

Student Anti-Bullying Policy



Intent

The school endeavours to provide every student with the educational support they need to learn and maintain positive behaviour. As such, this policy and associated procedures seek to protect personal and community safety, deal with destructive behaviours, restore relationships, encourage reconciliation, enhance wellbeing, foster responsibility and enable personal growth for soaring.

Clarifications

Bullying is the repeated and intentional verbal, physical and / or social behaviour of causing fear, distress or harm towards another person that involves an imbalance, or perceived imbalance of power. It can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and harassment. In any bullying incident there are likely to be three parties involved: the bully, the person being bullied, and bystanders.

Bullying can take many forms including:

- Physical bullying which involves physical actions such as hitting, pushing, obstructing or being used to hurt or intimidate someone. Damaging, stealing or hiding personal belongings is also a form of physical bullying.
- Verbal bullying which includes name calling or insulting someone about physical characteristics such as their weight or height, or other attributes including race, sexuality, culture, or religion.
- Social bullying which includes consistently excluding another person or sharing information or images that will have a harmful effect on the other person.
- Cyber bullying which is the ongoing abuse of power to threaten or harm another person using technology. Cyber bullying can occur in chat rooms, on social networking sites, through emails or on mobile phones.

Bullying has three main features:

- It involves a misuse of power in a relationship
- It is ongoing and repeated, and
- It involves behaviours that can cause harm.

Learning to Soar

What isn't bullying?

There are many negative situations which, whilst being potentially distressing for students, are not bullying. These include:

- mutual arguments and disagreements (where there is no power imbalance).
- not liking someone or a single act of social rejection
- one-off acts of meanness or spite
- isolated incidents of aggression, intimidation or violence.

However, these conflicts still need to be addressed and resolved.

Signs of bullying

Major behavioural changes in a student may be indicative of bullying. Such changes may include:

- crying at night and having nightmares
- refusing to talk when asked "What's wrong?"
- having unexplained bruises, cuts or scratches
- an unwillingness or refusal to go to school
- feeling ill in the mornings
- a decline in quality of school work
- becoming withdrawn and lacking confidence
- beginning to bully siblings
- acting unreasonably.

Parents/carers are encouraged to recognise signs of bullying and notify the School through a trusted staff member immediately (such as Head of House or class teacher), if they suspect their child is a victim of bullying.



Position statement

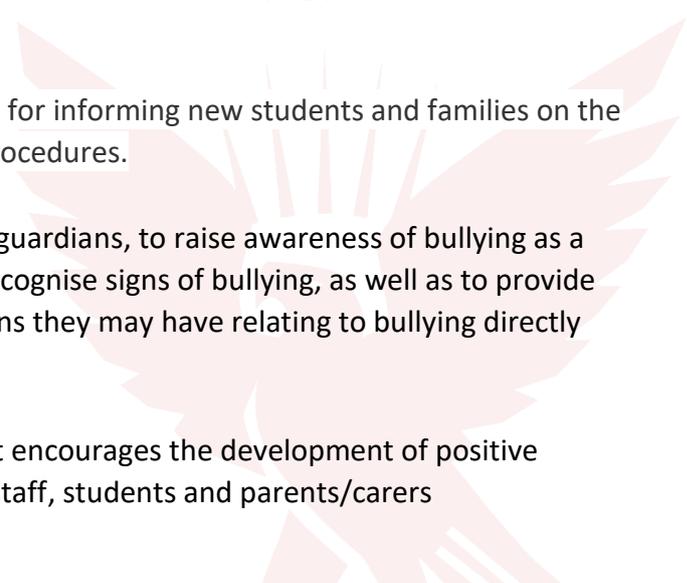
St John's Grammar School recognises its duty to students to provide a safe and positive learning environment where individual differences and diversity within the School is respected and accepted. Furthermore, we uphold our values of Community, Creativity, Innovation, Achievement and Empowerment as we seek to be an inclusive community where all learn to soar. As such, bullying has no place within our school community, including outside of school hours and off school grounds, and is not tolerated.

