Bullying Prevention and Intervention
Policy

1. Purpose

This policy sets out the approach of St Andrew's Cathedral School and St Andrew's Cathedral Gawura School (collectively referred to as 'the School') to bullying prevention and intervention. We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people, to acting in students' best interests and to keeping them safe from harm. Bullying is not tolerated at the School.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all School activities, including camps and excursions. It also applies outside of School hours and off School premises where students are involved in School-organised activities.

3. Bullying

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.

A simplified definition of bullying may be used when speaking with students, such as 'bullying is mean-on-purpose behaviour that is repeated over a period of time and targeted at a specific person or group of people'.

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 over time.

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 take many forms including:

- **Physical bullying** which involves physical actions such as hitting, pushing, obstructing or using one's physical presence, or physical bodily acts, to hurt or intimidate someone or threaten violence. Damaging, stealing or hiding personal belongings is also a form of physical bullying;
- **Verbal/written bullying** which may include name-calling or insulting someone about an attribute, quality or personal characteristic;
- **Social bullying** (sometimes called relational or emotional bullying) which may include deliberate acts of exclusion, spreading rumours or sharing information to have a harmful effect on the other person and/or damaging a person's social reputation or social acceptance; and
- **Cyberbullying** which is the misuse of power within a relationship to repeatedly threaten or harm another person using technology. Cyberbullying behaviour may include:
  o abusive texts and emails;
  o hurtful messages, images or videos;
  o imitating others online;
  o excluding others online;
  o humiliating others online;
  o spreading nasty online gossip; and
  o creating fake accounts or 'avatars' to trick someone or humiliate them.

Cyberbullying can occur on internet services, social media and electronic services that enable communication including, but not limited to, instant messaging, chat services, email communications, online games, SMS and MMS. It can be verbal or written and can includes images, videos and/or audio.

These behaviours can also be an indicator of child abuse and other harm.

Bullying can be illegal if it involves intimidation, stalking, physical violence, threats of violence or damaging property.

4. What isn't bullying?

There are many negative situations which, whilst being potentially distressing for those involved, do not constitute bullying. These include:

- mutual conflict situations which arise where there is disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Mutual conflict situations need to be closely monitored as they may evolve into a bullying situation; and
- one-off acts of aggression or meanness including single incidents of loss of temper, shouting or swearing. One-off acts do not normally constitute bullying.

5. Signs of bullying or cyberbullying

Major behavioural changes in a student may be indicative of being bullied. These behavioural 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, a school-organised activity or reluctance to attend other social events;
- feeling ill in the mornings;
- a decline in the quality of school work;
- becoming withdrawn and lacking confidence;
- appearing lonely or distressed;
- beginning to display bullying behaviour towards siblings;
- unexpected changes in friendship groups; and
- acting unreasonably.

Students may also not disclose cyberbullying to adults through fear that the adults may overreact and make the situation worse. Signs of cyberbullying to watch out for may include one or more of the behavioural changes outlined above, and/or other signs, including a student:

- being upset after using the internet or their mobile phone;
- being hesitant to go online, avoiding their phone or seeming nervous when an instant message, text message or email appears;
- spending unusually long hours online or on their mobile phone; and
- becoming secretive about their online activities and mobile phone use.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to recognise signs of bullying and notify the School through a trusted staff member immediately (such as a class teacher), if they suspect that their child is being bullied.

These behaviours can also be an indicator of child abuse and other harm.

6. Our policy

The School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people, to acting in students' best interests and to keeping them safe from harm.

The School recognises its duty to students to provide a safe and positive learning environment where individual differences and diversity within the School are respected and accepted.

Bullying is not tolerated at the School.

It is our policy that:

- bullying be managed through a 'whole-of-School community' approach involving students, staff and parents/guardians;
- bullying prevention strategies are implemented within the School on an ongoing 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 are tailored to the circumstances of each incident;
- we establish procedures for reporting and responding to child safety concerns, including when the behaviour may be an indicator of child abuse and other harm;
- staff establish positive role models emphasising our no-bullying culture; and
- bullying prevention and intervention strategies are reviewed against best practice on a regular basis.

