



BRISBANE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

TOWARDS A SAFE AND SECURE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT: A POLICY ON BULLYING

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1. Purpose and Application

This policy must be read in conjunction with the BGS Child Protection Policy. If bullying amounts to harm as referred to in the Child Protection Policy then the matter must be dealt with under the Child Protection Policy.

Brisbane Grammar School is committed to providing a safe and secure community for all of its members and will therefore not tolerate any action that undermines a person's rights in relation to this. The School will take whatever steps are necessary to prevent, or intervene in, such behaviour.

Every member of the School community has the right to be free from bullying. Therefore all members of the School community have a responsibility to actively practise and promote:

- tolerance for individual differences;
- the values of courtesy, respect, compassion, and care for others;
- a supportive and encouraging climate where the achievements and efforts of others are celebrated; and
- a commitment to adhering to, and upholding, all aspects of this policy.

A safe, secure community requires all members to be sensitive to others.

2. Definitions

What is bullying?

Bullying is a systematic abuse of power. It typically involves repeated acts of aggression that aim to dominate and cause hurt, fear, or embarrassment in another person. Bullying is generally deliberate and planned, but can also be a result of thoughtlessness. It can be perpetrated by an individual or by groups.

Bullying may take many forms, for example:

Physical bullying: pushing and shoving (where hurt is intended), kicking, invasion of personal space, the destruction of property, tripping, punching, tearing clothes, standing over someone, pushing books from someone's hands, shooting/throwing objects at someone.

Verbal bullying: any comment of an offensive nature that refers to ability, race, religion, gender or sexuality; including name-calling, offensive language, spreading of rumours, using words that suggest stupidity or physical problems, mocking, imitating, teasing, abusive phone calls, laughing at someone's mistakes, using unwelcome nicknames (this can include electronic and digital forms of communication).

Gesture bullying: includes making gestures (physical, verbal and written) to intimidate or to embarrass.

Exclusion bullying: includes the deliberate isolation (both explicit and implicit) of an individual student from his peer group.

Extortion bullying: the use of force to obtain money, food or personal belonging from other students; harassing other boys to do tasks e.g. buying lunch, carrying materials.

E-bullying: the use of any information and communication technologies that supports deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or a group that is intended to harm others.

3. Strategies for prevention:

As a school community all members have the responsibility to work actively towards the prevention of bullying.

4. Staff

This requires staff to:

- be positive role models at all times, in both words and in deeds;
- be vigilant in monitoring for signs of bullying behaviour;
- make efforts to remove occasions for bullying by proactive supervision during breaks;
- take steps to help victims by removing sources of distress;
- actively seek appropriate assistance (from Heads of Year and/or counsellors) to help students develop resilience;
- recognise instances of bullying and be able to differentiate them from playful activity;
- report suspected incidents of bullying to the Head of Year or other appropriate staff member; and
- create curriculum materials to develop students' awareness and coping skills.

5. Students

When a student who is being bullied has the courage to speak out he will reduce the distress being experienced by him and possibly others. When a student who is being bullied has the courage to speak out he may create an opportunity for a long term solution to the problem.

When a student who witnesses bullying has the courage to speak out he helps reduce the distress to the victim and he contributes to the building of a safe and secure school environment.

This requires the students to:

- make a conscious decision not to be involved in any incidents of bullying;
- take some form of preventative action, if present, when a bullying incident occurs; and
- report any incidents of bullying (including suspected incidents) to a member of staff or senior student.

6. Parents

This requires parents to:

- watch for, and report, signs of distress in their son - eg. unwillingness to attend school;
- advise their son to tell a member of staff if bullying has occurred;
- keep a written record of the incident;
- not encourage their son to retaliate;
- be willing to work with the School if their son is involved in incidents of bullying (either as victim or bully); and
- inform the School of any cases of suspected bullying even if their son is not directly affected.

When staff, students and parents work together to prevent incidents of bullying there is a much greater chance of creating a safe, secure, tolerant and happy school community.

7. Support for victims of bullying

The School will provide support to all victims of bullying. A victim may be assisted by:

- counselling to help develop strategies for dealing with any potential bullying;
- receiving an explanation, apology and/or reimbursement (where appropriate) from the bully; and
- receiving a report as to the outcome of the School's intervention/investigation procedures.

8. Reporting bullying:

It is essential that all forms of bullying be reported. All reports of bullying will be dealt with on a confidential basis.

To ignore bullying is to give your approval to bullying and will only serve to foster its existence in the School.

Procedures for reporting

Anyone who is bullied or who witnesses an incident of bullying behaviour should report the incident no matter how minor. Stakeholders should follow the procedures below.

As a Senior School student: You should alert your Head of Year, your Form Tutor, another member of the teaching staff, counsellor, or a senior student (at school).

For Middle School students you should alert your Core Teacher, Head of Year or another member of Middle School staff.

As a parent: Discuss the situation with your son's Head of Year or Core Teacher as soon as possible.

As a teacher: After ensuring the safety of the victim, discuss the incident with the student's Head of Year.

9. Investigation procedures:

All reports of bullying will be investigated by the appropriate member of staff. The nature and extent of the investigation will depend upon the seriousness of the bullying. As far as is reasonably possible the investigation and its outcome will be kept confidential although parents of students involved will be informed.

10. Outcomes

Following the completion of an investigation into bullying the School will implement such measures as are appropriate which could include one, or more, of the following:

- conflict resolution/mediation with students, and or families involved
- counselling
- restitution
- an agreement regarding standards of future behaviour
- detentions (afternoon/Saturday)
- suspension
- expulsion

11. Related Documents

BGS Policy 4: *Child Protection Policy*

12. Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding this policy please contact the Deputy Headmaster – Students or the Head of Middle School

13. Policy Management

Document management	Deputy Headmaster – Students and Head of Middle School	
Approved by	Board of Trustees Brisbane Grammar School	
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