Anti-bullying policy and procedure (student)

Relevant Legislation / Related information	• Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW) • Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017 (NSW) • Registered and Accredited Individual Non-government Schools (NSW) Manual - September 2023 - B8.2
Related documents (Including but not limited to)	• Student Code of conduct • Parent Code of conduct • Complaints policy and procedure • WHS policy • Workplace Bullying Harassment and Discrimination • Continuous improvement procedure
Authorisation Implementation	Principal
Date of Approval	17 December 2024
Review Cycle	Biennial
Feedback	Feedback on this procedure can be emailed to communityquestions@tasg.nsw.edu.au
Accessible	☒ Staff (Policy & procedure) ☒ Website (Policy)

Commitment

TASG is committed to providing a respectful, safe and supportive learning environment for students. Bullying undermines the dignity and wellbeing of each student, and the School considers all forms of bullying behaviour unacceptable.

Purpose and scope

The purpose of this policy is to support the School to prevent and address issues of student bullying in order to build respectful relationships. School staff will work in partnership with parents and carers who have an integral role to play in the prevention and resolution of bullying.

This policy applies to all School personnel, parents, students and carers.

Definitions

Personnel - all employees, volunteers, trainees, interns, and labour hire employees

Bullying - the intentional and repeated behaviour that involves the ongoing misuse of power that can cause physical and/or psychological harm to a student. Bullying behaviour can be verbal, physical, social (e.g. excluding, alienating behaviour) and psychological (spreading rumours, sending hurtful messages or comments) and includes bullying via social media and other online platforms (cyber-bullying).

Bullying can involve discrimination, intimidation and harassment. Bullying may be individual or collective behaviours which occur on or outside school premises and during or after school hours. Some bullying may constitute criminal conduct such as assault, threatening behaviours, property damage or harassment and stalking.

Cyber bullying - bullying through information and communication technologies

Safe and supportive environment – a school which:

- creates a school environment in which all students feel safe and secure
- the fostering of optimum conditions for learning and teaching
- encourages reporting of bullying
- supports the targets of bullying
- counsels perpetrators so that bullying behaviours stop
- provides, where necessary, appropriate disciplinary consequences for those who persist in bullying.

Policy

The Anglican School Googong (TASG) (the School) is committed to ensuring that each student can experience a safe and supportive environment while at school. Bullying by students will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

Counselling and/or disciplinary action will be taken in any case where a student is found, upon reporting and investigation, to have bullied another student.

Responsibilities

The **Principal** is required to:

- Ensure their school implements and regularly reviews an Anti-Bullying Plan, which includes all steps to build a safe and supportive learning and teaching environment that aims to reduce or avoid bullying incidents.
- Provide training for staff on how to reduce the incidence of bullying, how to report and respond to any incidents of bullying and promote the development and maintenance of respectful student relationships.
- Ensure that students are provided with age-appropriate support and education about bullying behaviours, respectful relationships and processes for reporting bullying, to ensure their safety.
- Ensure bullying complaints are investigated and responded to in a timely and procedurally fair manner, to respect the dignity and privacy of those students involved.
- Ensure relevant staff are informed about bullying complaints and incidents.
- Notify the local Police School Youth Liaison Officers of any bullying situation involving violence, significant threat of harm or alleged criminal conduct.

- Ensure wellbeing support for students involved in bullying, including liaison with the School Counsellor/Psychologist and Student Wellbeing and Learning teams where appropriate.
- Maintain and regularly analyse confidential records to identify students involved in bullying behaviours, through patterns and trends.

School staff are required to:

- Take reasonable care for the safety and wellbeing of students at school or when involved in a School activity.
- Implement classroom anti-bullying education and preventative strategies which promote respectful relationships.
- Notify the leadership team and maintain a confidential record of the alleged bullying matter.
- Notify parents and carers of bullying incidents that involve their children in a timely manner.
- Collaborate with students, parents, the School Counsellor/Psychologist, Student Wellbeing and Learning teams, and external agencies such as NSW Police where appropriate, in identifying and addressing bullying behaviour.
- model non-bullying behaviour at all times including tolerance and acceptance

Student Wellbeing and Learning teams will:

- Provide consultation, support and professional training related to bullying matters, at the request of the principal.

Parents and carers of students are required to:

- Work collaboratively with School its procedures and staff to prevent and resolve allegations of bullying in the College.
- Not engage in bullying behaviours toward any TASG students, staff or other parents.

Students will:

- ensure their behaviour does not intimidate or harass others.
- actively seek to stop bullying behaviour should it be witnessed.
- report bullying behaviour to staff as soon as they become aware of it (preferably their Crew Teacher, Head of House or School Counsellor).
- behave as responsible digital citizens and do not tell anyone your passwords, private details or access codes.

Compliance

Failure to comply with the responsibilities and obligations outlined in the policy may result in disciplinary action being taken, including termination of employment.

Procedure

It is expected that all members of the school community will work together to lower levels of bullying with the aim of elimination such behaviours. While bullying is defined above, behaviours associated with bullying can be diverse, verbal and/or physical, subtle or overt, face-to-face and/or via technology.