7. Bullying prevention strategies

The 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 social and emotional competencies relating to bullying (including cyberbullying) 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;
- appropriate sharing among staff of information about cyberbullying incidents;
- 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/guardians;
- promotion of responsible bystander behaviour amongst students, staff and parents/guardians;
- reporting of incidents of alleged bullying by students, bystanders, parents/guardians and staff are encouraged, and made easy through the establishment of multiple reporting channels (as specified below);
- students are supported by their teachers, pastoral care staff and the School leadership when they report a bullying incident and during the processes that follow the submission of the report;
- regular surveying of students in regard to attitudes towards bullying to inform bullying prevention programs;
- bullying screeners to identify unsafe areas and practices, and students who potentially bully or are bullied;
- records of reported bullying incidents are maintained and analysed, in order to identify students who persistently intimidate or bully and/or students who are persistently bullied and to implement targeted prevention strategies where appropriate;

- statements supporting bullying prevention are included in student communications;
- education of staff, students and parents/guardians on health conditions to promote understanding and to reduce stigma and fear; and
- promotion of student and staff awareness and a no-bullying environment through a structured program of tailored, age-appropriate events, activities and learning opportunities throughout the school year.

8. Reporting bullying

Students and their parents/guardians are sometimes reluctant to report or pursue bullying incidents, for fear that it will only make matters worse.

A key part of the School's bullying prevention and intervention strategy is to encourage reporting of bullying incidents as well as providing support and assurance to students who experience bullying (and their parents/guardians) that:
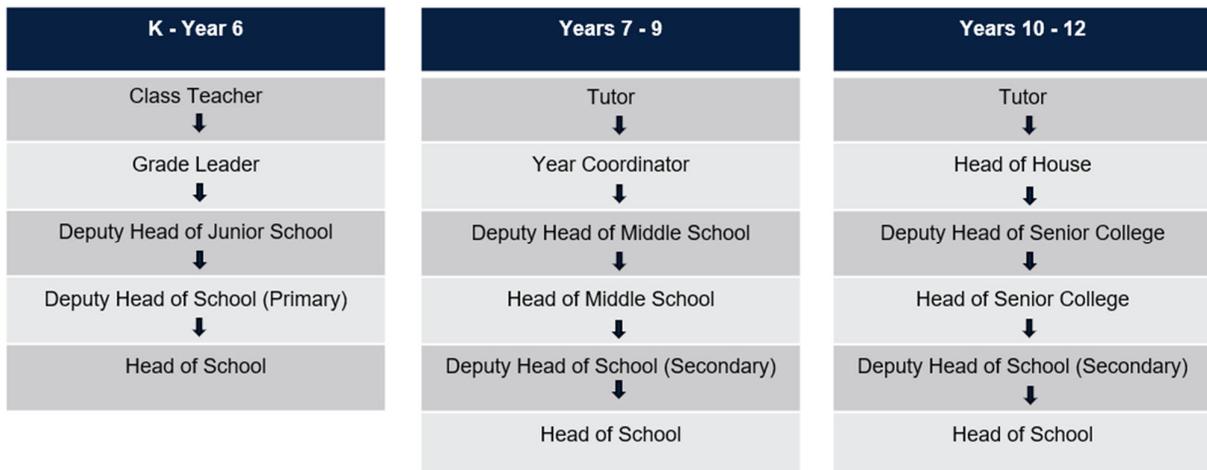
- bullying is not tolerated within the School;
- their concerns will be taken seriously; and
- the School has a clear strategy for dealing with bullying issues.

Reporting bullying incidents to the School

The Student Diary sets out guidelines, resources and procedures for students related to bullying and mean-on-purpose behaviour. All students are advised to report situations of bullying to their teacher and parents/guardians.

Various age-appropriate reporting mechanisms, including options to report anonymously, are made available and communicated to students. These include surveys, screeners and technology-enabled mechanisms which enable students to report directly to senior staff members in Secondary School and Junior School and Gawura.

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

K - Year 6	Years 7 - 9	Years 10 - 12
Class Teacher ↓	Tutor ↓	Tutor ↓
Grade Leader ↓	Year Coordinator ↓	Head of House ↓
Deputy Head of Junior School ↓	Deputy Head of Middle School ↓	Deputy Head of Senior College ↓
Deputy Head of School (Primary) ↓	Head of Middle School ↓	Head of Senior College ↓
Head of School	Deputy Head of School (Secondary) ↓	Deputy Head of School (Secondary) ↓
	Head of School	Head of School

While it may seem quicker to go to a higher authority in the sequence, it is usually more appropriate to start with the person who knows the student or the details of the incident best. If the matter cannot be resolved at the initial level it should progress through the hierarchy of responses.

Complaints to the eSafety Commissioner about cyberbullying material targeted at a child

Making a complaint

Where cyberbullying material (see definition below) is targeted at a child under the age of 18 years, a complaint can be made to:

- the provider of a social media service, relevant electronic service, designated internet service (as defined in the Online Safety Act 2021 (Cth)) - see The eSafety Guide for information about providers; and
- the eSafety Commissioner under section 30 of the Online Safety Act 2021 (Cth).

Complaints to the eSafety Commissioner can be made through the online portal by the child, their parent or guardian, or an adult authorised by the child to make the complaint. The eSafety Commissioner has the power investigate the complaint and to issue a removal notice.

