

# Bullying Prevention & Intervention Policy

<b>Date Approved:</b>	21/03/2025
<b>Scheduled Review Date:</b>	8/12/2028
<b>Policy Owner:</b>	Principal

## 1. Context & Purpose

The College is seeking to create a positive and supportive environment for students, staff and the wider College community.

We believe in creating agency and developing responsibility within students, where they are trusted as young people nearing adulthood and where they learn and grow in an environment reflective of the way people best learn at work – through experiences, support, inclusion, collaboration and sharing knowledge.

Three of the Colleges values also are as follows:

**Connection** We show genuine interest in others and share experiences  
**Humility** We appreciate and use our strengths to lift up others  
**Care** We look out for each other

These values are consistent with students also connecting with their Islamic faith, where students can experience an inclusive environment to explore their faith and sense of identity as a young Muslim person.

Conduct that amounts to bullying is at the opposite end of what we are trying to achieve and inconsistent with our values and faith, and will not be tolerated.

The purpose of this policy is to assist us to achieve a positive culture consistent with our values, by:

- explaining what bullying is so there is shared understanding amongst the College community
- making clear that any form of bullying at the College is unacceptable
- outlining the strategies and programs in place at the College to build a positive school culture and prevent bullying behaviour
- ensuring that all reported incidents of bullying are appropriately investigated and addressed

- ensuring that support is provided to students who may be affected by bullying behaviour (including targets, bystanders and students engaging in bullying behaviour)
- seeking parental and peer group support in addressing and preventing bullying behaviour at the College

## 2. Application

The application of this policy is relevant to the Board, Principal, teaching and non-teaching staff, students and parents/guardians. This policy applies to all school activities, including the College online environment, camps and excursions.

## 3. Statement of Policy

The College understands that it has an obligation to ensure that its students and staff are not subjected to bullying or harassment of any kind.

The College is committed to providing a safe and secure environment in which bullying and harassment does not occur and where all members of the community are treated with dignity, courtesy and respect.

If bullying or harassment does occur and is detected or reported, the College is committed to an early and effective response, with approaches ranging from intervention and/or the provision of counselling, a restorative practices approach, or disciplinary action, as required and as outlined in this policy.

When responding to bullying or harassment behaviour, we aim to:

- be proportionate, consistent and responsive
- find a constructive solution for everyone
- stop the bullying from happening again
- restore the relationships between the people involved.

## 4. What is Bullying & Harassment

### ***Bullying***

In 2018 the Education Council of the Council of Australian Governments endorsed the following definition of bullying for use by all Australian schools:

*“Bullying is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening. Bullying can happen in person or online, via*

*various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records).*

*Bullying of any form or for any reason can have immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.”*

Bullying can occur between students, between staff, between staff and students, parents and staff, and parents and other children.

Some examples of bullying include the following

- direct physical bullying – e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property
- direct verbal bullying – e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse
- indirect bullying – e.g. spreading rumours, playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate, mimicking, encouraging others to socially exclude a person and/or damaging a person’s social reputation or social acceptance.
- cyberbullying, which can be direct or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technology such as mobile devices, computers, chat rooms, emails, social media, etc. It can be verbal, written and include images, video and/or audio.

Serious bullying, including serious cyberbullying, may be a criminal offence and may become a police matter.

### **Harassment**

Harassment is a type of behaviour where a person discriminates, or seeks to embarrass or ridicule a person on the basis of a particular attribute such as a person’s sex, race, disability or age. It can be closely related to bullying.

Harassment can include behaviour such as:

- telling insulting jokes about particular racial groups
- sending explicit or sexually suggestive emails or text messages
- displaying racially offensive or pornographic posters or screen savers
- making derogatory comments or taunts about a person’s disability, or
- asking intrusive questions about someone’s personal life, including his or her sex life.

Sexual harassment is a distinct category of harassment. It is unwelcome sexual behaviour which could be expected to make a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. Sexual harassment can be physical, verbal or written.