It is our policy that:

- bullying be managed through a 'whole-of-School community' approach involving students, staff and parents/guardians
- bullying prevention strategies be implemented within the School on a continuous basis with a focus on teaching age-appropriate skills and strategies to empower staff, students and parents/guardians to recognise bullying and respond appropriately
- bullying response strategies be tailored to the circumstances of each incident
- staff establish positive role models emphasising our no-bullying culture
- bullying prevention and intervention strategies are reviewed on an annual basis against best practice

Prevention

St John's Grammar School recognises that the implementation of whole-School prevention strategies is the most effective way of eliminating, or at least minimising incidents of bullying within our community. The following initiatives form part of our overall bullying prevention strategy and our strategy to create a 'no-bullying' culture within the School:

- a structured curriculum and peer group support system, that provides age-appropriate information and skills relating to bullying (including cyber bullying) and bullying prevention, to students over the course of the academic year
 - education, training and professional development of staff in bullying prevention and response strategies
 - protocols for the induction of new staff, and for informing new students and families on the school's safety and wellbeing policies and procedures.
 - regular provision of information to parents/guardians, to raise awareness of bullying as a School community issue to equip them to recognise signs of bullying, as well as to provide them with clear paths for raising any concerns they may have relating to bullying directly with the School
 - promotion of a supportive environment that encourages the development of positive relationships and communication between staff, students and parents/carers
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- promotion of responsible bystander behaviour amongst students, staff and parents /carers
- a comprehensive approach to data collection and analysis, with a focus on student connectedness and satisfaction with school, perceptions of student safety and wellbeing, and the effectiveness of the school's responses to any bullying behaviour.

Reporting bullying

A key part of the School's bullying prevention and intervention strategy is to encourage reporting of bullying incidents as well as providing assurance to students who experience bullying (and parents/carers) that:

- bullying is not tolerated within the School
- their concerns will be taken seriously
- the School has a clear strategy for dealing with bullying issues

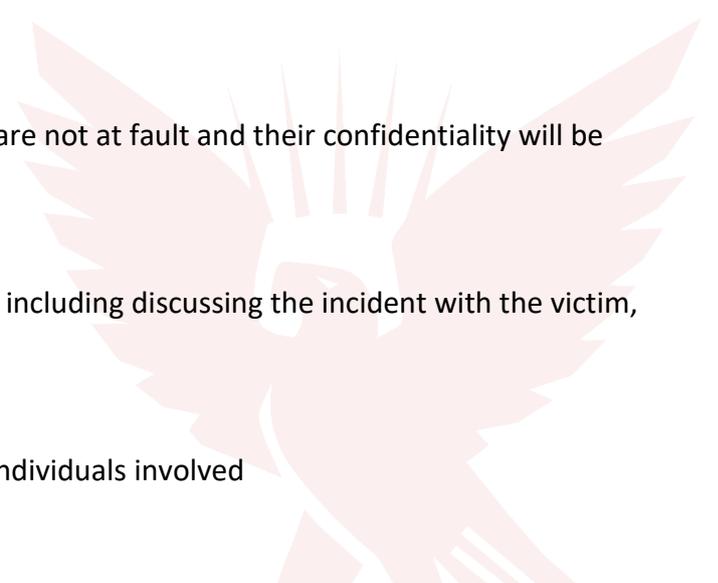
Bullying incidents can be advised to the School verbally (or in writing) through any of the following avenues:

- informing a trusted teacher
- informing the School counsellor
- informing a student's Head of House
- informing the student's Head of School or ELC Director
- informing the Deputy Principal or Principal

Responding to bullying

Bullying behaviours vary enormously in their extent and intent and, as a consequence, each incident needs to be dealt with on its facts.

