



**HAWKESBURY**  
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL

**Anti-Bullying Policy**

**September 2024**

# Table of Contents

<b>1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>2</b>
1.1 Scope.....	2
1.2 Definitions .....	2
1.3 Bullying is .....	2
1.4 Forms of Bullying .....	3
1.5 What is not bullying .....	4
1.6 Signs of Bullying .....	4
1.7 Signs of Cyberbullying .....	5
<b>2. Our Policy .....</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1 Our Policy .....	5
2.2 Bullying Prevention Strategies .....	6
2.3 Reporting Bullying.....	6
2.4 Reporting Bullying Incidents to the school .....	7
2.5 Reporting a complaint to the eSafety Commissioner .....	7
<b>3. Management of Bullying Incidents.....</b>	<b>7</b>
3.1 Responding to bullying.....	7
<b>4. Bullying Support Services .....</b>	<b>8</b>
4.1 Office of the eSafety Commissioner .....	8
<b>5. Staff Responsibilities.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>6. Implementation .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>7. Discipline of Breach of Policy.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>8. Additional Information .....</b>	<b>9</b>
8.1 Other agencies.....	9
8.2 Related Policies/Documents.....	9
<b>Acknowledgement.....</b>	<b>11</b>

# 1. Introduction

At Hawkesbury Independent School, we believe that all members of the community have the right to a learning and work **environment free from intimidation, humiliation and hurt**. We all share a responsibility to **create a culture of caring which does NOT tolerate bullying**.

## 1.1 Scope

This Policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions. It also applies outside of school hours and off the school premises where students have been involved and there is a clear and close connection to the school.

## 1.2 Definitions

In our school, we **refer to “bullying behaviour” rather than to bully/ies**. This suggests that bullying is one of a range of behaviours and that the individual is able to choose an alternative. Children often use behaviour towards each other that, whilst not acceptable, would not be helpful to label as bullying. This might include calling each other names (not intended to be hurtful), pushing each other around etc. It can be hard to decide where to draw the line between the two.

## 1.3 Bullying is

Bullying is an **ongoing and deliberate misuse of power** in relationships through **repeated** verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that **intends to cause** physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening. Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records). Bullying of any form or for any reason can have immediate, medium and 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.

## 1.4 Forms of Bullying

Bullying can take many forms including:

	Direct examples	Indirect examples
<b>physical</b> bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ hitting, slapping, punching</li> <li>○ kicking, tripping</li> <li>○ pushing, strangling</li> <li>○ spitting, biting</li> <li>○ pinching, scratching</li> <li>○ throwing things eg stones</li> <li>○ damaging, stealing or hiding personal belongings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ getting another person to harm someone</li> </ul>
<b>verbal/written</b> bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ mean and hurtful name calling</li> <li>○ hurtful teasing</li> <li>○ demanding money or possessions</li> <li>○ forcing another to do their school work/homework</li> <li>○ forcing another to commit offences such as stealing</li> </ul>	
<b>non-verbal</b> bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ threatening and/or obscene gestures</li> </ul>	
<b>social</b> (sometimes called relational or emotional bullying)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ deliberate acts of exclusion</li> <li>○ spreading rumours or sharing information to have a harmful effect on another person</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ damaging a person's social reputation or social acceptance by trying to get other students not to like someone</li> </ul>
<b>cyber-bullying</b> (the misuse of power within a relationship to repeatedly threaten or harm another person using technology)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ abusive texts and emails</li> <li>○ hurtful messages, images or videos</li> <li>○ imitating others online</li> <li>○ excluding others online</li> <li>○ humiliating others online</li> <li>○ spreading nasty online gossip and chat</li> <li>○ creating fake accounts or 'avatars' to trick someone or humiliate them</li> </ul>	

These behaviours can also be an indicator of child abuse and other harm. Bullying can be illegal if it involves intimidation, stalking, physical violence, threats of violence or damaging property.

