



Promoting Positive Relationships Policy

1 Purpose

The purpose of this Promoting Positive Relationships Policy (**Policy**) is to document the commitment of Brisbane Girls Grammar School (the School) to providing an educational environment in which students feel valued and secure.

The School is proud of its reputation as a leader in the education of girls and young women and recognises that students learn more effectively when they feel safe and secure in their environment. This Policy aims to support all aspects of students' growth by encouraging the development of a strong pro-social School culture where respect for others is paramount and any form of bullying or cyberbullying is acknowledged and responded to as unacceptable.

2 Scope

This Policy is relevant to the staff and students of the School.

3 Policy

Brisbane Girls Grammar School actively promotes positive relationships within the School community. It recognises that a sense of connectedness among students and between students and the adult members of the School community is a vital component of adolescent growth.

4 Principles

The School provides a conceptual framework and language for discussing the problems and issues associated with building healthy relationships and promotes the healthy development of its students, including the Student Wellbeing Framework. This Policy and framework:

- (a) recognises the importance of a strong and caring community in nurturing the intellectual, emotional and spiritual growth in our students;
- (b) recognises the importance of a culture of appreciating and including others, based on understanding diverse perspectives and nurturing positive relationships.
- (c) incorporates the House structure which provides a caring context within which personal growth and social responsibility are supported and where the importance of the role that healthy adults and peer mentors play in students' lives is recognised;
- (d) recognises the importance of the School's co-curricular program which allows students to participate in a wide variety of activities and promote the development of a strong sense of connection and belonging to the School community;
- (e) promotes professional development of all School staff regarding Student Care and assistance for their ongoing participation in structures and programs which promote and support positive peer interactions;
- (f) requires each student to sign the Student's Code of Behaviour and Acceptable Use of Technology Policy (Students) prior to entering the School;
- (g) provides for confidential counselling for anyone affected by relationship issues;
- (h) recognises that the School is part of a larger community, including a partnership with parents, involvement in which is important to help to create a peaceful School learning environment.

5 Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

- (a) ensuring a culture of promoting positive relationships within the School;
- (b) establishing and implementing Policies and Procedures that strengthen and support this culture;
- (c) ensuring all staff are aware of the School's Promoting Positive Relationships Policy and associated frameworks including the Promoting Positive Relationships Strategy, including all revisions to them.
- (d) effective communication of this policy to staff, students, parents, volunteers and the School community. This communication will be accessible and clearly sets out the responsibilities and rights of each party and clear pathways to address issues and concerns.
- (e) ensuring the School responds promptly, compassionately and appropriately to matters brought to its attention in the implementation of this policy so that accurate and relevant information is available for staff members, students and their families and other affected stakeholders.

5.2 All Staff

All staff are responsible for ensuring their compliance with this Policy and its associated implementation.

The Student Care staff (including the Deputy Principal, Dean of Students, Associate Dean (Students), Associate Dean (Wellbeing), Heads of House, Student Counselling Service staff and Health Centre staff are responsible for:

- (a) implementing and supporting this Policy and principles contained;
- (b) investigating concerns regarding relationship issues between students;
- (c) ensuring timely communication with parents;
- (d) encouraging and facilitating mediation between students where appropriate;
- (e) providing ongoing support for students and their families.

5.3 All Students

All students have the responsibility to:

- (a) consider the impact of their actions on others;
- (b) respect the property and rights of other students and Staff;
- (c) not accept bullying but to report it because bullying is too important not to report.

The School requires all students to conduct themselves in accordance with the Student Code of Behaviour.

6 Reporting and monitoring

This Policy shall be reviewed every two years or in the event of any information, incident, legislative changes or organisational practice that would demonstrate the need for a review.

Document title	Promoting Positive Relationships Policy	Author	Deputy Principal
Version	BGGS100.2007.4	Approval	Principal
Distribution	Minerva (Staff, students, parents)	Date	November 2024

7 Related documents

Promoting Positive Relationships Strategy (Appendix A)

Child Protection Policy and Child Risk Management Strategy

Protective Practices for Staff Policy

Student Code of Behaviour

Acceptable Use of Technology Policy

Social Media Policy



Appendix A: Promoting Positive Relationships Strategy

1 Purpose

The purpose of this Promoting Positive Relationships Strategy (**Strategy**) is to implement practices and procedures that promote the safety and wellbeing of all students at Brisbane Girls Grammar School (the **School**).

