

Positive Peer Relations

School Policy on Bullying



Guildford Grammar School

FOUNDED 1896



Positive Peer Relations School Policy on Bullying		
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Introduction

At Guildford Grammar School we provide an educational environment that promotes the dignity and respect of all members within our community and we are committed to actively promoting the development of positive personal relationships.

All members of our School community have the right to a learning and working environment free from all forms of bullying and harassment.

The School recognises that in any organisation there is the potential for bullying and harassment to occur. Any form of bullying or harassment is unacceptable, and the School is committed to addressing it. This policy and guidelines provide all members of our community with clear procedures and practices that support the safety of each student.

There is an expectation that all members within the School community honour and support a commitment to this policy. Bullying and harassment both diminish an individual's self-confidence and self-respect. They can undermine an individual's sense of belonging and self-worth. The School recognises that all members within our community have a role to play in ensuring everyone has a learning and working environment free from all forms of bullying and harassment.

Each of us can make a difference to achieve a harmonious and positive environment in which we live, learn, play and work.

Anne Dunstan

Principal

January 2020



1. Policy Statement

Bullying prevention plays a role in ensuring that all schools build a safe, positive and supportive school culture that fosters caring, positive and respectful relationships between all involved in the school community.

‘Every school is expected to have a safe, supportive, respectful and positive learning environment free from bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence, so student wellbeing and academic outcomes are maximised.’ Department of Education WA.

The majority of this document focuses on bullying behaviour exhibited by students towards other students. Claims of adults bullying students are treated as child abuse. Further information on this can be found in the School’s Child Protection Policy.

All students receive positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour and are given opportunities to interact and develop respectful and positive relationships with each other and with staff members and volunteers.

2. Context

Guildford Grammar School adopts a number of strategies and approaches (i.e. whole-school prevention and targeted early intervention and intervention for bullying incidents) to foster a positive school climate and a safe environment for everyone.

Guildford Grammar School’s bullying prevention policy is the vehicle to articulate the school community’s shared understanding of bullying and how best to respond, and the agreed preventative and responsive strategies implemented by the school, based on this understanding.

3. Guiding Principles

Duty of Care

School authorities, schools and teachers owe a duty of care to their students. This duty arises from the nature of the relationship and exists whenever and wherever the student is in their care.

The notion of reasonable care extends to ensure that the school provides a safe environment for all students and includes the development of processes for the effective prevention of bullying.

Social and Emotional Wellbeing (SEW) Framework

Within our school community, student voice and student led initiatives make a significant contribution to the social and emotional well-being of our students. Sharing voice and participating in student led initiatives ensures students feel valued and supported, enabling them to develop competencies across the social and emotional skill sets.

Our highest profile student led initiative has been the development of the schools ‘3G’ trademark. Through our student leaders the pillars of United, Professional, and Committed were identified as building a positive school culture.



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School Values

The school purpose and values are reflective of the school's Christian foundation. They inform the qualities of the student that the School seeks to develop.

Inspiring students to achieve personal excellence and to be outstanding citizens who work to create a just, loving and peaceful society.

Our core values:

- **Excellence** – Making the best use of your gifts, talents, and abilities for the benefit for others and you
- **Respect** - showing appreciation and consideration for those around us
- **Integrity** – maintaining moral principles irrespective of the circumstances
- **Spirituality** - searching for meaning in our lives which transcends the body and mind
- **Teamwork** - working cooperatively to achieve our common goals
- **Compassion** – recognising those in need and taking action to help.

Social and Emotional Skills

Together with family and community, we are able to address the social and emotional wellbeing of children and adolescents in our care. The interactions, activities and experiences on offer at GGS are underpinned by four broad areas of skill development considered important for students to reach their social and emotional potential. These are set out in the Australian Curriculum as 'Personal and Social Capabilities' and include:

- Social Awareness
- Social Management
- Self-Awareness
- Self-Management

Self-awareness

Self-awareness is demonstrated by the student being able to identify their own thoughts and feelings, recognise how these thoughts and feelings arise, and how the thoughts and feelings influence their behaviour. Self-awareness includes the ability of the student to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and understand themselves better.