### ***Unacceptable Conduct that is not Bullying***

There are other behaviours that may not constitute bullying even though the behaviour is distressing or inappropriate. Such conduct is unacceptable to the College. Examples include the following:

- Mutual conflict or an argument/disagreement between people with no imbalance of power. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.
- Social rejection or dislike is not bullying, unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.
- Single-episode acts of nastiness or physical aggression
- Harassment is language or actions that are demeaning, offensive or intimidating to a person. This can include sexual harassment or disability harassment. Further information about these two forms of harassment, including definitions, is set out in our Inclusion and Diversity Policy – this type of conduct is unacceptable at the College.

The College will be guided by its other policies relating to student behaviour, inclusion, harassment and discrimination to respond to these types of conduct.

## **5. Signs of Bullying**

Major behavioural changes in a student may be a sign that they are being bullied. Such behavioural changes may include:

- refusing to talk when asked what's wrong
- having unexplained bruises, cuts or scratches
- an unwillingness or refusal to go to school
- declining quality of schoolwork
- becoming withdrawn and lacking confidence

Parents/guardians are encouraged to notify the College staff member if they suspect their child is a victim of bullying.

## **6. Prevention**

### ***General Prevention***

Protection against bullying and harassment at the College comes through the quality and depth of the relationship students, teachers and parents establish with each other. Each member of the College community has the responsibility to contribute to the general welfare of the College by assisting us to promote positive and respectful relationships and reporting instances of bullying or harassment, if they occur.

Closely linked to its values and faith, the College will seek to create a culture that reflects kindness, support, inclusion and acceptance. As a small school with a more specific education program, the College has an opportunity at the outset to establish this positive and supportive culture. It will do this in the following ways:

- ***Teacher of Influence and classroom culture***

The nature of the education program allows for a main teacher of influence to provide a more personalised, individual approach to learning, where deeper and stronger relationships can be established with each student, that goes beyond teaching subject knowledge. It means that the teacher can spend more time with students, acting as a role model and mentor to facilitate learning and positive behaviour. This in turn extends to developing an inclusive and supportive classroom culture.

- ***Student agency and development***

The nature of the education program brings a holistic approach to each student, with the development of attributes and skills given equal importance to acquiring knowledge. This includes attributes such as self-awareness, empathy, resilience, communication and conflict management. The College will do this by supporting each student to develop and own an Individual Capability and Learner Profile.

The College will seek to establish a culture where students look out for each other, and through guidance and support, empower students to be confident communicators and to resolve any conflict that does arise in a non-aggressive and constructive way.

Particular attention will be given to developing a culture where the safety and wellbeing needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are protected, as well as any other student who may be at risk or vulnerable to bullying because of a characteristic.

- ***Parent/Teacher/Student relationship***

The College will approach the student/parent/teacher relationship differently – adopting a partnering approach, with parents included in substantive individual student meetings at the beginning of and other scheduled times through the year. The College will use the Individual Capability and Learner Profile of each student to provide a framework for such meetings, and use the meetings to reinforce a collective approach to establishing an inclusive and supportive College culture.

- ***Industry connected curriculum and role models***

Curriculum development and experiences will be supported by selected sports industry and community organisations, with an opportunity for the College build into the curriculum industry based experiences that teach and reinforce positive behavior. This will be complemented by connecting young people to a range of industry experts and role models, who can talk to and model acceptable behaviour at College, in the workplace and more broadly in the community.

- ***Halaqa***

The College will regularly have a Halaqa, which is a study circle where students and staff can gather to discuss, reflect and share knowledge and understanding. At appropriate times the Halaqa will be used to reinforce College values, and create empowerment with students and staff to own and embrace a positive and supportive culture, and one that does not tolerate bullying or harassment.

### ***Specific Roles***

#### College

In addition to the above matters, the College will implement the following strategies:

- Promote anti-bullying and related policies, providing resources where required
- Set an appropriate Code of Conduct for both students and parents
- Provide adequate levels of supervision for College activities

#### Parents

The College will seek parents to also play a role by:

- being informed about bullying, including this policy, and being prepared to discuss bullying and its affects with their children
- modelling acceptable and appropriate behaviour
- proactively engaging with the College in a clam and respectful manner should they become aware of their child being involved in bullying – either as a victim, perpetrator or witness
- accepting the College’s considered actions if their children are found to be involved in bullying

#### The Bystander

The positive behaviour of the bystander (person observing the alleged bullying) can have a major impact on the reduction of bullying behaviour. Most students report that they wish to support victims by intervening directly or indirectly (by telling a teacher). The College therefore encourages students and staff to be active bystanders by directly indicating to the alleged bully that you feel the behaviour is bullying and that, if does not stop, you will take action by reporting the conduct.