2 Scope

This Strategy applies to all students, parents and staff (including full-time, part-time, permanent, fixed-term and casual employees as well as contractors, volunteers and people undertaking work experience or vocational placements at the School) (**Staff**).

3 Statement of Commitment

The School seeks and affirms each girl's worth and dignity and is committed to a learning environment free from discrimination, harassment and abuse.

All students, parents and Staff have the right to:

- (a) feel safe, cared for and respected;
- (b) be free from threat and intimidation;
- (c) experience a pleasant, healthy and safe School environment.

Bullying (including Cyberbullying) behaviour strikes at the basis of these values and prevents students reaching for fulfilment in every dimension of life. Bullying is entirely contrary to the ideals of the School and its Code of Behaviour and will not be tolerated.

In accordance with the School's statement of Aspiration and Intent this policy seeks to:

- (a) develop in students respect and concern for others, of all races, genders, sexuality, religions and creeds;

- (b) develop in students an understanding that they must take responsibility for their own behaviour;
- (c) develop in students critical and effective thinking and problem solving skills;
- (d) develop in students life skills related to healthy life styles; and
- (e) develop an environment that nurtures and promotes student self-esteem and self-confidence.

Bullying not only affects the students and their families involved, it also affects students who may witness violence, intimidation and the distress of the person/people being bullied or cyberbullied. It can damage the atmosphere of the class and the climate of the School.

The School places a high priority on providing internet facilities and devices/equipment which will benefit student learning outcomes and the effective operations of the School. However, it recognises that the presence in the learning environment of these technologies (some provided partly or wholly by the School and some privately owned by students and other members of the School community), can also facilitate anti-social, inappropriate, and even illegal behaviour and activities.

The School aims, therefore, to maximise the benefits of these technologies, while at the same time to minimise the dangers and manage the risks.

4 Definitions

4.1 Bullying — What Is It?

The most frequently cited definition of bullying is the "repeated oppression, psychological or physical, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group of persons." (Rigby 1996)¹. There are three critical points in this definition:

¹ Rigby, K. (1996). *Bullying in Schools-and what to do about it*. Melb: ACER

- (a) **Power:** Students who bully may acquire power through various means: physical size and strength; status within a peer group; and recruitment within the peer group so as to exclude others.
- (b) **Frequency:** Bullying is not a random act; it is characterised by its repetitive nature. Because it is repetitive, students who are bullied not only have to survive the humiliation of the attack itself but live in constant fear of its recurrence.
- (c) **Intent to harm:** Bullies usually deny any intent to harm others and may not always be fully conscious of the harm they cause. Causing physical and emotional harm, however, is usually a deliberate act. It puts the student who is bullied in a position of oppression by the student who bullies.

Bullying is “recipient defined”, ie “it was only a joke” or “she doesn’t mind” is an unacceptable excuse. In many cases of bullying, there are elements of harassment and discrimination on the grounds of ‘difference’. The intention of the bully is irrelevant, the important factor is the harm done to the other person.

Bullying also occurs when a student sees another student being bullied and does not try to prevent it, report it or stand up for the one being bullied.

Bullying can be:

4.1.1 Physical

Pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, fighting, damaging or destroying other people’s property, jostling, pinching, touching or any unwelcome physical intimidation, such as gestures or staring.

4.1.2 Verbal

Offensive or abusive comments, sarcasm, crude jokes and comments, ridiculing appearance, actions or beliefs, obscene or threatening phone calls and emails, teasing or putting other people down.

4.1.3 Social

Exclusion, spreading rumours, gossip, racial or sexual comments, graffiti and notes intended to isolate, manipulate or harm others.

4.1.4 Emotional

Victimisation, instilling fear in others, extortion (forcing other students to hand over money, food or other possessions), forcing other students to do their work.

4.2 Bullying – What Is It Not?

Bullying is not the same as conflict between people or disliking someone. In mutual conflict situations, there is a disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. In these situations, both students are upset and usually both want a resolution to the disagreement. Sometimes, mutual conflict or social dislike, can develop into bullying when one person becomes targeted repeatedly in retaliation or rejection.