Self-Management

Self-management is the ability to identify feelings, behaviours and thoughts and also to self-regulate and manage these effectively in different situations. Through self-management, students learn skills to regulate impulses, build strategies to help them cope with stress, persevere and motivate themselves, and set and follow through with goals.

Social Awareness

Social awareness involves empathy, students learning to understand life from other peoples' perspectives and understanding how their actions may influence other people. Our students are encouraged to think about other cultures, backgrounds, and societal norms. Students



also develop the ability to recognise the social supports around them in their family, school and community.

Social Management

Social management includes the ability to build and maintain healthy relationships with other people. Some of the skills required for healthy relationships include effective communication skills, active listening, cooperation, being able to stand up to negative peer pressure, positive conflict resolution, and being both supportive and asking for help when needed (ACARA, 2010).

Social management includes the ability to make responsible decisions. Responsible decision making is the ability to consider others, the self, ethical standards, safety, and social norms when making decisions (ACARA, 2010). It also includes the ability to realistically predict and accept responsibility for the outcomes of these decisions (ACARA, 2010).

Positive School Culture

Anglican Ethos

The religious, spiritual and liturgical life of the School is central to its mission; be that enacted in the Chapel, in the classroom, on the stage, or on the sporting field, in social activities, or while travelling to and from school. Guildford Grammar School promotes a Christian ethos in an Anglican tradition which is inclusive, ecumenical and liturgical thereby recognising a thoughtful, enquiring and proper place for the Bible, Tradition and Reason, properly exercised, in informing Christian discipleship and for the building up of the Kingdom of God.

In so much as the Chapel is the most striking building of the school it symbolises the importance the school places upon the centrality of the Christian experience lived out in the Anglican tradition within the School.

The School Chapel is a quiet place in the School: it is a place of prayer and reflection for all members of the school community. It proclaims a message that God is present among his people; that Jesus is alive and is ready to answer prayer; that the Holy Spirit calls us to love and understanding with each other. The Eucharist is at the heart of its worship and proclaims that in broken bread and shared wine we seek to reflect the self-giving love of Christ.

While the School welcomes those from all beliefs, and none, it is expected that all members will live a life reflective in word and deed of the example of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. To that end the School seeks to respond to human need with loving service, to be non-judgmental and inclusive.

Pastoral Care

Pastoral care at Guildford Grammar School is a model of emotional and spiritual support to enhance the social, emotional and physical wellbeing of the students. A hallmark of our pastoral care model is ensuring that each student is **known** and **valued**. We believe that 'care' is all-encompassing in nature, whether in a pastoral or academic sense are similar and inter-related, with both contributing to improved performance and enjoyment at school. Research informs us that students receiving quality social and emotional education, the essence of our pastoral care program, are likely to be more resilient, feel more connected to school, achieve better results and demonstrate more positive behaviours. Our ultimate aim is



to provide students with the skills and emotional strength to become confident and compassionate young men and women in the wider world.

The Preparatory School

In the Preparatory School we aim to provide an environment that is physically, emotionally and intellectually safe for all members of our school community. We are consistently looking for opportunities for our students to grow and develop as individuals in community and to understand the impact of their words and actions on others. As a core part of our pastoral care we focus on anti-bullying and we seek to achieve this by:

- preventing the occurrence of bullying. We do this by educating the students on establishing positive relationships and reinforcing the rights and responsibilities of all school members;
- developing individual self-esteem and respect for others through informative lessons and activities in all classes;
- combating bullying by processes of restorative practice, reconciliation and support (which may include involvement by school psychologists, outside partners and parents).