There are many types of bullying, which may include:

- physical; punching, hitting, tripping, kicking
- verbal: teasing, using offensive names, being abusive, constant criticism, inappropriate comments about a person's appearance, belittling remarks
- non-verbal: writing offensive notes, rude gestures, graffiti
- psychological: spreading rumours, hiding or damaging possessions, inappropriate use of information technology, unauthorised use of camera phones
- emotional: deliberately excluding others from a group, refusing to sit next to someone, overtly encouraging other people to actively ignore or avoid a person
- sexual harassment: which involves behaviours such as unwanted touching, inappropriate joking, taunting or teasing of a sexual nature; and/or exposure

Cyber bullying

Electronic technologies have enabled *cyber bullying* e.g. the carrying on of some of the above behaviours (whether while at school or not) by use of electronic technologies such as email, websites, Facebook, online chatrooms, Twitter, blogs, Snapchat, Instagram or other Apps.

Cyber bullying includes:

- sending hateful or threatening comments or pictures via mobile phones, the internet or social networking sites
- using technology to socially exclude someone
- posting rude, explicit or embarrassing pictures of someone on the internet
- stealing someone's identity in order to harm them in some way
- putting pressure on a person to send revealing or compromising pictures of themselves
- covertly filming, recording or taking a picture of someone and posting the images on the internet to cause hurt or harm
- 'outing' and disseminating confidential information about someone
- flaming and multi-messaging to clog up a person's electronic system and to cause them distress
- using aliases and pseudonyms in chat rooms and on social networking sites in order to harass and upset; and
- engaging in cyber stalking and the invading a person's privacy.

Sexting is another type of cyber bullying. Sexting involves taking sexually explicit photos and making them available for others to see via a mobile phone or the internet. Sending explicit images of anyone including yourself is a crime if you are under the age of 18 years. If the person in the picture is under the age of 16 years, it can be a very serious crime resulting in charges of paedophilia.

What is not bullying

Behaviours that do not constitute bullying 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 or intimidation.

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

TASG's anti-bullying strategies

The methods used by the School to discourage bullying will vary from time to time and will depend on the needs of the School. The measures that are currently in place to discourage bullying, include but are not limited to:

- emphasis is on preventative and early intervention including wellbeing programs
- classroom teachers clarify with the students the School's policy on anti-bullying at the start of the school year and at other times throughout the year
- the policy is available on the website, staff policy folder and information in the student diaries
- undertaking student check-ins via daily Connect classes in both junior and senior schools, discussing student wellbeing and bullying behaviours
- ensuing effective pastoral support for students through the appointment of teachers, heads of house, co-ordinators, tutors and other staff
- encouraging students to report incidents and assist them in adopting strategies to deal with bullying
- making students and families aware during enrolment interviews about our bullying policy and the expectation of students, staff and families to demonstrate our School values including demonstrating kindness in all interactions
- employing Counsellors/Psychologists who have specialist skills in helping both victims of bullying and identified bullies
- training staff to detect bullying behaviours
- employing an appropriate range of sanctions (including suspension and expulsion) to deal with and discourage bullies

- use of student diaries for recording instances of bullying and measures to address bullying and display of technology agreement

Reporting

School personnel should assist the identification and reporting of bullying by:

- being vigilant when in the classroom, when supervising around the grounds and during co-curricular activities and be observant of signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying;
- educate students about bullying;
- empower students to act to stop bullying if they witness it occurring;
- offer support to students who are bullied;
- listen and respond to all complaints of bullying;
- record students' unacceptable behaviour; and
- report incidents of unacceptable behaviour to the Head of Junior School, Head of Senior School, Connect Teacher, Deputy Principal and the School Counsellor.

Record keeping

The following should be recorded using the online incident form:

- the student who made the allegation
- when the allegation was made
- who the allegation was made to
- the details of the issue/s alleged
- action taken to respond to the issue, and
- any further action required – what, when and by whom.

Records should also be made of conversations, meetings and interviews detailing who was present and the agreed outcomes.

At each stage of the resolution the person in charge is required to record information in line with the *Continuous improvement procedure*.

Severity

If the nature and seriousness of the bullying behaviour is such that it may be criminal offence or require consideration of mandatory reporting, staff or parents should report the matter to the Principal. This may include physical assault, threats of violence, problematic sexual behaviour or child-to-child sexual abuse (Refer to the Complaints policy, mandatory reporting or Reportable conduct policy).

Supporting children who experience bullying

Actions may include:

- take an active interest in their child's school life to be aware of any problems.
- take seriously any reports of bullying made to them.

- encourage the child to be verbally assertive rather than retaliate with action.
- encourage the child to report bullying if they experience or witness it happening; and
- encourage the child to work collaboratively with the School to resolve incidents of bullying.

Additional resources:

- Kids Helpline – 1800 551 800 www.kidshelp.com.au / Bullying | How to deal with being bullied | Kids Helpline
- Lifeline – 13 1114
- Beyond Blue – 1300 22 4636
- Bullying No Way
- Local Police School Youth Liaison Officers can be contacted through Queanbeyan Police Station on 6298 0599

Consequences

Students who are found to have engaged in bullying behaviour will generally, in the first instance, be counselled. This may also involve a mediation session if appropriate.

Students who do not respond to counselling and/or mediation, and who repeatedly bully others may face suspension or expulsion.

The leadership position of any student who is found to persistently bully others will be removed.

The continued enrolment in the School of a student who is found to persistently bully others will be reviewed.