4.3 Cyberbullying – What is it?

“Cyberbullying is a way of delivering covert psychological bullying. It uses information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated and hostile behaviour, by an individual or group that is intended to harm others.” (Belsey 2007²)

Cyberbullying includes, but is not limited to, the following misuses of technology: harassing, teasing, intimidating, threatening another person by sending or posting inappropriate and hurtful email messages, instant messages, text messages, phone messages, digital pictures or images, videos or Web site or app postings (including blogs).

The forwarding of private emails, messages, pictures or videos, including AI generated images, or otherwise inappropriately communicating personal or private information belonging to another person or logging on and pretending to be someone else as well as sending sexually explicit images (‘sexting’) and intentionally excluding others from an online group all constitute cyberbullying. If this behaviour occurs either

² Belsey, B. (2007). www.cyberbullying.org

during School time or after School hours, the behaviour will constitute a breach of School policy and as such a student will be subject to disciplinary action. Students must be aware that in certain circumstances where a crime has been committed, they may also be subjected to a criminal investigation by Police over which the School will have no control. 'Sexting' is a crime and the School has an obligation to report it to the Police.

5 Implementation

In practice, the School's commitment to the safety and wellbeing of students, and the means by which it will implement the measures, is outlined below.

5.1 Handling reports of bullying and cyberbullying

The School does not condone bullying, cyberbullying or harassment of any form and the following process has been established to deal with such unacceptable behaviour should it occur. Based on the severity of the bullying or cyberbullying incident, a student may commence at any stage of the process outlined below.

The Interview process may involve the Principal, an outside investigator, the Deputy Principal or other staff at any stage.

Parents will be kept informed of the process.

5.1.1 Stage 1

- (a) When concerns are raised regarding a student being bullied or cyberbullied, or for being responsible for bullying or cyberbullying, the Head of House, Associate Dean (Students) and/or Dean of Students will seek information to clarify what has happened.
- (b) In cases where bullying has been substantiated, then the student concerned and the Head of House or Associate Dean (Students) and/or Dean of Students will determine the most appropriate first response.
- (c) The student suspected of bullying or cyberbullying may be interviewed at this time and advised that their behaviour is inappropriate and is to cease.

- (d) The Head of House or Associate Dean (Students) and/or Dean of Students will formulate an appropriate response to allow both students to move forward. Counselling may also be recommended to the student(s) involved.
- (e) The student(s) involved will be monitored to ensure that the bullying or cyberbullying has ceased.
- (f) Notes of the incident will be kept on file.

5.1.2 Stage 2

If a repeated incident is substantiated, the student(s) will be seen by the Dean of Students who will:

- (a) Provide advice (written or verbal) to the parents of the students involved.
- (b) Request School Psychologist involvement to assist students involved in the bullying or cyberbullying.
- (c) Consult with staff, students and parents to develop an appropriate, meaningful consequence.

A further report will be placed on the student's file.

5.1.3 Stage 3

If a further bullying or cyberbullying incident is substantiated there will be:

- (a) An interview between the Dean of Students and the student responsible for bullying or cyberbullying and the student's parent/s.
- (b) Further School Psychologist involvement for the student being bullied or cyberbullied and the student who is bullying or cyberbullying.
- (c) A behavioural contract to be signed.

A report on the outcome of this stage will be placed on the student file.

5.1.4 Stage 4

If a further bullying or cyberbullying incident is substantiated, the Principal will interview the

student and her parents to determine whether the student's enrolment should be terminated.

5.2 Managing Breaches of this Strategy

The School is committed to appropriately managing and reporting breaches of this Strategy in accordance with its other relevant policies as appropriate in the circumstances, such as the *Child Protection Policy*.

5.3 Strategies of Communication and Support

The School is committed to educating all students, parents and Staff upon entry to the School about the Promoting Positive Relationships Policy and Strategy in a range of forums including explanation of the policy during House Group meetings, in Year Assemblies, through publication to parents and on the School website and intranet, Minerva.

The School is committed to making this Strategy available to students, parents and Staff via its school intranet site (Minerva) and by hard copy from the School's administration by request.

The School is committed to training Staff in relation to risks to children and will conduct this training regularly via (as applicable) induction, annual formal training events, informal updates at Staff meetings and discussions between managers and their Staff.

6 Responsibilities

The School is responsible for developing and implementing this Strategy and related policies and procedures to ensure it fulfils its obligations.