The Senior School

The Senior School comprises eight houses containing boarding and day students. Each house includes around 90 students from Years 7-12. A Head of House and a Mentor Teacher responsible for each year group support students in the House. In order to foster stronger relationships with students and families Mentor Teachers oversee each group of students for three successive school years (e.g. Year 7, 8, 9). Mentor groups are organised by school year whereas the houses include students from all years, this provides the dual benefits of allowing the delivery of age specific programs and activities as well as having the role modelling/mentor and support systems from older students.

Each House contains a 'common room' area providing a physical base for the students, with pool tables, couches and other facilities. Students are presented with the opportunity to represent their House in a range of sporting and cultural activities, this provides a low-risk setting for students to engage in new activities and opportunities to help them identify where their strengths and passions lie.

Communication is one of the most important aspects of effective pastoral care. In the Senior School, the lines of communication are opened with parents before the students begin school. Initial meetings with new students take place before the commencement of Term One each year. Initial meetings are followed by a phone call to parents from the student's Mentor Teacher who explains their role in goal setting and overseeing the wellbeing of the students in their mentor groups. This open communication allows Mentor Teachers and Heads of Houses to have current information about each student from their parents' perspective and enables support to be provided if required.

In order to sustain relationships with families, every year the Head of House schedules a meeting with existing students and their parents. The focus of this is to discuss the student's social, emotional and academic development. Our aim is that each student is known as an individual and valued as a member of their House and also the wider school community.

Boarding



Each boarding year group has a Year Coordinator, who lives on-site. The Year Coordinators are actively involved in the residential life of students due to the 'live-in' nature of their roles they are always on hand to provide advice and assistance for our students. The Year Coordinators follow their particular group through their school journey enabling strong relationships to be established not just with the individual's students, but also their families.

As well as the Year Coordinators, each of the residential sites (Senior Hall/Junior Hall) has a Head of Hall who oversees student development and progress. These staff also live in a residential capacity to provide another consistent source of guidance and mentorship for students throughout their time at school.

Within the residential halls our Housemothers play an important role, these core staff assist and teach students with domestic tasks (cooking, sewing, ironing) as well as being there to greet our students after school each day to check-in on how their day has been.

4. Definition of Bullying

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

The national definition of bullying for Australian schools recognises the needs of the educational context for a definition that emphasises relationships and potential areas for action. <https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/UnderstandingBullying/Documents/what-is-bullying.pdf>

Bullying involves: Verbal bullying, social/relations bullying, physical bullying, cyberbullying and bystanders.

5. Recognising the Effects of Bullying

Each individual student who is being bullied or is bullying others will respond and act differently. A student's behaviours and moods can also change for a variety of reasons and the most common way we know a student is being bullied is that students will tell someone they trust.

Much bullying behaviour occurs out of sight of adults; however, a staff member is well placed to notice behaviour changes in a student they know, which may indicate the effects of bullying, including cyber bullying.

Signs a teacher may notice:

- becomes aggressive and unreasonable
- change in student's demeanour/ engagement/ attendance
- starts getting into fights
- refuses to talk about what is wrong



- student displays change in personality, for example more withdrawn, anxious, sad, angry etc
- unexpected changes in their friendship groups
- excessive sleepiness or lack of focus in the classroom and in other activities
- higher levels of absenteeism
- decline in school work
- suicidal thoughts – these should be reported to leadership and parents/carers immediately.

Sometimes bullying can be less obvious. Signs can include:

- student is often alone or excluded from friendship groups at school
- student is a frequent target for teasing, mimicking or ridicule at school
- change in the student's ability or willingness to speak up in class and appears insecure or frightened.

Signs a parent may report:

- doesn't want to go to school
- changes their method or route to school or are frightened of walking to school
- changes in sleep patterns
- changes in eating patterns
- frequent tears, anger, mood swings
- unexplained bruises, cuts, scratches
- missing or damaged belongings or clothes
- decline in physical health
- arriving home hungry.

