# 6.6 Anti-Bullying – Years 7-12

## Our Commitment

Pittwater House is committed to providing a safe and caring environment which allows the development of the whole student. Our School seeks to affirm each students' worth and dignity and looks to promote a positive learning environment where students interact in a respectful manner.

Every member of the Pittwater House School community has a right to:

- be treated as an individual with *dignity*;
- feel *safe*;
- *learn*;
- be *free from enforced anxiety*; and
- *not to be subjected to* forms of harassment or bullying.

The purpose of this policy is to promote and maintain a positive climate that is safe, supportive and respectful, within our teaching and learning community, with an overarching commitment to student wellbeing. With the support of parents and staff, we encourage all students to create and cultivate meaningful and respectful relationships, community based on compassion, respect and dignity.

Bullying, as defined in this policy, is contrary to the values of Pittwater House School and is therefore prohibited.

## Policy

The following principles are pivotal in contributing to effective learning and acknowledge the importance of our students' safety and wellbeing by:

- affirming our commitment to provide a duty of care which ensures all members of the School community feel safe and protected while at school;
- accepting responsibility for developing and sustaining a safe and supportive learning and teaching environment which simultaneously fulfils the School's child protection responsibilities;
- actively supporting young people to develop skills in order to keep themselves and others safe;
- encouraging the essential role that staff and parents play in creating and developing a culture of safety and support for our students;
- committing to the development of a safe school community through a whole-school and evidence based approach:

  - ensuring practice is based on the National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF) and broader educational obligations; and
  - developing a culture of safety and support for our students where diversity is valued.

1.  **What is Bullying?**

To effectively respond to bullying at Pittwater House, it is important that school staff are provided with an agreed definition.

The NSSF defines bullying as follows:

*Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behavior that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. It is not the same thing as conflict, violence or disagreement - although it may, of course, involve these things. With bullying there is always a power imbalance which makes the ill treatment of a victim possible.*

*Bullying can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and all forms of harassment including that based on sex, race, disability, sexual orientation or practice of religion. Bullying of any form, or for any reason, can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Bullying can happen anywhere: at school, travelling to and from school, in sporting teams, at home, online, as well as in the workplace.*

Bullying can take many forms, all of which will cause distress. The *National Centre Against Bullying* identifies **five** kinds of bullying:

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| **Physical:** | hitting, tripping, kicking, spitting on others |
| **Verbal:** | teasing |
| **Covert:** | lying about someone, spreading rumours, humiliating someone to make them feel deliberately isolated, consistent exclusion among peers |
| **Psychological:** | threatening, manipulating or stalking someone |
| **Cyberbullying:** | using technology, such as email, mobile phones, chat rooms, social media, to bully someone, verbally, socially, or psychologically |

2.  **What is Not Bullying Behaviour?**

It is equally important to clarify what behaviours are NOT bullying. Whilst the following behaviours are often upsetting for those students involved, and still need to be addressed and resolved, they do not constitute bullying:

- **mutual arguments and disagreements**
- **a single act of social rejection**
- **one-off acts of meanness or spite**
- **isolated incidents**

3.  **Cyberbullying**

*Cyberbullying is when a group or an individual use information and communication technologies (ICT) to intentionally harm a person over time, who cannot easily stop this bullying from continuing (Child Health Promotion Research Centre, Edith Cowan University, 2010).*

Cyberbullying can be described as any repeated behaviour, by way of harassment, insults or humiliation, that occurs through electronic media. This can be communicated by way of:

- emails
- mobile phones
- social networking sites
- instant messaging programs

The implications of cyberbullying can be enormous, due to the capacity to cause harm in front of a wide audience. Cyberbullying is becoming increasingly common and can possibly cause greater harm than face-to-face bullying.

It can be a dangerous form of covert psychological bullying, as it can be carried out with relative anonymity which young people are less likely to report.

*The Pittwater House Senior School Safe School Policy is applicable when using technology, especially in the instance where cyberbullying is impacting on the learning and wellbeing of a student. (**for more information see** [Appendix 5](#) Cyberbullying).*

4. **How does Pittwater House Senior School Discourage Bullying?**

The School aims:

- to **IDENTIFY** the various forms of bullying so that all members of the School community are aware and understand behaviours which are not tolerated;
- to encourage a culture where it is acceptable and usual to **REPORT** incidents in order to protect students; and
- to **EMPOWER** every student with appropriate strategies to deal with harassment.

