINT STEPHEN'S COLLEGE

2.1 The College supports a 'whole school' approach to dealing with bullying. The key elements are:

- a shared understanding of bullying as a problem
- a shared understanding of the different forms of bullying
- a shared resolve to eliminate bullying
- identification of bullying problems in the College and community
- the creation of a 'telling' environment and the use of a range of interventions to address incidents when they happen
- recognition by teachers of their role in creating an anti-bullying ethos
- a classroom anti-bullying education program

2.2 Advice for Students being bullied:

- be assertive, you have rights. State 'leave me alone'
- do not retaliate with physical or verbal aggression
- do not respond. If you show you are not upset, the harassment may stop
- use humour to defuse the situation if possible
- build your own protection by establishing friends
- be smart about avoiding high risk places and times
- talk about it with others who can help you decide how to handle the situation or decide on what action you should take they can take action, e.g. your friends or family; the older students in the school, especially the house or school prefects; teachers, pastoral care leaders, heads of houses, counsellors, chaplain, nurse, Head of Junior School / Head of Senior School, Headmaster.
- know you can report bullying

Note: If the bullying involves sexual abuse, it is a requirement of the College's "Child Protection Policy" that you report the alleged sexual abuse or sexual harassment to a member of the College staff as soon as possible after it occurs.

2.3 Advice for Students witnessing bullying:

- take action as the bullying occurs by saying 'leave him/her alone'
- you can show your support by standing next to / sitting with the victim
- report the incident to a member of staff as soon as you can. It is OK to ask for privacy and confidentiality, or make an anonymous report that will alert the staff to a trouble spot or a bullying incident
- offer support to the student being bullied. Make suggestions about handling it. Encourage student to get help through an adult, a prefect or family
- enlist the support of an older / senior student
- avoid making an audience for the bully

Note: If the bullying involves sexual abuse or sexual harassment you must (in terms of the College's "Child Protection Policy") report the incident to a staff member so soon as you become aware of the incident.

2.4 Educating Students about Bullying

- Curriculum programs to teach and inform students about bullying and harassment; victimization; assertiveness training (Christian Living, Mind Matters, You Can Do It,

Personal Development, Tutor Group, Peer Support, Drama, English, SOSE, Mental Health, Health and Personal Development classes)

- Acting companies e.g. Connect Away (Escape Fast Personal Safety and Anti Bully Program); Brainstorm Company (Sticks and Stones)
- Anti Bullying brochure and poster (Bullying No Way)
- Student Diary – what constitutes bullying and how to report it
- Opportunities in student leadership programs for students to contribute to managing the problem (Peer Helpers and College Ambassadors)

2.5 Educating Parents and Eliciting Parent Support

Information in Acta Ludi, class / House newsletter and student information about College policy, what constitutes bullying, how to help, communication with the College and how the College responds; parenting sessions; counselling, You Can Do It! And similar personal development programmes.

2.6 Reducing Opportunities for Bullying Behaviour

- teachers being punctual to classes and duties
- rigorous monitoring of high risk areas and movement of students from one part of the College to another between classes
- active patrol while on duty
- classroom rules and expectations clearly stated and reinforced
- encouragement of play activities during recess to reduce 'boredom' e.g. playing touch on oval, handball, chess, gardening
- creation of safe places for students who feel vulnerable
- modelling of pro-social behaviour

