



Bullying Policy

(V1.4 1808)

BRISBANE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

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BULLYING POLICY (V1.4 1808)

1. Purpose and Application

This policy must be read in conjunction with the Brisbane Grammar School (**BGS** or **the School**) *Child Protection Policy and Child Risk Management Strategy*. If bullying amounts to harm as defined in the *Child Protection Policy and Child Risk Management Strategy*, then the matter must be first dealt with under that policy.

The School is committed to providing a secure, supportive and protective community for all of its members and will therefore not tolerate any behaviour that undermines this. The School will take whatever steps are necessary to prevent and address such behaviour (see also the *Code of Expectations and Behaviour for Students of Brisbane Grammar School* and behaviour management policies).

This policy applies to all staff (including contractors, volunteers and work experience students), students and parents. This policy applies to bullying behaviour by students wherever it occurs, including within and outside of School, and in real life and online platforms. Every member of the School community has the right to be free from bullying. Therefore, all members of the School community have a responsibility to actively practice and promote:

- tolerance for individual differences;
- the values of courtesy, respect, compassion, and care for others;
- a supportive, protective, encouraging school culture where the achievements and efforts of others are celebrated; and
- a commitment to adhering to, and upholding, all aspects of this policy.

A secure, supportive and protective community requires all members to be tolerant to others.

2. Definitions

Bullying is an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more persons. Bullying can happen in person or online, and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying of any form or for any reason can have 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 may take many forms, for example:

- *Physical bullying*: pushing and shoving, kicking, invasion of personal space, the destruction of property, tripping, punching, tearing clothes, standing over someone, pushing books from someone's hands, shooting/throwing objects at someone;
- *Verbal bullying*: any comment of an offensive nature that refers to appearance, habits, ability, race, religion, gender, sexuality or gender identity; including name-calling, offensive language, spreading of rumours, , mocking, imitating, teasing, abusive phone calls, laughing at someone's mistakes, using unwelcome nicknames (this can include electronic, and digital forms of communication);
- *Gesture bullying*: includes making gestures (physical, verbal and written) to intimidate or to embarrass.



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- *Exclusion bullying*: includes the deliberate isolation (both explicit and implicit) of an individual student from his peer group;
- *Extortion bullying*: the use of force to obtain money, food or personal belongings from other students; harassing other students to do tasks e.g. buying lunch, carrying materials; and
- *Cyberbullying*: the use of any information and communication technologies such as social media, (mobile) phone and text messages, instant messaging, personal websites and personal polling websites, to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or a group that is intended to harm others (also see *ICT Use Policy* and the *Explicit Sexual Imagery Policy*).

Behaviours that do not constitute bullying (because they do not involve deliberate and repeated harm and a power imbalance) 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; or
- isolated incidents of aggression, intimidation or violence.

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

Bullying behaviour may also breach the School's *Code of Expectations and Behaviour (Students)*, *Anti-Discrimination Policy* or *Sexual Harassment Policy*. The School has a separate *Workplace Harassment Policy* for staff.

3. Prohibition of Bullying

Bullying behaviour of any kind is prohibited by the School under this policy. Bullying behaviour may also breach the School's other policies, such as the *Code of Expectations and Behaviour for Students of Brisbane Grammar School*, *Anti-Discrimination Policy* or *Sexual Harassment Policy*.

The School has a separate *Workplace Harassment Policy* for staff.

4. Strategies for Prevention

As a School community, all members have the responsibility to work actively towards the prevention of bullying amongst students.

4.1. Staff

This requires staff to:

- be familiar with this policy and attend professional development provided by the School;
- be positive role models at all times, in both words and in deeds;
- be vigilant in monitoring for signs of bullying behaviour;
- be vigilant in monitoring for signs of distress in individuals;
- adopt classroom management techniques that minimise opportunities for bullying behaviours;
- make efforts to remove opportunities for bullying by proactive supervision during breaks;



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- take steps to help students by addressing sources of distress;
- actively seek appropriate assistance (from Heads of Year, Assistant Heads of Year and/or Counsellors) to help students develop resilience;
- recognise bullying behaviour and be able to differentiate bullying from other activity;
- report suspected bullying behaviour in accordance with section 5 of this policy;
- create and deliver curriculum materials and participate in other School initiatives to develop students' awareness and coping skills; and
- commit to record keeping, follow up and ongoing monitoring.

4.2. Students

When a student who is being bullied has the courage to speak out he will reduce the distress being experienced by him and possibly others, and creates an opportunity for a solution to the problem.

When a student who witnesses bullying has the courage to speak out he helps reduce the distress to the victim and he contributes to the building of a secure, supportive and protective school environment.

This requires all students to:

- make a conscious decision not to be involved in any bullying behaviour;
- take some form of proactive action if aware that bullying has occurred; and
- report any bullying behaviour (including suspected behaviour) in accordance with section 5 of this policy.

4.3. Parents

This requires parents to:

- be familiar with this policy and attend education provided by the School;
- be positive role models at all times, in both words and deeds;
- watch for, and report, signs of distress in their son – e.g. unwillingness to attend school;
- advise their son to tell a member of staff if bullying has occurred;
- keep a written record of the bullying behaviour;
- not encourage their son to retaliate;
- be willing to work with the School if their son is involved in bullying behaviour (either as a student who has been bullied, or who has engaged in bullying behaviour);
- report to the School any cases of bullying or suspected bullying regarding their son in accordance with section 5 of this policy; and
- report to the School any cases of bullying or suspected bullying, even if their son is not directly affected, in accordance with section 5 of this policy.