The methods implemented to discourage bullying are based on a variety of initiatives used to help develop greater emotional intelligence throughout the school community. Strategies to prevent bullying need to be reflected across all facets of school life.

These include:

- Promoting and encouraging the concept of developing respectful relationships and ensuring students are aware of the HEROIC core values of the School.
- Encouraging all members of the Pittwater House Senior School Community to embrace the *Pittwater House Senior School Safe School Policy* to promote a bully-free environment.
- Integrating our anti-bullying guidelines to the Senior Student *Code of Conduct* and by reinforcing the rights and responsibilities of all students.
- Engaging staff to model tolerance, empathy and acceptance of individual differences.
- Monitoring students' online behaviour through the School's network, email and school portal and, where possible, in cooperation with parents.
- Training staff to detect bullying behaviour and to be able to help resolve conflicts in a positive manner.
- Encouraging staff to adopt classroom management techniques that provide active supervision, discourage opportunities for bullying behaviours and challenge unacceptable behaviour.

- Publishing and promoting our anti-bullying policies to the School Community via the School Portal and in school policy documents, and other publications such as the Student Handbook.
- Providing activities/sessions that develop a culture of resilience, up-standing behaviour, acceptance, compassion and empathy through the integration of year groups, horizontally and vertically.
- Undertaking confidential student wellbeing surveys.
- Engaging School Counsellors to support both the victims of bullying as well as to those exhibiting bullying behaviour.
- Continuing to provide support for parents and guardians through the School's Pastoral Care structure and at information seminars and forums.
- Reviewing the *Pittwater House Senior School Safe School Policy* on a regular basis in order to ensure that it remains contemporary, effective and relevant.
- Engaging in an appropriate range of sanctions to deal with and discourage bullying behaviour.
- Providing appropriate staff supervision both in and out of the classroom.
- Raising awareness through school assemblies, year meetings and Form Class.
- Reporting and employing appropriate in-school intervention strategies to support students affected by bullying.
- In consultation with the School Community, review and implement anti-bullying measures with the aim of reducing instances of bullying

School staff have a responsibility to:

- Respond in a timely manner to an incident of bullying and anti-social behaviour by seeking support from relevant Year/Stage Co-ordinators and staff.
- Model and promote appropriate behaviour when in contact with students, both in and out of the classroom.
- Respect and support students.
- Where possible, try to remove the source of distress without putting the victim at risk.
- Listen to students without being judgemental.

In addition, all staff have a responsibility to:

- Provide a curriculum and pedagogy (the method and practice of teaching) that supports all students in developing an understanding of bullying and the potential impact it has on individuals and the broader community beyond the School.

Students have a responsibility to:

- Model and promote appropriate behaviour.
- Respect the individual differences and diversity of the students who make up the School community.
- Be proactive and responsible bystanders and report matters that are of concern to them immediately. Be brave enough to report an incident or peak out and support others.
- Be an advocate for students who are risk.
- Adopt and embrace the policies that surround bullying and anti-social behaviours.

Parents have a responsibility to:

- Model and promote appropriate behaviour
- Be aware of the School's *Safe School Policy* and support the approach it takes to address issues of this nature.
- Monitor their child's computer and internet use.
- Encourage children to seek mutually beneficial solutions to relationship issues.
- Report incidents of school-related bullying to the school without delay.
- Work collaboratively with the school in educating their children as to what is acceptable, healthy adolescent behaviour.

**5. How Will the School Respond?**

The School does not tolerate any form of bullying or harassment toward any student. All episodes of alleged bullying and harassment which are reported to the School **will be responded to** and any investigation will be conducted fairly and without bias. When an allegation of bullying has been made to the School:

- Students and their parents are fully informed of the allegation/s.
- Students and their parents are given the opportunity to provide an explanation and to respond to the allegation. The student/s always have the right of reply.
- Students and their parents are informed of the likely consequences.
- A thorough investigation is pursued and all points of view are listened to and understood.
- The student (at the centre of the allegation) may need support.
- Students and their parents are informed of the outcome of the investigation.
- If a student is bullying and harassing others, the School will point out what is happening and insist that it stops. In the first instance, this may involve a peer mediation session.
- If a student continues to bully and harass others, the School will act and initiate a process of consequences for their actions with the student and their parents fully involved in the process.
- Consequences will be dependent upon the nature of the incident and will relate to the *Pittwater House Senior School Behaviour Justice Schema*. Consequences may include: Lunch Detentions, After School Detentions, Internal/External Suspensions or Exclusion. These punitive measures may be accompanied by a mediation process, a form of reflection or restorative practice.
- Students and their parents have the right to know how to seek a review of the decision.