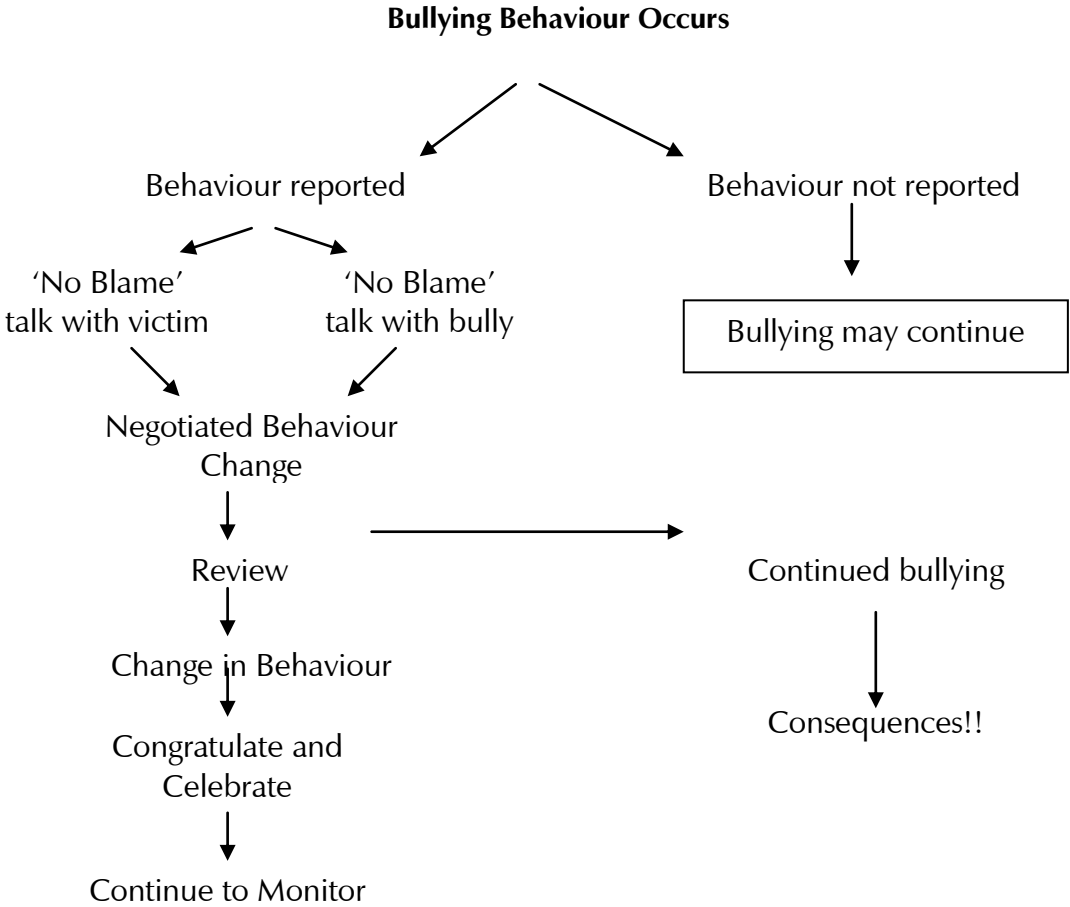
3. RESPONDING TO BULLYING

At Saint Stephen's College both 'problem-solving' and 'punitive consequences' approaches are used to respond to reported / observed cases of bullying. This allows a distinction to be made between more severe and less severe forms of bullying as well as the on-going nature of the case. There could be either counselling or consequences, described as follows:

- **Counselling:** discussion, role-play to develop empathy, the No Blame interview, the method of shared concern, developing agreements / contracts etc
- **Consequences:** used in conjunction with Saint Stephen's College Behaviour Management Policy – time out, isolation from peers, alternative recesses, withdrawal of privileges, detention, suspension, expulsion.

The two approaches can be used in conjunction with each other (Figure 1)