When staff, students and parents work together to prevent bullying behaviour there is a much greater chance of creating a secure, supportive and protective school community.

4.4. School education programs and preventative strategies

Education of students, staff and parents forms an important component of the School's proactive approach to bullying and the creation of a secure, supportive and protective learning environment.



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Each of these groups will be educated as follows:

- students will receive a scoped and sequenced bullying education program as part of the student wellbeing curriculum;
- staff will be provided with up to date data and literature, and required to attend professional development; and
- parents will have the opportunity to attend an induction program and lectures presented by experts in this field.

In addition, the School implements a range of other preventative strategies and conducts other activities to monitor and raise awareness of bullying issues, for example:

- appointment of the Student Wellbeing Team, including School Counsellors, Form Tutors / Core Teachers, Form Seniors and a tiered and longitudinal wellbeing structure;
- maintenance of the Student Wellbeing Register to record and monitor student wellbeing;
- publication of materials at the School, at assemblies, on the School's website or in newsletters;
- participation in external activities or events (such as the National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence);
- consulting with students and parents (including internal or external student wellbeing surveys and audits);
- evaluating the effectiveness of School responses to bullying behaviour; and
- creating physical environments and staff supervision practices that limit opportunity for bullying behaviour.

5. Reporting bullying

All forms of bullying (including suspected bullying) must be reported. All reports of bullying will be dealt with by the School, as far as possible, in a confidential manner.

To ignore bullying is to give your approval to bullying and will only serve to foster its existence in the School.

Anyone who is bullied or who is aware of or suspects bullying behaviour should report this (no matter how minor it is perceived to be) by following the procedures below:

5.1. As a Senior School student

You must inform your Head of Year or Assistant Head of Year, your Form Tutor, another member of the teaching staff, Counsellor or the Deputy Headmaster - Students (either verbally or in writing) as soon as possible, by providing all known details of the actual or suspected bullying behaviour. Students may also report bullying via the Student Wellbeing Register.

5.2. As a Middle School student

You must inform your Core Teacher, Head of Year, Counsellor or the Head of Middle School (either verbally or in writing) as soon as possible, by providing all known details of the actual or suspected bullying behaviour. Students may also report bullying via the Student Wellbeing Register.



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5.3. As a parent

You must inform your child's Head of Year, Core Teacher, Form Tutor or Deputy Headmaster – Students or Head of Middle School (as applicable, either verbally or in writing) as soon as possible by providing all known details of the actual or suspected bullying behaviour. Parents and other members of the School community may also report bullying via a link on the School's website.

5.4. As a teacher or staff member of the School

After ensuring the safety of students involved, the teacher or staff member must follow the School's internal operational procedures for responding to bullying.

6. Investigation Procedures

All reports of bullying will be investigated in accordance with the School's internal operational procedures for responding to bullying. The nature and extent of the investigation will be at the School's sole and absolute discretion depending upon the circumstances. As far as is reasonably possible the investigation and its outcome will be kept confidential although, where appropriate, both the students involved and their parents will be informed.

7. Outcomes

Following the completion of an investigation into bullying, the School will take such actions as are deemed appropriate by the School in its sole and absolute discretion, which could include one, or more, of the following:

- explanation or apology;
- counselling;
- restitution;
- an agreement regarding standards of future behaviour;
- other methods to restore relationships; and
- disciplinary action, such as detentions, suspension or expulsion

8. Support for Students and Parents

The School will provide support to all students and their parents which may include, where appropriate:

- being informed of the outcome of the School's investigation;
- being consulted in respect of the support to be offered by the School, including counselling; and
- receiving an explanation, apology and/or restitution (where appropriate).



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9. Related Documents

- Anti-Discrimination Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy (For Staff)
- Behaviour Management Policy (For Students and Parents)
- Bullying Policy: Operational Procedures for Responding to Bullying (*internal School procedure for staff*)
- Child Protection Policy and Child Risk Management Strategy
- Code of Expectations and Behaviour (Students)
- Counselling Policy Practices and Procedures
- Explicit Sexual Imagery Policy
- Explicit Sexual Imagery Policy: Operational Procedures for Responding to Sexting (*internal School procedure for staff*)
- ICT Use Policy
- Privacy Policy and Standard Information Collection Notice
- Sexual Harassment Policy
- Student Enrolment Agreement

10. Contact Information and Resources

If you have any questions regarding this policy, please contact the Deputy Headmaster – Students or the Head of Middle School.

Students may wish to contact the Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800, which provides free phone counselling 24/7 to young people aged between 5 and 25.

Parentline is also available on 1300 30 1300.

Other resources that provide information about creating safe environments free from bullying include:

- Student Wellbeing Hub – www.studentwellbeinghub.edu.au
- Bullying No Way! – www.bullyingnoway.gov.au
- Cybersafety – www.esafety.gov.au
- National Centre Against Bullying – www.ncab.org.au



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11. Policy Management

The School will review this policy every two years to ensure it remains effective and relevant and may also change this policy at any time to take account of changes and the effect of changes, in legislation, best practice and other School policies and documents.

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