



## Cobram Anglican Grammar School

*A School of the Anglican Schools Commission (Inc.)*

### Anti Bullying and Harassment Policy

<b>Section</b>	Student Welfare
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<b>Communication</b>	School Website

#### 1. Bullying

Bullying is when someone, or a group of people **repeatedly** create a risk to another person's health and safety - psychologically or physically, or to their property, reputation or social acceptance.

Bullying in any form is unacceptable in the school environment.

Bullies deliberately set out to repeatedly intimidate, exclude, threaten and/or hurt others.

Bullying is a form of harassment.

##### **Cyber Bullying**

People who use the internet, email, intranet, phones or similar technologies to bully others are cyber bullies. Bullying that is carried out through an internet service, such as email, chat room, online games, discussion group, instant messaging or through mobile phone technologies such as short messaging service (SMS) is cyber bullying.

Cyber bullying will not be tolerated at any level, time or place and consequences exist for individuals who choose to cyber bully others.

#### 2. Harassment

Harassment is **any unwanted behavior, physical or verbal** (or even suggested), that makes a reasonable person feel uncomfortable, humiliated, or mentally distressed.

There are three types of harassment,

1. Verbal/Written
2. Physical
3. Visual

Examples of harassment include **derogatory jokes, racial slurs, personal insults, and expressions of disgust or intolerance toward a particular race**. Abuse may range from mocking a person's accent to psychologically intimidating a person by making threats or displaying discriminatory symbols.

### **3. Scope**

This policy applies to behaviour that occurs within and outside of school hours.

### **4. Aims**

- To educate and reinforce to the school community what bullying including cyber bullying is and that it is unacceptable.
- To enable everyone in the school community to be alert to the signs and evidence of bullying and cyber bullying and to be aware that they have a responsibility to report it to staff, whether as observer or victim.
- To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying and cyber bullying are investigated appropriately and that support is given to both victims and perpetrators.
- To seek parental and peer-group support and co-operation at all times.

### **5. Application**

This policy applies to the School Council, Principal, all school staff, students and parents/guardians of Cobram Anglican Grammar School.

### **6. Types of Bullying**

There are three broad categories of bullying:

#### **1. Direct physical bullying**

This form includes repetitive hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.

#### **2. Direct verbal and written bullying**

This form includes repetitive name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, or verbal abuse.

#### **3. Indirect bullying**

This form of bullying is harder to recognise and is often carried out without the express knowledge of the person being bullied. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation.

Indirect bullying includes:

- lying and spreading rumors;
- playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate;
- mimicking;
- encouraging others to socially exclude someone
- damaging someone's social reputation and social acceptance; and
- cyber-bullying, which involves the use of email, text messages, social media tools or chat rooms to humiliate and distress someone.

### **7. What Bullying is NOT**

Many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying, even though they are unpleasant and often require intervention and management. There are three socially unpleasant situations that are often confused with bullying:

- a. Mutual conflict - In mutual conflict situations, there is an argument or disagreement between parties but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the problem. However, unresolved mutual conflict sometimes develops into a bullying situation with one person becoming targeted repeatedly for 'retaliation' in a one-sided way.
- b. Social rejection or dislike - Unless the social rejection is directed towards someone specific and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others, it is not bullying.
- c. Single-episode acts - Single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If a student is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied.

Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different students is not the same as bullying. This behaviour may be deemed harassment under this policy.

## **8. Cobram Anglican Grammar School's policy**

Cobram Anglican Grammar School recognises its duty to provide a safe, inclusive and positive learning environment where individual differences and diversity within the School are respected and accepted. Bullying is not tolerated at Cobram Anglican Grammar 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 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.

## **9. Prevention Strategies**

Cobram Anglican Grammar School recognises that the implementation of whole-school prevention strategies are the most effective way of eliminating, or 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
- 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)
- regular risk assessments of bullying within the School are undertaken by surveying students to identify bullying issues that may ordinarily go unnoticed by staff
- records of reported bullying incidents are maintained and analysed, in order to identify persistent bullies and/or victims and to implement targeted prevention strategies where appropriate
- education of staff, students and parents/guardians to understand and to reduce stigma and fear regarding all abilities that may impact a person's ability to participate
- anti-bullying posters are displayed strategically within the School
- promotion of student awareness and a 'no-bullying' environment by participating in events such as the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence.

## **10. Reporting Bullying**

Students and their parents/guardians are sometimes reluctant to 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 assurance to students who experience bullying (and parents/guardians) 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 a member of the School's Wellbeing Team
- informing a student's Year Level Coordinator
- informing a student's Head of School
- informing the Principal.

Please also refer to Cobram AGS *Complaints and Disputes Resolution Information for Parents and Students*.

<https://www.cags.vic.edu.au/about-us/school-policy>

## **11. 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 and maintained
- 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
- maintains records of reported bullying incidents

- will escalate its response when dealing with persistent bullies and/or severe incidents.

The following may also form part of the School's response plan:

- notification of/consultation with parents/guardians
- offering a Wellbeing Support Service to persistent bullies/victims
- implementing effective follow up strategies
- disciplinary action, at the Principal's discretion, including suspension and expulsion of persistent bullies, or in cases of severe incidents.

## **12. Staff Responsibilities**

All staff are responsible to:

- model appropriate behaviour at all times
- deal with all reported and observed incidents of bullying in accordance with this policy
- ensure that any incident of bullying that they observe or is reported to them, is recorded appropriately
- be vigilant in monitoring students that have been identified as either persistent bullies or victims
- acknowledge the right of parents/guardians to speak with the School if they believe their child is being bullied.

## **13. Signage**

Anti-bullying posters may be posted in strategic locations in the School to promote appropriate behaviour and encourage students to respect individual differences and diversity.

## **14. Implementation**

This policy is implemented through a combination of:

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

### Version Control

Version	Date	Summary of Changes
2.0	Sept 2021	Update
3.0	22/02/2022	Insert Harassment definition Insert Communication reference Renummer and updated formatting Updated template
4.0	July 2023	Policy was reviewed. No changes were made