Figure 1: Flow diagram on how bullying incidents are to be treated



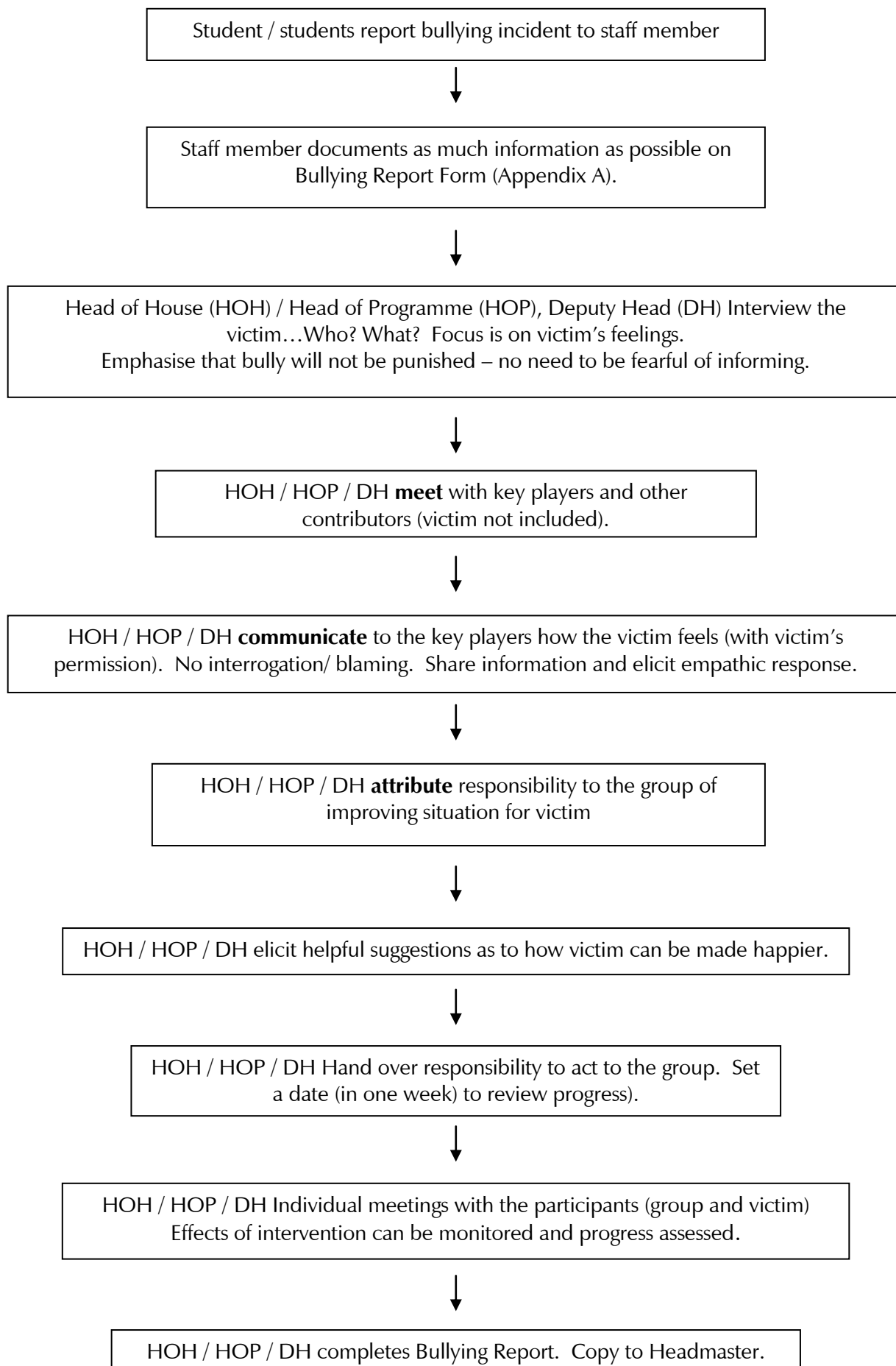
4. PROCEDURE FOR ADDRESSING A REPORTED OR OBSERVED CASE OF BULLYING

There will be occasions when one method is used alone. In instances involving sexual abuse and in instances involving aggravated or sustained sexual harassment, it is not expected that either the “No Blame” method or the “Shared Concern” method would be applicable.

Instead the College Administration would normally elect to rely upon the procedures set out in the College’s “Child Protection Policy”. This includes reporting the incident to the appropriate authorities.