All Staff are responsible for acting in compliance with this Strategy and other School policies and procedures.

7 Related Documents

Promoting Positive Relationships Policy

Child Protection Policy and Child Risk Management Strategy

Protective Practices for Staff Policy

Student Code of Behaviour

Social Media Policy

Acceptable Use of Technology Policy



Appendix B: Bullying and Cyberbullying

What can you do if you are being bullied or cyberbullied?

Any student who feels she is being bullied or cyberbullied is encouraged to report her concerns immediately.

Bullying and cyberbullying will continue if those responsible think they can escape detection and avoid consequences.

- (a) Approach your Head of House, senior staff member, classroom teacher, parents, support staff, School Psychologist or another adult with whom you feel comfortable.
- (b) The person receiving the complaint will, with your permission, report it to the Associate Dean (Students) and/or Dean of Students.
- (c) Any report of bullying or cyberbullying made to the School will be followed up sensitively and actions taken documented.
- (d) Try not to show that you are upset. Try to look and sound confident. Bullies feel powerful if they believe they have upset you.
- (e) If you are being cyberbullied, block and delete the bully (do not respond to their behaviour), consider using the 'report abuse' button provided by the service provider, save and store the offensive material, consider opening a new account.
- (f) If the bullying or cyberbullying continues students/parents are encouraged to report it again. It is important that bullies get the message that their behaviour will not be tolerated.
- (g) Consider talking to one of the School Psychologists for help in developing skills which can be useful in bullying or cyberbullying situations.

How can you help someone who is being bullied or cyberbullied?

The person being bullied or cyberbullied may be too scared or upset to tell anyone. Remember that **NOBODY** deserves to be bullied or cyberbullied. 'Bystanders' (people who witness bullying or cyberbullying) play a significant role in bullying and cyberbullying. Bystanders are present most of the time when bullying or cyberbullying occurs, bullying or cyberbullying behaviour is reinforced when people watch but do nothing however, when bystanders do intervene, the bullying or cyberbullying is more likely to stop quickly most of the time.

Consider doing the following:

- (a) If you know of bullying or cyberbullying, report it to your Head of House, senior staff member, classroom teacher, parents, support staff, School Psychologist or another adult with whom you feel comfortable, who will refer the matter to the Associate Dean (Students and/or Dean of Students).
- (b) Tell the bully that you and your friends strongly disapprove of his or her actions (a clear statement such as "you need to stop doing that, it's not okay"). Students who bully may think they have the support of their peers unless they are told otherwise.
- (c) Offer support to students who are bullied. Let them know they can do something about it. Act as a helpful bystander or friend to the student.

What can you do if you act in a bullying way to another student?

If you recognise that your behaviour is not appropriate or has upset a student, speak with someone you trust about it. Your Head of House, teacher or a School Psychologist will support you in your efforts to bring about change. Apologise to the student if possible and work out how you can make sure that you don't repeat the behaviour.

What can you do if you are accused of being a bully or cyberbully?

Speak with your Head of House, School Psychologist or teacher immediately. Your view regarding what happened will be carefully listened to and you will be treated fairly at all times.

Advice for parents

Watch for signs that your daughter may be being bullied or cyberbullied. Some of the following may indicate bullying or cyberbullying: wanting to miss School, a pattern of headaches or stomach aches, tension or unhappiness, becoming withdrawn, bruising, disappearance of property, damaged clothing, emotional distress during or after using the internet, closing the browser quickly so that adults cannot see the screen content, looking anxious or nervous when on computer, refusing to talk about sites visited, nervousness or fear when talking about friends, change in contact with friends.

If you think your daughter is being bullied or cyberbullied, inform her Head of House.

Do NOT encourage your daughter to retaliate or respond aggressively. It is not recommended for you to speak with the other student's parents at this stage.

If your daughter is being cyberbullied consider advising her to: block and delete the bully (rather than respond to the behaviour); use the 'report abuse' button provided by the service provider; save and store the offensive material; consider opening a new account.

Support your daughter in developing her talents and participating in activities that will build confidence.

If bullying involves sexually explicit imagery or severe physical abuse, you have a right to consider police action.

If you suspect that your daughter may be bullying others, we encourage you to speak with someone (Associate Dean (Students), Dean of Students, Head of House, School Psychologist) who will be able to assist you in considering how best to help your daughter.