



## SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT POLICY

### 1. PURPOSE

St Hilda's Anglican School for Girls is committed to providing a safe and caring environment which fosters respect for others, tolerance, sensitivity, understanding, mutual respect and encourages compassion and companionship in times of fun, hard work and worry. The School is committed to ensuring a healthy and safe working and learning environment that is free from discrimination and all forms of harassment, which are unacceptable behaviours and will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

### 2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all students of the School and requires a commitment from all members of the School community.

### 3. BACKGROUND

Bullying may be overt (that is behaviour visible to others) or covert (that is behaviour not visible to others).

### 4. DEFINITIONS

*"Bullying has been defined as repeated oppression, psychological or physical, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group of persons"* (Rigby, 2007).

*"Conflict or fights between equals and single incidents are not defined as bullying"* (Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth, 2014).

The national definition of bullying for Australian schools says:

*"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 can take many forms. We consider the following behaviour to be bullying:

#### 4.1 Verbal bullying:

- constant teasing in a sarcastic and offensive manner
- name-calling and offensive nicknames
- insulting and intimidating
- repeated swearing to unsettle or upset others or a particular individual
- homophobic remarks
- racist or sexist comments
- verbal abusing another person

#### **4.2 Physical bullying:**

- hitting, kicking, pinching, pushing, bumping, shoving, scratching, slapping, biting, punching or tripping someone repeatedly
- unwanted physical or sexual touching
- throwing objects with the intent to injure or annoy

#### **4.3 Emotional bullying includes:**

- deliberate, pointed exclusion from group conversations or activities
- encouraging others to socially exclude another person
- making up or spreading rumours to facilitate dislike for someone
- hurtful mimicking behaviour
- playing nasty jokes designed to cause embarrassment and humiliation
- repeated, deliberate ignoring
- purposeful misleading or being lied to
- making stories up to get others into trouble
- damaging someone's social reputation or social acceptance

#### **4.4 Threatening/Psychological bullying:**

- stalking, threats or implied threats
- making negative facial or physical gestures, menacing or contemptuous looks towards another person
- manipulation – pressuring others to do things they don't want to do
- intimidation – forcing students to do demeaning or embarrassing acts
- extortion – forcing someone to give you money or material items

#### **4.5 Property Abuse:**

- Stealing money repeatedly
- Interfering with someone's belongings
- Damaging other personal items
- Repeatedly hiding someone's possessions

#### **4.6 Cyber bullying:**

- Spreading gossip and rumours through email, phone, chat room and internet
- Sending offensive text/phone and email messages
- Abusive phone calls
- Posting personal information on internet sites without permission to cause distress and humiliation
- Setting up a defamatory personal website or deliberately excluding someone from interacting within social networking spaces.

Evidence suggests that verbal and indirect forms of bullying are more prevalent among girls.

Bullying in 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.

## **5. LEGISLATION**

Nil

## 6. RELATED POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Child Protection Policy  
Internet User's Acceptable Use Policy  
School Community Code of Conduct  
Student Behaviour Management Policy

## 7. GUIDELINES

### 7.1 At St Hilda's Anglican School for Girls, we:

- Talk openly about being unkind, mean and bullying on a regular basis – what it is, how it affects us, and what we can do about it
- Teach our students the skills with which to build their self-esteem and empower them to take responsibility for themselves. Give them the opportunity to practise these skills
- Evaluate the effectiveness of our anti-bullying policies
- View anti-bullying to be a tripartite responsibility of the staff, students and parents

### 7.2 Staff are expected to:

- Watch for early signs of distress in student
- Deal with all reported and observed incidents of bullying
- Report all incidents or suspected incidents to the Head of Year or Dean of Student Wellbeing or Head of Junior School
- Offer the target immediate support and help
- Acknowledge the right of parents to speak with school authorities if they believe their child is being bullied
- Include appropriate learning activities to counter bullying in lessons, taking time to discuss this policy in year level or form time groups

### 7.3 Students are expected to:

- Inform someone if they are being bullied or if they see someone else being bullied – both at school and on the way to and from school
- Report all incidents of bullying to a trusted teacher or their Head of Year, Tutor or classroom teacher, even if the student is not directly involved
- Help someone who is being bullied by offering support to students who are being bullied and show the student/s doing the bullying that it is wrong and unacceptable
- Not bully others
- Talk with friends and foster healthy, positive relationships

### 7.4 Parents are encouraged to:

- Watch for signs that their child may be being bullied or bullying others. There could be an unwillingness to attend school, a pattern of headaches or stomach aches, equipment has gone missing, etc.
- Take an active interest in their child's social life
- Contact the Head of Year or Head of Junior School or Dean of Student Wellbeing if their child is being bullied or if they suspect their child is being bullied
- Talk openly and often with their daughter, listen to her concerns in an understanding way
- Support the School's position that any form of bullying is unacceptable
- Contact the School for additional support and strategies that will help their daughter

### **7.5 Responding to bullying:**

Bullying behaviours can vary enormously in their extent and intent and, as a consequence, each needs to be dealt with differently and on an individual basis.