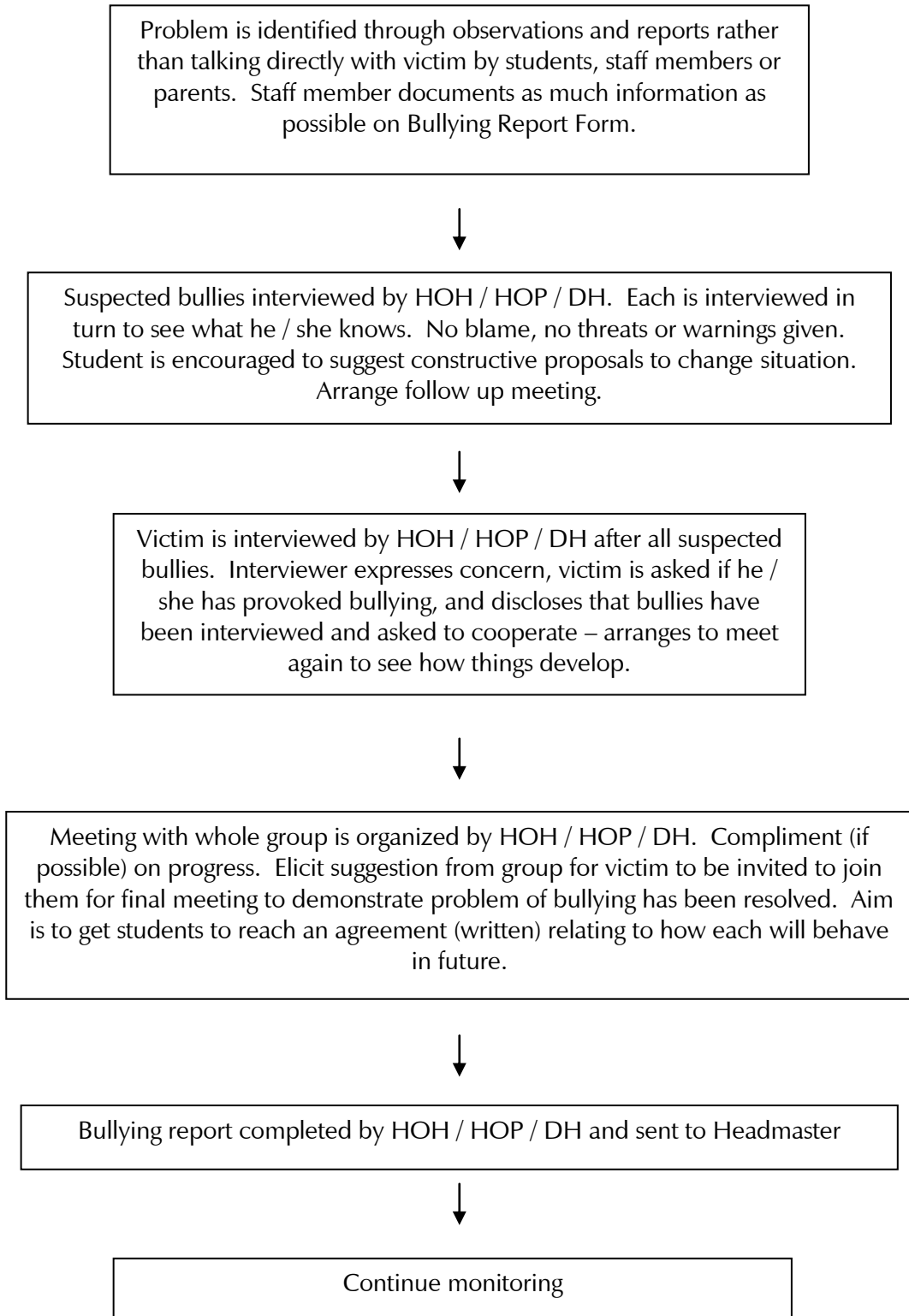
(a) **Problem Solving Approach**

'No Blame'