## 1.5 What is **not** bullying

There are also some behaviours, which, although they might be unpleasant or distressing for students, **are not bullying**

<b>mutual conflict</b>	mutual conflict which involves a disagreement, but not an imbalance of power. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying/harassment if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly, in retaliation
<b>single episodes</b>	one-off acts (of aggression or meanness) including single incidents of loss of temper, shouting or swearing do not normally constitute bullying
<b>social dislike</b>	social dislike is not bullying/harassment unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others

## 1.6 Signs of Bullying

Major **behavioural changes** in a student may be **indicative of being bullied**. These behavioural changes may include:

- crying at night and having nightmares
- refusing to talk when asked “What’s wrong?”
- having unexplained bruises, cuts or scratches
- an unwillingness or refusal to go to school, a school organised activity or reluctance to attend other social events
- feeling ill in the mornings
- a decline in quality of schoolwork
- becoming withdrawn and lacking confidence
- appearing lonely or distressed
- beginning to display bullying behaviour towards siblings
- unexpected changes in friendship groups
- acting unreasonably.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to recognise signs of bullying and notify the School through a trusted staff member immediately (such as a class teacher) or the Principal directly, if they suspect that their child is being bullied. These behaviours can also be an indicator of child abuse and other harm.

## 1.7 Signs of Cyberbullying

Students may also not disclose cyberbullying to adults through fear that the adults may overreact and make the situation worse.

**Signs of cyberbullying** to watch out for may include one or more of the behavioural changes outlined above (in signs of bullying), and/or other signs, including a student:

- being upset after using the internet or their mobile phone
- being hesitant to go online, avoiding their phone or seeming nervous when an instant message, text message or email appears
- spending unusually long hours online or on their mobile phone
- becoming secretive about their online activities and mobile phone use.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to recognise signs of bullying and notify the School through a trusted staff member immediately (such as a class teacher) or the Principal directly, if they suspect that their child is being bullied. These behaviours can also be an indicator of child abuse and other harm.

## 2. Our Policy

### 2.1 Our Policy

Hawkesbury Independent School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children, including acting in students' best interests and keeping them safe from harm.

Hawkesbury Independent 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 Hawkesbury Independent School

It is our policy that:

- bullying be managed through a **'whole-of-school' approach** involving students, staff and parents/guardians
- bullying prevention strategies are implemented within the Hawkesbury Independent School community 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
- bullying response strategies are tailored to the circumstances of each incident
- we establish procedures for reporting and responding to child safety concerns, including when the behaviour may be an indicator of child abuse and other harm
- staff establish positive role models emphasising our no-bullying culture
- bullying prevention and intervention strategies are reviewed on an annual basis against best practice.

## 2.2 Bullying Prevention Strategies

Hawkesbury Independent School recognises that the implementation of whole-school prevention strategies is the most effective way of eliminating, or minimising incidents of bullying within our school community.

The following initiatives form part of our overall bullying prevention strategy and our strategy to create a 'no-bullying' culture within Hawkesbury Independent School:

- A **structured curriculum** 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.
- Education, training and **professional development of staff** in bullying prevention and response strategies.
- Appropriate **sharing among staff of information** about i) bullying incidents and ii) cyberbullying incidents.
- Provision of **information to parents/guardians**, to raise awareness of bullying 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 Hawkesbury Independent School.
- Promotion of a **supportive environment** that encourages the development of positive relationships and communication between staff, students and parents/guardians.
- Promotion of **responsible bystander behaviour** amongst students, staff and parents/guardians.
- **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).
- **Students are supported** by their teachers and the Principal when they report a bullying incident and during the processes that follow the submission of the report.
- Regular risk assessments of bullying within Hawkesbury Independent School are undertaken by **surveying students** to identify bullying issues that may ordinarily go unnoticed by staff.
- **Records of reported bullying incidents are maintained and analysed**, in order to identify students who persistently intimidate or bully and/or students who are persistently bullied and to implement targeted prevention strategies where appropriate.

## 2.3 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 Hawkesbury Independent School's bullying prevention and intervention strategy is to encourage reporting of bullying incidents as well as providing support and assurance to students who experience bullying (and parents/guardians) that:

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

## 2.4 Reporting Bullying Incidents to the school

Incidents can be advised to the School verbally (or in writing) through reporting the incident to either the classroom teacher, Principal or a trusted teacher via phone or email or via a requested face-to-face meeting.

## 2.5 Reporting a complaint to the eSafety Commissioner

Where Cyberbullying Material is targeted at a child under the age of 18 years, a complaint can be made to:

- the provider of a social media service, relevant electronic service, designated internet service (as defined in the Online Safety Act 2021 (Commonwealth)) - see [The eSafety Guide](#) for information about providers
- the eSafety Commissioner under section 30 of the Online Safety Act 2021 (Commonwealth).