Sometimes students are reluctant to pursue bullying and their reluctance and concerns are respected. The action pursued depends upon the extent to which the recipient is prepared to be involved in the response and whether the incident was observed.

Initially the staff member who observes the incident or receives the report will:

- Take the report seriously
- Take time to explore the situation
- Maintain a record
- Determine the appropriate action which may include a number of responses depending on the nature of the situation

### **7.6 The action may include the following:**

- Advising or conferring with the Head of the Junior School, Dean of Student Wellbeing, Heads of Year or School Psychologists
- Reassuring and supporting the recipient
- Working with the perpetrator
- Clarifying with the perpetrator the possible sanctions and the inappropriateness of their behaviour
- Working with groups of students
- Working with the bystanders, those students observing the behaviours but doing nothing
- If appropriate responding using the “No Blame Approach” (Maines & Robinson) and the “Method of Shared Concern” (Pikas)
- Restorative justice aimed at resolving conflict and repairing harm
- Conducting other forms of mediation sessions with both parties concerned
- Informing parents
- Informing other relevant teaching staff

### **7.7 Repeated or severe reports of bullying will result in:**

- The Principal being informed
- The parents of all parties being informed and their assistance sought
- A statement outlining consequences issued by the School for further incidences
- If deemed appropriate a suspension from school may result
- Additional strategies designed to assist in the fostering of respect for others which may include on-going counselling, anger management or social skills development

### **7.8 Curriculum and Wellbeing Program Initiatives**

Specific issues are targeted systematically through curricula and the wellbeing program in Years 3 - 10.

### **7.9 Action for the School to take if investigation shows that the matter involved criminal liability, the School will:**

- a) Advise the victim and their parents of their capacity to make a formal complaint to the Western Australian Police
- b) The School will assist fully in any Western Australian Police investigation
- c) If the victim or their parents are reluctant to pursue criminal liability, the School will formally advise the student and their parents of the School's limited powers going forward to monitor the matter.

**7.10 If the investigation shows that the matter involves civil liability, the School will:**

- a) Advise the victim and their parents to retain their own lawyers for independent advice if they wish to pursue the bully;
- b) If appropriate, instruct the School's lawyers for specific advices and the School's rights to pursue the matter; and
- c) Advise the School's insurance broker of the possible legal action.

**7.11 Upon resolution of the complaint, the School will:**

- a) Counsel all students in the School's anti-bullying policy, respecting the confidentiality of the victim and their complaint; and
- b) Reassess the School's Supportive School Environment Policy and the Acceptable Use of Technology Policy.

**8. BREACH**

If students breach this policy they may be subject to disciplinary action in line with the Student Behaviour Management Policy.

**9. REFERENCES**

Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth, 2014).

Berne, S. (1999). *Bullying – An Effective Anti-Bullying Program for Primary Schools*. Hawker Brownlow Ed: Aust.

The Friendly Schools & Families website is <http://www.friendlyschools.com.au/>

Information on Aussie Optimism is available through <http://psych.curtin.edu.au/research/aussieoptimism/index.htm>

*Bullying. No Way!* [www.bullyingnoway.com.au](http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au).

Rigby, K. (1996). *Bullying in Schools and what to do about it*. ACER: Victoria.

