

About Bullying



Every person in Banding, in every role, has the right to participate in an environment that is fun, safe, and healthy, and to be treated with respect, dignity and fairness.

Bullying denies participants these rights and can result in feelings of disgrace, embarrassment, shame, or intimidation. Bullying can also affect an individual's musical performance, level of enjoyment, work or school life, academic achievement, and physical and mental health.

Bullying can occur both in and out of the Band setting and can involve band members, parents, conductors, tutors, audiences, and band administrators.

Bullying must be prohibited by all organisations under their Codes of Conduct and should result in penalties and punishments being applied.

Some forms of bullying constitute assault, harassment or discrimination under federal and state legislation and are therefore illegal.

What is bullying?

Bullying is deliberately hurting a specific person either physically, verbally, psychologically, or socially. It involves a power imbalance where one person has power or strength (e.g., physical, mental, social, or financial) over another. It can be carried out by one person or several people who are either actively or passively involved. In a banding context bullying can take many forms, for example:

- a parent telling their child that they are incompetent, hopeless, useless, etc.
- a tutor or conductor alienating a band member (adult or child).
- several people ganging-up on an individual band member.
- supporters verbally abusing players from another band.
- a musician calling a adjudicator or volunteer names and using put-downs.
- a parent intimidating a young conductor, mentor or tutor.

Bullying can be a 'one-off' incident, but usually involves repeated actions or incidences. It can occur everywhere: at home, school, work, playgrounds, band, while participating in sport, when using public transport or walking to or from home. An individual may bully their victim face to face or use technology such as a mobile phone or computer.

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Types of bullying

Bullies may use one or several types of bullying to hurt their victim.

Physical - pushing, shoving, punching, hitting, kicking, taking away a person's belongings (this may also constitute assault).

Verbal - name calling, banter, threatening, teasing, intimidating, yelling abuse, using put-downs.

Psychological - ganging up, preventing a person from going somewhere, taking a person's possessions, sending hostile or nasty emails or text messages.

Socially - excluding, alienating, ignoring, spreading rumours.

Bullying behaviour is damaging to all involved: the bully, victim, family members, those that witness the behaviour and the organisation involved. Members, parents, tutors, conductors and administrators all have a responsibility to take action to prevent bullying occurring and to properly manage it, should it occur.

The effects of bullying

People that bully may:

- pick a victim randomly, or carefully choose their victim.
- find that they get what they want by bullying (power, acceptance, admiration).
- have been bullied themselves.
- be arrogant, aggressive, or impulsive.
- enjoy having power over others.
- enjoy doing it and not care that they cause their victim distress.
- believe that some people deserve to be bullied.
- have been influenced by aggressive 'models' (at home, in real life or in television or the movies).
- see their behaviour as justified or 'pay-back' for some treatment they have received

Any person can be bullied. Sometimes people who are popular, smarter, attractive or possess obvious ability are victims of bullying. People can also be subject to bullying if they:

- have not had experience standing up for themselves against bullies.
- lack assertiveness, resilience and the social skills required to protect themselves against bullies.
- struggle academically or in terms of sporting ability.
- appear stressed, anxious, or easily hurt or upset.
- look different or are different.
- have a disability or illness.
- lack confidence or are shy.
- have been overprotected at home.

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Signs a person is being bullied

A person, especially a child, may not always ask for support when being bullied. They may feel afraid, ashamed or embarrassed and that the person they tell will think they are weak. Victims of bullying may think that they deserve to be bullied or are 'dobbing' by telling someone what is happening to them.

The following are signs that a person may be being bullied:

- Finds excuses for not wanting to attend lessons, rehearsals or concerts (e.g. feeling sick, has an injury, has too much work to do) or talking about hating their band.
- alienated from social or shared activities.
- has bruising or other injuries.
- becomes uncharacteristically nervous, worried, shy or withdrawn.
- clothing or personal possessions are missing or are damaged.
- repeatedly 'loses' money or possessions.
- suddenly prone to lashing out at people either physically or verbally.

Managing bullying

Bullying is more likely to occur in environments that are highly competitive and promote a 'win at all costs' mentality. By emphasising other aspects of banding such as enjoyment, teamwork, fellowship and skill development, especially at the youth level, bands may be able to prevent bullying behaviours.

Bands should promote their organisation as one that will not allow or tolerate bullying and develop Codes of Conduct and a policy that addresses bullying behaviours, such as a Member Protection Policy.

A Member Protection Policy addresses a range of inappropriate behaviours including discrimination, harassment and abuse and provides a complaints process for dealing with incidents. The policy can also provide a complaint handling process so bands can deal with incidents of bullying in a practical manner that is consistent with other inappropriate behaviour.

The law

Bullying that involves physical assault is against the law. Bullying that involves, harassment or discrimination can be against the law under certain circumstances (e.g., racial and sexual harassment). Because bullying can contribute to psychological injury it may be covered under occupational health and safety legislation.