



# Penrith Christian School

*Strive for the Highest*

## Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy

### Policy and Procedure Management

|                                                                   |                                                                            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Prepared by                                                       | Mitchell Clarke                                                            |
| Approved date                                                     | March 2025                                                                 |
| Monitored by                                                      | Senior Leadership Team                                                     |
| Review by                                                         | Senior Leadership Team                                                     |
| Date for review                                                   | March 2027                                                                 |
| Status                                                            | Active                                                                     |
| Audience                                                          | Staff, Volunteers, Contractors, Visitors, Students, Board, Staff           |
| Related Policies, Procedures, Work Instructions, Forms or Manuals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Student Behaviour Policy</li></ul> |

# Table of Contents

|      |                                |   |
|------|--------------------------------|---|
| 1.   | Rationale                      | 3 |
| 2.   | Bullying                       | 3 |
| 2.1. | What is bullying?              | 3 |
| 2.2. | What is not bullying?          | 4 |
| 3.   | Our Policy                     | 5 |
| 3.1. | Bullying Prevention Strategies | 5 |
| 3.2. | Reporting Bullying             | 6 |
| 3.3. | Responding to Bullying         | 7 |
| 3.4. | Bullying Support Services      | 8 |
| 3.5. | Staff Responsibilities         | 8 |
| 3.6. | Implementation                 | 8 |

# 1. Rationale

In order for learning to take place effectively, every student must feel safe and secure at school. This means that bullying and intimidation are unacceptable because of the fear and anxiety they engender. Penrith Christian School should be a place where all students can feel safe, secure and able to achieve their potential.

It is expected that all members of the School community – staff, students and parents – will work together to ensure that bullying, whether verbal or physical, subtle or overt, face-to-face or via technology, does not happen.

## 2. Bullying

### 2.1. What is bullying?

Bullying is the repeated and intentional behaviour of causing fear, distress or harm towards another person that involves an imbalance of power. It can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and harassment. In any bullying incident there are likely to be three parties involved: the bully, the person being bullied, and bystanders.

Bullying can take many forms including physical bullying, psychological bullying, indirect bullying and cyber bullying.

**2.1.1. Physical bullying** which involves physical actions such as hitting, pushing, obstructing or being used to hurt or intimidate someone. Damaging, stealing or hiding personal belongings is also a form of physical bullying.

**2.1.2. Psychological bullying** which is when words or actions are used to cause psychological harm. Examples of psychological bullying include name calling, teasing or making fun of someone because of their actions, appearance, physical characteristics or cultural background.

**2.1.3. Indirect bullying** which is when deliberate acts of exclusion or spreading of untrue stories are used to hurt or intimidate someone.

**2.1.4. Cyber bullying** which is the ongoing abuse of power to threaten or harm another person using technology. Cyber bullying can occur in chat rooms, on social networking sites, through emails or on mobile phones. This includes:

- i. Sending hateful or threatening comments or pictures via mobile phone or the Internet, or by social networking sites such as Instagram, Twitter, Snap Chat, Facebook, Tik Tok, or other social media platforms.
- ii. Using modern technologies to engage in the social exclusion of someone and in 'hate group' recruitment.

- iii. Posting rude, explicit or embarrassing messages or pictures about someone on the Internet.
- iv. Stealing someone's identity in order to harm them in some way.
- v. Putting pressure on a person to send revealing or compromising pictures of themselves.
- vi. Covertly filming, recording or taking a picture of someone and posting the images on the Internet to cause hurt.
- vii. 'Outing' and disseminating confidential information about someone.
- viii. 'Flaming' and multi-messaging to clog up a person's electronic system and to cause them distress.
- ix. Using aliases and pseudonyms in chat rooms and on social networking sites in order to harass and upset.
- x. Engaging in cyber-stalking and the invading of privacy.
- xi. Referring to your School in a negative or disparaging way on the Internet.

## **2.2. What is not bullying?**

There are many negative situations which, whilst being potentially distressing for students, are not bullying. These include mutual conflict situations, one-off acts and harassment.

**2.2.1. Mutual Conflict Situations** which arise where there is disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Mutual conflict situations need to be closely monitored as they may evolve into a bullying situation.

**2.2.2. One-Off Acts** (of aggression or meanness) including single incidents of loss of temper, shouting or swearing do not normally constitute bullying.