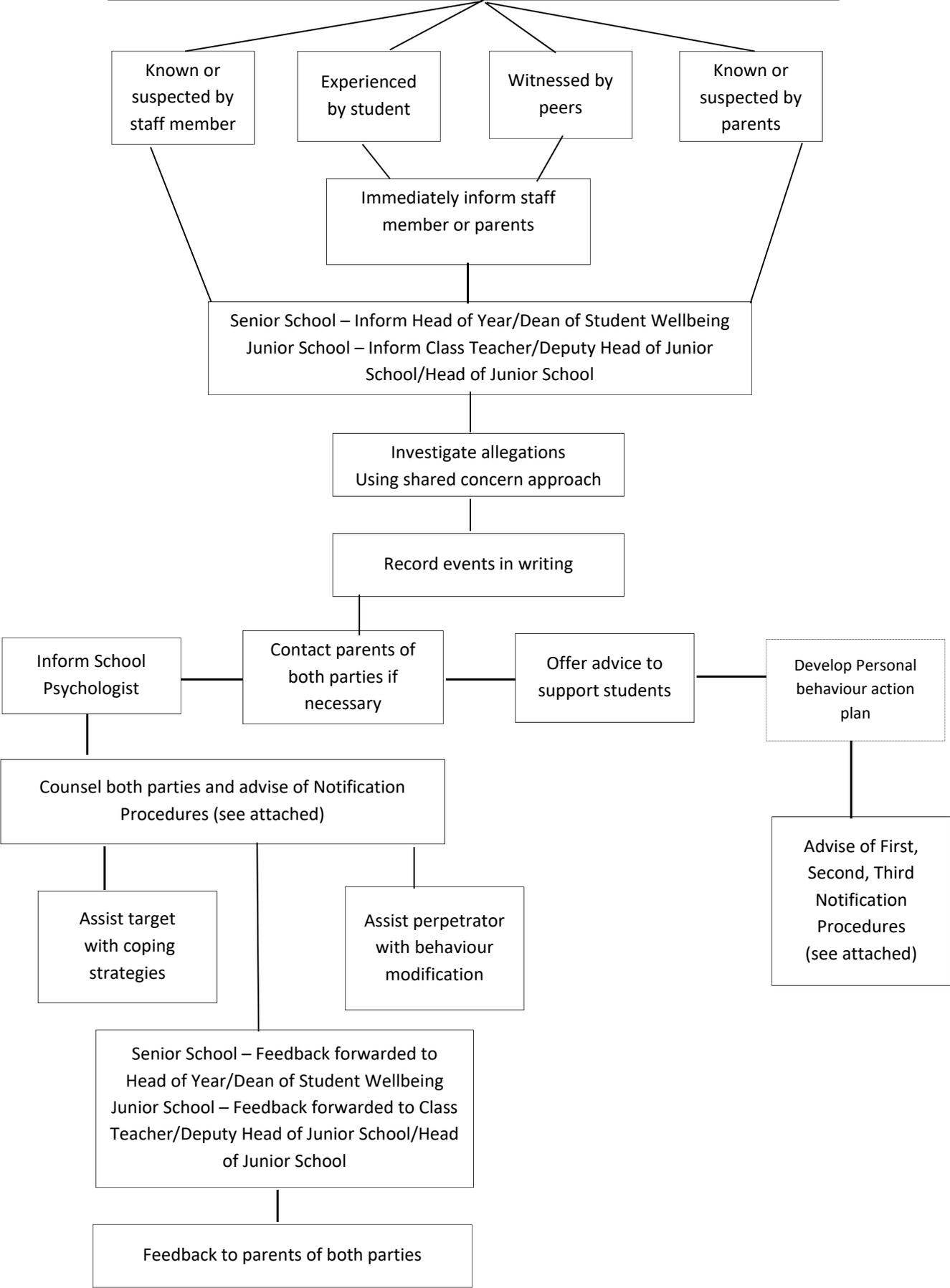
CybersafeKids and Online Resources. <http://www.cybersafeworld.com/>  
<http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/>

<http://www.michaelcarr-gregg.com.au/> is the website for Michael Carr-Gregg, an Australian psychologist.

<https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/WhatsBullying/DefinitionOfBullying>

**Responsibility:** Dean of Student Wellbeing  
**Review Date:** December 2018  
**Next Review Date:** December 2019

**ACTION TO BE TAKEN IN RESPONSE TO BULLYING BEHAVIOUR**



**Should the initial infringement be severe, at the discretion of the Principal, it may be appropriate to bypass First Notification Procedures and implement Second Notification Procedures.**

## CONSEQUENCES OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR IN SENIOR SCHOOL

### FIRST NOTIFICATION

Behaviour clearly identified with student to ensure an absolute understanding of the issue using  
**SHARED CONCERN APPROACH**

Student given opportunity to respond

Student counselled on appropriate and acceptable behaviours and a commitment to change is then expected

Situation monitored by teachers,  
Psychologist, Head of Year and Dean  
of Student Wellbeing

Legal implications of harassment  
clearly stated

Mediation between  
students arranged if  
appropriate

School will contact parents  
and confirm this has  
been done

Student advised she is to inform her parents

Consequences of subsequent infringement clearly stated

### SECOND NOTIFICATION

Procedures for First Notification carried out

Meeting with parents, Head of Year and Dean of Student Wellbeing and where appropriate School Psychologist

Student withdrawn for up to one week

Re-entry into school negotiated with school, student and parents

Consequences of further infringement clearly stated

### THIRD NOTIFICATION

Behaviour clearly identified with student to ensure an absolute understanding of the issue

Student given opportunity to respond

Meeting with parents, Dean of Student Wellbeing and Principal

Legal implications of harassment stated

Student withdrawn or excluded permanently from school

# CONSEQUENCES OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR IN JUNIOR SCHOOL

## FIRST NOTIFICATION

Behaviour clearly identified with student to ensure an absolute understanding of the issue using  
**Shared Concern Approach**

Student given opportunity to respond

Student counselled on appropriate and acceptable behaviours and a commitment to change is then expected

Situation monitored by teachers, Psychologist,  
Deputy Head of Junior School

Mediation between  
students arranged if  
appropriate

Parents advised

Behaviour modification  
plan established and  
monitored

## SECOND NOTIFICATION

Procedures for First Notification carried out

Meeting with parents, Head of Junior School and where appropriate School Psychologist

In school or out of school withdrawal

Re-entry into school negotiated with school, student and parents

Consequences of further infringement clearly stated

## THIRD NOTIFICATION

Behaviour clearly identified with student to ensure an absolute understanding of the issue

Student given opportunity to respond

Meeting with parents, Head of Junior School, Principal and where appropriate School Psychologist

Legal implications of harassment stated

Out of school suspension, withdrawal or exclusion