## 7. Reporting a Bullying Incident

Our ability to effectively reduce and eliminate bullying behaviour is greatly affected by students/parents/carers reporting concerning behaviour as soon as possible, so that a timely response appropriate to the circumstances can be made.

Students who may be experiencing bullying behaviour, or students who have witnessed bullying behaviour, are encouraged to report their concerns to College staff as soon as possible. Parents/carers who develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour, are also encouraged to raise the matter with their child's teacher.

Bullying complaints will be taken seriously and responded to sensitively at our College.

## 8. Responding to a Bullying Incident

### *Initial Investigation*

When notified of alleged bullying behaviour, College staff are required to record the details of the allegations on the bullied student's file, in the student management system, and inform the Principal.

The Principal (or his/her appointee) will undertake an initial investigation of the allegations in a timely and sensitive manner. The objective of the investigation is to better understand the nature of the alleged conduct and the students involved, which will in turn inform staff about how to respond to any behaviour most effectively.

To do this, the person undertaking an initial investigation may:

- speak to the those involved in the allegations, including the victim, the students allegedly engaging in bullying behaviour/s and any witnesses to the incidents
- speak with the parents of the students involved
- speak with relevant teachers/staff
- take notes and /or obtain written statements

All communications while investigating an allegation will be managed sensitively. Investigations will be completed as quickly as possible to allow for a response to the situation to be addressed in a timely manner.

### *Restorative Response*

As a general approach, the College favours a restorative practices approach to the management of student behaviour. The emphasis is on the restoration of positive relationships rather than applying

punishment for breaking rules.

The objective of restorative practice is to repair relationships that have been damaged by bringing about a sense of remorse and restorative action on the part of the person who has bullied someone and forgiveness by the person who has been bullied.

Through this process, students are encouraged to understand what they have done, give them ownership of their actions, recognise the impact of their actions on others, consider the most desirable way to reconcile and resolve conflict with others and be engaged and empowered through the process. When students recognise the potential or actual harm caused by their behaviour and take action to stop and modify this, they also help to restore the relationships that were affected.

The College will hold a restorative conference by a trained facilitator (or experienced staff member) to provide the opportunity for the person who feels bullied and the person perceived to have engaged in bullying behaviour to talk about what happened, discuss who has been affected, how they have been affected, how they are feeling and what is needed to repair the harm. The conference may involve parents if considered necessary or appropriate. It is expected that an understanding will be reached by which a specific behaviour is to be modified: this can range from a verbal agreement to modify or a more formal written agreement.

### ***Additional Steps***

Should those causing bullying or the persons who feel bullied refuse to participate in a conference (or the conference proves unsuccessful) or the College considers that a restorative conference is not appropriate for the bullying in question, the College may respond to the bullying conduct in one or more of the following ways:

- offer counselling support to the victim student or students, the students engaging in bullying behaviour, and student witnesses, including referral to external support agencies as required
- Prepare an individual management plan restricting contact between a student target and the student(s) engaging in bullying behaviour
- Monitor the behaviour of the students involved for an appropriate time and take follow up action if necessary
- Implement disciplinary consequences for the students engaging in bullying behaviour, which may include removal of privileges, detention, suspension and/or expulsion consistent with the College's Behaviour Management Policy.

### ***Follow-up and Communication***

The College understands the importance of monitoring and following up on the progress of students who have been involved in or affected by bullying behaviour. Where appropriate, College staff will also endeavour to provide parents/carers with updates on the management of bullying incidents.

The class teacher will be responsible for maintaining up to date records of the investigation of and responses to bullying behaviour. The bullying offence will be recorded in the bully's and victim's file on the College's student management system.

## 9. Communication

The policy will be available on the College's website and through the College's student management system. A summary of the policy will also be included in the Staff Handbook and the Student & Parent Handbook.

## 10. Policy History

Version	Policy Owner	Approval Date	Summary of Changes
1	Principal	21/3/2025	First Adopted