For the eSafety Commissioner to investigate cyberbullying, the harmful content must have first been reported to the service or platform used to send, post or share it - at least 48 hours before it is reported to the eSafety Commissioner.

Cyberbullying material

Cyberbullying material that is provided on a social media service, relevant electronic service, designated internet service (as defined in the Online Safety Act 2021 (Cth)) that an ordinary person reasonable person would conclude is likely to:

- be intended to have an effect on a particular child; and
- have the direct or indirect effect on the child as seriously threatening, seriously intimidating, seriously harassing or seriously humiliating the child,

can be the subject of complaint to the eSafety Commissioner under section 30 of the Online Safety Act.

9. 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;
- takes seriously, and monitors single incidents of conflict or fights between students, that do not ordinarily amount to bullying, for signs of ongoing behaviour, which may be an indicator of bullying;
- provides assurance to the student being bullied that they are not at fault and their confidentiality will be respected;
- ensures that teachers, pastoral care and School leadership staff support the student being bullied through the reporting process and the corresponding investigation and resolution processes;
- ensures that student leaders support the School's anti-bullying policy and promote anti-bullying behaviours;
- takes time to properly investigate the facts including discussing the incident with the student being bullied, the student who was bullying and any bystanders;
- keeps parents/guardians of both the student who was bullied and the student who did the bullying, informed of the situation as and when appropriate to do so;
- takes time to understand any concerns of the individuals involved;
- maintains records of reported bullying incidents;
- will escalate its response when dealing with students who persistently bully and/or for severe incidents, even if these are not necessarily repetitive; and
- considers whether the behaviour gives rise to concerns that the student exhibiting the behaviour and/or the student subject to the behaviour may be experiencing child abuse or other harm, and, if so, follows the School's procedures for responding to and reporting child safety incidents or concerns.

Actions that may be taken when responding to bullying include:

- modelling appropriate behaviour;
- following behaviour management procedures;
- strengthening the target;
- mediation;
- restorative practice;
- support groups; and/or
- counselling.

These approaches should be coupled with:

- notification to/consultation with parents/guardians;
- offering counselling to students who persistently bully and students who are persistently bullied;
- implementing effective follow up strategies; and
- disciplinary action, at the Head of School's discretion, including suspension and expulsion of students who persistently bully, or in cases of severe incidents.

10. Bullying support services

School counselling team

The School provides access to in-house counselling services and provides recommendations to suitable external agencies where appropriate.

Youth Liaison Officers

Youth Liaison Officers are NSW Police Force members who are responsible for administering the Young Offenders Act 1997 (NSW). They are responsible for delivering cautions, referring children to youth justice conferences, and implementing strategies to reduce crime by juveniles in the community.

The Youth Liaison Officer allocated to the School is located at Day Street Police Station and can be contacted on (02) 9265 6499.

School Liaison Police

School Liaison Police are NSW Police officers who work with schools to reduce crime, violence and anti-social behaviour. Our students are encouraged to contact the School Liaison Officer if they have any concerns.

Our School Liaison Police Officer/s are located at Day Street Police Station and can be contacted on (02) 9265 6499.

Office of the eSafety Commissioner

The Office of the eSafety Commissioner provides resources, advice and strategies for parents/guardians, schools and children on how to deal with cyberbullying for people under the age of 18.

11. Staff responsibilities

All staff are responsible for:

- modelling appropriate behaviour at all times;
- dealing with all reported and observed incidents of bullying in accordance with this policy;
- ensuring that any incident of bullying that they observe or is reported to them, is recorded appropriately;

- being vigilant in monitoring students that have been identified as either students who persistently bully or are persistently bullied;
- considering whether the behaviour gives rise to concerns that the student exhibiting the behaviour and/or the student subject to the behaviour may be experiencing child abuse or other harm, and, if so, follows the School's procedures for responding to and reporting child safety incidents or concerns; and
- acknowledging the right of parents/guardians to speak with the School if they believe their child is being bullied.

12. Implementation

This policy is implemented through a combination of:

- staff training;
- student and parent/guardian education and information;
- involvement of external bodies and authorities as and when appropriate;
- effective incident reporting and recording procedures;
- effective management of bullying incidents when reported;
- the creation of a 'no-bullying' culture within the School community;
- effective record keeping procedures; and
- initiation of corrective actions where necessary.

13. Document control

Document Name	Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy
Confidentiality	External
Document Status	Approved
Version Number	3
Owner	Head of School
Version Date	25 May 2023
Date of Next Review	May 2026

14. Approval

Approver	Date of Approval
Governance Committee	16 February 2023
School Council	25 May 2023