(b) **Problem Solving Approach**

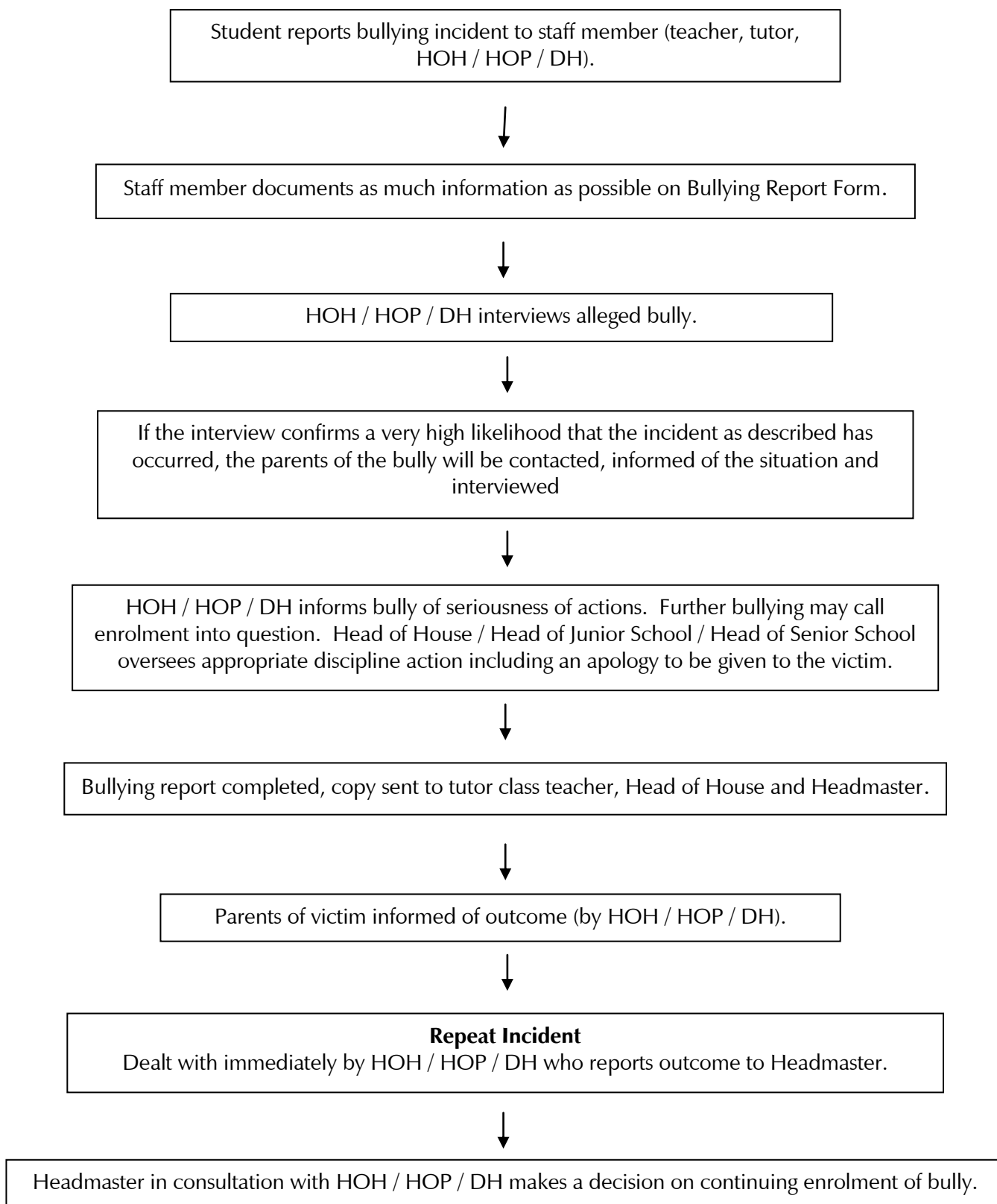
'Shared Concern'



The Headmaster may in his absolute discretion, delete any step or number of steps in the above two tables.

(b) 'Consequences' Approach

Generally this approach is taken in more severe cases of bullying e.g. physical (hitting, shoving, biting, pushing, fighting), or in continued bullying. However, if the bullying involves sexual abuse, or aggravated or sustained sexual harassment, the procedures set out in the College's Child Protection Policy under the heading 'Procedures for Reporting Harm' (pages 6 and 7) will apply instead of these provisions



Conclusion

As stated in the introduction, the Anti-Bullying Policy at Saint Stephen's College is integrated in the Behaviour Management Policy. Through existing programs and a proactive approach, it is anticipated that incidents of bullying are minimized and isolated rather than occurring on a frequent basis at the College.

However, the College also recognizes that bullying does occur within a school environment and that through the curriculum, proactive monitoring, positive role modelling of pro-social behaviour and a whole school approach, instances of bullying can be prevented or at least responded to quickly and effectively. It is perhaps valuable to remember that schools are among the safest places in the community for children and young people.

As educators, we must be committed to ensuring that Saint Stephen's College strives to be a safe and supportive environment that values diversity, where all have the right to be treated with fairness and dignity.



Saint Stephen's College
BULLYING ACTION FORM

ACTION

FOR VICTIM:

FOR BULLY:

Feedback given to parents of students. Date: _____

Signed By Staff Member Compiling Report: _____

Signed By Head of House: _____

Signed By Head of School: _____