In all circumstances the School:

- takes bullying incidents seriously
 - provides assurance to the victim that they are not at fault and their confidentiality will be respected
 - takes time to properly investigate the facts including discussing the incident with the victim, the bully and any bystanders
 - takes time to understand any concerns of individuals involved
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- maintains records of reported bullying incidents
- will escalate its response when dealing with persistent bullies and/or severe incidents
- offering support and counselling to the victim, bully and bystanders
- notification of/consultation with parents/carers
- disciplinary action at the Head of School, Deputy Principal or Principal's discretion, including detention and suspension; or expulsion of persistent bullies or in cases of severe incidents

The School also recognises that in some situations, it may be appropriate to report bullying to other authorities, in the case of behaviours which may constitute a crime, or serious online bullying.

Methods to restore relationships

Restorative Justice Practices: (O'Connell)

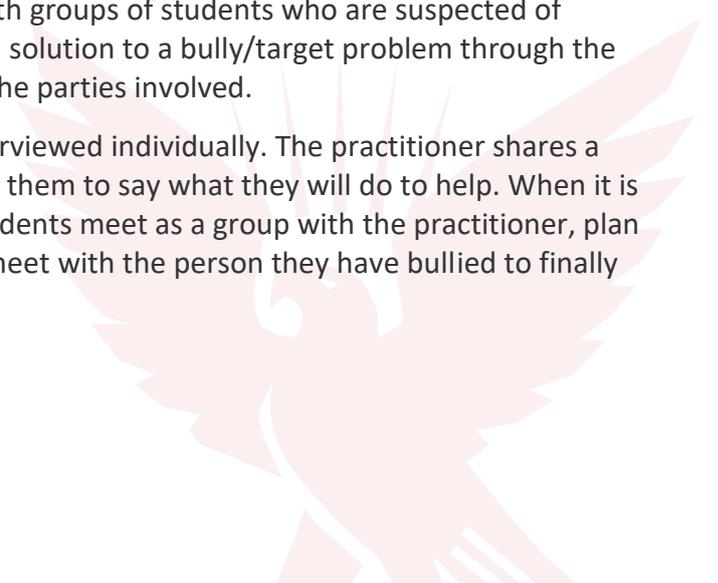
The School has a responsibility to educate students in how to correct their behaviour, and how to repair the damage that is caused by bullying. As such the policy includes Restorative Justice Practices to teach students how to deal with the consequences of their behaviour in a compassionate and caring manner. Restoration includes students taking responsibility for their actions, apologising to the student involved, and in more serious cases, to the parents. Further to an apology, where appropriate, students may be expected to undertake service to the school community. The student who was bullied has the opportunity to tell the offending student how he/she felt when they were being bullied. This is done with a staff member present. Restorative Justice Practice is the method of choice across schools both in Australia and internationally for effectively managing bullying by also teaching students responsibility, respect and compassion for others.

The Method of Shared Concern: (Pikas method)

This is a non-punitive multi-stage strategy used with groups of students who are suspected of bullying someone. It facilitates the emergence of a solution to a bully/target problem through the use of a series of interviews and discussions with the parties involved.

Students suspected of bullying others are first interviewed individually. The practitioner shares a concern for the bullied student and invites each of them to say what they will do to help. When it is clear that helpful actions have taken place, the students meet as a group with the practitioner, plan what they propose to do next, and subsequently meet with the person they have bullied to finally resolve the problem.

The No Blame Approach: (Maines & Robinson)



This approach involves a 7-step process entailing: (1) interviewing the victim about his or her feelings; (2) convening a meeting with people involved, including bystanders and others in collusion with the behavior; (3) explaining the problem to the group, focusing on the victim's feeling and not allocating blame; (4) sharing responsibility through the teacher's statement that she/he knows that the group is responsible and can take action; (5) asking the group for suggestions to help the victim feel better; (6) giving responsibility for solving the problem to the group; and (7) meeting with the group again, including the victim, to monitor bullying and keep the students involved.

A summary of the School's bullying intervention process