Depending on the seriousness of the matter, **parents may be asked to find alternative academic arrangements for their children**. Matters may be so serious that, under the **Child Protection Act 1998,** the School may be obliged to report the incident to police and the Department of Family and Community Services.

## Procedural Fairness

For serious matters, interviews with the involved student/s will be conducted by the Head of School, Year/Stage Co-ordinator or a member of the Executive Team in the presence of one other adult, usually each other. The student will be advised of the necessity to conduct a formal interview, the investigative process, the reason for the interview, and that it is a requirement of the interview that it is documented. Where statements from involved parties are taken, they will be written in isolation, with due discretion and

confidentiality ensured. Students are given the opportunity to read their statement over or, if they wish, to have the documented notes of an interview made available to them or to their parents. The School will work closely with the student and parents to ensure procedural fairness and impartiality.

If safety is of concern and there is a need for a bag, locker or pocket search, each student is entitled to the right to privacy and dignity. Should they wish a search to be conducted privately, that will be arranged. If a student refuses to have their bag or locker inspected, the relevant item will be impounded by the Year/Stage Co-ordinator or Head of School. After consultation with the Principal, the College may seek the involvement of either parents or police authorities to proceed.

Students may be directed to not attend school while the investigation process takes place (eg. where there are safety concerns). All students are given every opportunity to have a witness present to support them in any interview procedure. The student will be given the opportunity to respond and provide their version of events. The investigation process will be conducted in a timely manner appropriate to the circumstances.

# Appendix 5

## Cyberbullying

**What does cyberbullying look like?**

- *Flaming:* hostile online interaction usually where angry or rude comments are exchanged.
- *Denigration:* putting mean messages online.
- *Exclusion:* intentionally leaving someone out of the group, such as instant messaging, friend sites, or online group activities.
- *Outing:* sharing secrets about someone online, including private information, pictures and videos.
- *Trickery:* tricking someone into revealing personal information and then sharing it with others.
- *Impersonation:* pretending to be someone else online, sending or posting mean or false messages.
- *Harassment:* repeatedly sending malicious messages to someone online.
- *Cyberstalking:* continuously engaging in harassing and invading one's privacy.
- *Sexting:* the sharing of sexually explicit material by mobile phone or computer.

It should be noted that sending explicit images of anyone under the age of eighteen years, including the student, is a crime. If the person in the picture is under sixteen years, it can be a very serious crime resulting in charges of paedophilia.

**Mobile phones and cyberbullying:**

Using mobile devices to bully and threaten other students is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. In some cases, it can constitute criminal behaviour.

Students are reminded that mobile phones and devices are not to be used to take photos/videos of any student or teacher, not in nor out of the classroom, and never without their permission. This includes uploading any content onto social media websites, or emailing others with the intent to embarrass, humiliate or cause discomfort to the subject of the photo/video.

Mobile phones (Years 7-10) are to be locked away in lockers at the beginning of the school day and are not to be brought out again until the end of it. Years 11-12 have limited use throughout the school day.

Please refer to the current *Pittwater House Mobile Phone Policy.*

**Responding to Cyberbullying:**

The *Pittwater House Senior School Safe School Policy* also applies in relation to technology, especially in the instance where cyberbullying is impacting on the learning and wellbeing of a student.

**How to protect yourself:**

The impact of the internet and the various social media tools that are available to our society, demand that we all exercise an increased sense of responsibility and remain accountable for our online behaviour.

The following guidelines should be adhered to when using technology in the classroom, or for school activities, as a means of keeping yourself safe:

- Be safe online. Never reveal, not even to friends, your personal information, photos, password or login details.

- Be aware of what you post online. Remember that something sent electronically will leave a digital footprint and can never entirely be removed or 'deleted'.

- Don't respond to messages when you are angry or hurt – either to strangers or people you know. This will often encourage and even intensify their harassment of you.

- Log out and stop messaging if you feel you are being harassed.

- Never tell unknown people private details about yourself or how they can meet you in person.

- Families to engage fully in the school's specific Cyber Safety education program.

- If needed, report any significant incidents to the eSafety Commissioner or Police.

| Version | Revision Details | Revised by: | Authorised by: | Date: |
|---------|------------------|-------------|----------------|-------|
| 2 | Replaces old policy | CRH, LIP, RMA | JSW | 15 Feb 2019 |
| 3 | Replaces old policy | D. Heath/K. Thomas | JSW | 30 Aug 2023 |