**2.2.3. Harassment** is unwelcome behaviour that intimidates, offends, or humiliates a student because of a particular personal characteristic. Harassment is similar to bullying because someone hurts another person through cruel, offensive and insulting behaviours. Harassment is different from bullying in that it is a form of discrimination and is unlawful where the basis for harassment relates to a personal characteristic which is protected by law, such as:

- i. sex and gender identity or sexuality and sexual orientation
- ii. race, religion, ethnic background
- iii. Disability

For policies and procedures relating to the School's approach to harassment, please refer to the PCS Harassment (Student against Student) Policy.

### 3. Our Policy

Penrith Christian School recognises its duty to students to provide a safe and positive learning environment where individual differences and diversity within the School is respected and accepted.

Bullying is not tolerated at Penrith Christian School.

It is our policy that:

- i. bullying be managed through a 'whole-of-School community' approach involving students, staff and parents/guardians
- ii. bullying prevention strategies are 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
- iii. bullying response strategies are tailored to the circumstances of each incident
- iv. staff establish positive role models emphasising our no-bullying culture
- v. bullying prevention and intervention strategies are reviewed on an annual basis against best practice.

#### 3.1. Bullying Prevention Strategies

Penrith Christian School recognises that the implementation of whole-School prevention strategies is the most effective way of eliminating, or at least 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:

- i. A structured curriculum and peer group support system, that provides age-appropriate information and social and emotional competencies relating to bullying (including cyberbullying) and bullying prevention, to students over the course of the academic year.
- ii. Education, training and professional development of staff in bullying prevention and response strategies.
- iii. Appropriate sharing among staff of information about cyberbullying incidents.
- iv. 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.

- v. Promotion of a supportive environment that encourages the development of positive relationships and communication between staff, students and parents/guardians.
- vi. Promotion of responsible bystander behaviour amongst students, staff and parents/guardians.
- vii. 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).
- viii. Regular risk assessments of bullying within the School are undertaken by surveying students to identify bullying issues that may ordinarily go unnoticed by staff.
- ix. 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.
- x. Statements supporting bullying prevention are included in student communications.
- xi. Education of staff, students and parents/guardians on health conditions to promote understanding and to reduce stigma and fear.
- xii. Anti-bullying posters are displayed strategically within the School.
- xiii. Promotion of student awareness and a 'no-bullying' environment by participating in events such as the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence.

### **3.2. 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:

- i. bullying is not tolerated within the School
- ii. their concerns will be taken seriously
- iii. the School has a clear strategy for dealing with bullying issues.

**3.2.1.** Bullying incidents can be advised to the School verbally (or in writing) through any of the following avenues:

- i. Trusted Teacher
- ii. Student Wellbeing Leader
- iii. School Counsellor
- iv. Head of Years
- i. Principal

### **3.3. 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. Where possible, a restorative approach is utilised.

In all circumstances the School:

- i. takes bullying incidents seriously
- ii. provides assurance to the victim that they are not at fault and their confidentiality will be respected
- iii. takes time to properly investigate the facts including discussing the incident with the victim, the bully and any bystanders
- iv. takes time to understand any concerns of individuals involved
- v. maintains records of reported bullying incidents
- vi. will escalate its response when dealing with persistent bullies and/or severe incidents.

#### **3.3.1. Actions**

Actions that may be taken when responding to bullying include:

- i. notification of/consultation with parents/guardians
- ii. offering counselling to persistent bullies/victims
- iii. implementing effective follow up strategies
- iv. disciplinary action, at the Authorised Delegate's discretion, including suspension and expulsion of persistent bullies, or in cases of severe incidents.

### 3.4. Bullying Support Services

The School also provides access to the following support services:

- <https://kidshelpline.com.au/>
- <https://thebullyproject.com.au/>
- <https://www.ncab.org.au/>
- <https://headspace.org.au/>
- <https://au.reachout.com/>
- <https://www.esafety.gov.au/>

### 3.5. Staff Responsibilities

All staff are responsible to:

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

### 3.6. Implementation

This Policy is implemented through a combination of:

- i. staff training
- ii. student and parent/carer education and information
- iii. effective incident reporting and recording procedures
- iv. effective management of bullying incidents when reported
- v. the creation of a 'no-bullying' culture within the School community
- vi. effective record keeping procedures
- vii. initiation of corrective actions where necessary.