Students who are more likely to be bullied are also more likely to:

- feel disconnected from school and not like school
- lack quality friendships at school
- display high levels of emotionality that indicate vulnerability and low levels of resilience
- be less accepted by peers, avoid conflict and be socially withdrawn
- have low self-esteem or negative self-perception
- be relatively non-assertive
- be different in some way.

While all of the above are signs of possible bullying, they may also be signs that something else is happening with the child. Referral to the appropriate school personnel to determine the cause of the issues is recommended.

6. Cyberbullying

Cyber bullying explicitly refers to bullying that occurs through information and communication technologies such as the internet and mobile phones. Forms of cyber bullying may include (but are not restricted to):

- Sending offensive text messages, Instant Messages or pictures.
- Using a person's screen name or password to pretend to be them.
- Forwarding private emails, messages, pictures or videos to other, unintended recipients.
- Posting negative comments or compromising pictures.
- Spreading rumours or gossip about someone online.
- Intentionally excluding others from an online group.



The internet can open a world of connectivity and learning for young people, but to help them have enjoyable online experiences, it is critical that parents and staff are attuned to any signs of cyberbullying. See recognising signs of bullying (Page 7). Guildford Grammar School has clear policies and procedures regarding use of mobile phones, emails and internet, as well as social media that are clearly communicated to the staff, students and parents.

7. Bullying Prevention at Guildford Grammar School

Guildford Grammar School uses a number of evidence-based programs and tools to equip students, staff and parents with the necessary skills when dealing with bullying.

- **Protective Behaviours** - programs within the curriculum
- **Guildford Grammar School's Social and Emotional Wellbeing (SEW) Framework** - <https://ggs.wa.edu.au/SEW-1>
- **IT Agreement** - responsible use of technology by staff and students
- **Behaviour Support** - the school's role in managing any behaviours that occur that are not consistent with school policy;
- **Student Concerns** - giving students an opportunity to voice issues and concerns on emerging safety and wellbeing policies;
- **Incident Reporting** - document procedures for reporting incidents;
- **Critical Incidents** - show procedures for dealing with critical incidents that impact on the effective operation of the school or create danger or risk to individuals at the school or on school related activities;
- **Record Keeping** - strategies for record keeping and communication between appropriate staff about safety and wellbeing issues;
- **Communication** - clearly communicate procedures for staff to follow when they become aware of possible incidents or situations of child maltreatment, harassment, aggression, violence, bullying or misuse of technology; and

8. Procedures for responding to bullying

Students sometimes use inappropriate behaviours at school because they are not aware of the correct ways to behave. The promotion and teaching of positive behaviours, rather than focusing on negative behaviour, allows children to see clearly, what is expected of them. The school's Behaviour Management Policy and the School's Code of Conduct assists in clearly defining these expectations.

Clear management and reporting of bullying incidents is important so that children understand there are consistent actions taken when they report bullying, that their concerns are treated seriously, and that children who bully understand that their behaviour will be dealt with in a particular manner.

9. Methods to restore relationships

The primary aim of the school's response to bullying is to restore a positive learning environment for all students. The School will select the method that is most appropriate for the students and the situation to repair relationships after the bullying has happened.

The following methods to restoring relationships that focus on repairing harm and restoring relationships, can happen alongside broader proactive steps and strategies designed to prevent bullying from happening again.



These six methods are identified as frequently used in Australian schools:

- a disciplinary approach
- strengthening the subject of the bullying
- mediation
- support group method
- restorative practices
- The Method of Shared Concern.

Responses shown not to be effective in responding to bullying in a school environment

There are many beliefs about bullying and ways of dealing with behaviour that have been shown, through research, to be far less effective than whole-school positive behaviour support approaches.