Complaints to the eSafety Commissioner can be made through the [online portal](#) by the child, their parent or guardian, or an adult authorised by the child to make the complaint. The eSafety Commissioner has the power to investigate the complaint and to issue a removal notice.

For the eSafety Commissioner to investigate cyberbullying, the harmful content **must have first been reported to the service or platform used** to send, post or share it – at least 48 hours before it is reported to eSafety.

### Cyberbullying Material

Cyberbullying material that is provided on a social media service, relevant electronic service, designated internet service (as defined in the Online Safety Act 2021 (Cth)) that an ordinary person reasonable person would conclude is likely to:

- be intended to have an effect on a particular child; and
- have the direct or indirect effect on the child as seriously threatening, seriously intimidating, seriously harassing or seriously humiliating the child, can be the subject of complaint to the eSafety Commissioner under section 30 of the Online Safety Act.

## 3. Management of Bullying Incidents

### 3.1 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.

In all circumstances the School:

- takes bullying incidents seriously
- takes seriously, and monitors single incidents of conflict or fights between students, that do not ordinarily amount to bullying, for signs of ongoing behaviour, which may be an indicator of bullying
- provides assurance to the student being bullied that they are not at fault and their confidentiality will be respected



- ensures that teachers and staff support the student being bullied through the reporting process and the corresponding investigation and resolution processes
- involves the Principal/delegate who has specialist skills in helping both students who have been bullied and students who are bullying others
- engages the student body, to instigate antibullying initiatives
- ensures that students support the antibullying policy and promote anti-bullying behaviours
- takes time to properly investigate the facts including discussing the incident with the student being bullied, the student who was bullying and any bystanders
- keeps parents and guardians of both the student who was bullied and the student who did the bullying, informed of the situation as and when appropriate to do so
- takes time to understand any concerns of individuals involved
- maintains records of reported bullying incidents
- will escalate its response when dealing with students who persistently bully and/or for severe incidents, even if these are not necessarily repetitive
- considers whether the behaviour gives rise to concerns that the student exhibiting the behaviour and/or the student subject to the behaviour may be experiencing child abuse or other harm, and, if so, follows the Child Protection Procedures.

## 4. Bullying Support Services

### 4.1 Office of the eSafety Commissioner

The Office of the eSafety Commissioner provides resources, advice and strategies for parents, schools and children on how to deal with cyberbullying for people under the age of 18.

## 5. Staff Responsibilities

All staff are responsible for:

- modelling appropriate behaviour at all times
- dealing with all reported and observed incidents of bullying in accordance with this policy
- ensuring that any incident of bullying that they observe or is reported to them, is recorded appropriately
- being vigilant in monitoring students that have been identified as either students who persistently bully or are persistently bullied
- considering whether the behaviour gives rise to concerns that the student exhibiting the behaviour and/or the student subject to the behaviour may be experiencing child abuse or other harm, and, if so, follows the School's procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns
- acknowledging the right of parents/carers to communicate with the Principal and/or school staff if they believe their child is being bullied.

## 6. Implementation

This Policy is implemented through a combination of:

- staff training
- student and parent/carer education and information
- involvement of external bodies and authorities as and when appropriate
- effective incident reporting and recording procedures
- effective management of bullying incidents when reported
- the creation of a 'no-bullying' culture within the school community
- effective record keeping procedures
- initiation of corrective actions where necessary

## 7. Discipline of Breach of Policy

Where a staff member breaches this Policy Hawkesbury Independent School will take **disciplinary action**, including in the case of serious breaches, summary dismissal.

## 8. Additional Information

### 8.1 Other agencies

- 1) [Kids Helpline](#)
- 2) Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800 or [chat online](#)
- 3) [Bullying No Way](#)
- 4) Police Youth Liaison Officer 4587 4099 (Windsor Police)

### 8.2 Related Policies/Documents

- 1) Behaviour Management Policy
- 2) Suspension, Exclusion & Expulsion of Students Policy
- 3) Supervision of Students Policy
- 4) Child Protection Policy
- 5) Workplace Health & Safety Policy
- 6) Enrolment Policy





## Acknowledgement

I \_\_\_\_\_ have read, understood and agree to

comply with the terms/procedures of the Hawkesbury Independent School *Anti-Bullying*

*Policy.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date