These include:

- zero tolerance and 'get tough' suspensions and exclusions in the absence of positive and preventative approaches
- rigid control of student behaviour
- belief that students must receive punitive and negative consequences in all cases
- increased security measures
- unfair and inconsistent use of discipline
- punishment without support
- responses which disempower students
- anti-bullying programs without complementary resilience building programs

10. Preventing and teaching about bullying

When deciding what resources are the most appropriate for a school, it is necessary to incorporate both preventative and management strategies to counter bullying. As noted previously, these will be part of the whole school approach to curriculum provision, student management and countering bullying. Programs also need to be developmentally appropriate.

11. Privacy

The School must follow privacy laws and may not be able to tell parents everything that has taken place, especially about any other children involved. These laws serve to keep every child's information private.

12. Communicating the Positive Peer Relations School Policy on Bullying

The Positive Peer Relations School Policy on Bullying Policy is communicated to the wider school community via the school Bulletin, school assemblies, and teachers' staff meetings and posted through notifications and links on the school website.

Professional Development for staff

Staff will be provided professional development in order to implement the policy, gain an understanding of the school's agreed policies and procedures, an understanding of bullying



and its effects on children, learn how students should be engaged, and gain knowledge and skills on how to address bullying.

Ongoing evaluation and continual improvement

Formal evaluation of all school policies is imperative to ensure their ongoing effectiveness. The school bullying prevention policy is no exception. The evaluation should assess the behaviours and attitudes of all parties, using methods such as focus groups, surveys, risk assessments and incident records. The results of the evaluation are used to modify or develop new strategies.

13. Legislation

Listed below are some of the wide range of legislation that impose these types of duties and obligations upon Schools:

*Criminal Code 1913 (WA);
School Education Act 1999 (WA);
School Education Regulations 2000 (WA);
Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth);
Disability Standards for Education 2005;
Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA) and
State Records Act 2000 (WA).*

14. Related School Policies

Behaviour Management Policy
Child Protection Policy
Child Protection Reporting Policy and Procedures
Code of Conduct
Complaints and Disputes
Duty of Care
Emergency Management
Excursions, Incursions, Camps & Tours
Mobile Phones, Emails & Internet
Privacy Policy
Risk Management Program
Social Media
Values and Purpose of the school.



APPENDIX A

Rights and Responsibilities of school community members

MEMBERS	RIGHTS	RESPONSIBILITIES
All students, teachers, parents, wider school community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> are safe and supported in the school environment are included are treated with respect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> participate and contribute to school positive behaviour programs build positive relationships demonstrate respect and tolerance towards others
School leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is supported in developing the school's plan to prevent and effectively manage bullying is supported in implementing the strategies and programs under the school's plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provides leadership in resourcing the school's plan ensures that school community is informed of the plan implements the plan supports staff to implement the strategies and programs under the plan
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> feel safe and supported in the workplace are informed of the school's plan on bullying have access to professional learning in preventing and effectively managing bullying have access to curriculum resources suitable for supporting students in building positive relationships, resilience, safety and bullying prevention (including social/emotional learning) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> promote and model positive relationships participate in developing the school plan identify and respond to bullying incidents deliver the strategies and programs to students in responding to bullying effectively promote effective bystander behaviour promote social problem-solving use appropriate terminology when referring to bullying and the students involved
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> have access to curriculum that supports the building of resiliency and social skills are informed of the school's plan on bullying are provided with supports to stop bullying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand and value the concepts of inclusion and tolerance identify and respond effectively to bullying are aware of themselves as bystanders seek help for themselves and others as needed.
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> are treated with respect are confident their children are provided with a safe and supported environment are provided with access to information on the prevention and management of bullying are informed of the school's plan and opportunities to participate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> support and encourage children to treat others with respect and tolerance act in accordance with the school plan if they observe/know about bullying encourage children to report bullying incidents work effectively with the school in responding to bullying
Wider community: including other professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> are strategically included in prevention and bullying management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide support and input into the school's approach to preventing and managing bullying