



St Margaret's Berwick Grammar is defined as Berwick Campus and Officer Campus.

Rationale

All members of the St Margaret's Berwick Grammar Community are committed to providing a safe, secure and caring environment for learning and social growth. Bullying, in any form, has no place in such an environment.

Bullying

Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, deliberately upset or hurt another person or damage their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion. There is an imbalance of power in incidents of bullying due to age, size, status, or other reasons.

Bullying may occur because of perceived differences such as culture, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability or disability, religion, body size and physical appearance, age, or economic status. Bullying may be motivated by jealousy, distrust, fear, misunderstanding or lack of knowledge. It can continue over time, is often hidden from adults and will probably continue if no action is taken.

Bullying usually occurs in the context of a sustained interpersonal process that creates humiliation for victims in front of a bystander audience whom those engaged in bullying wish to impress. These roles can be very fluid, with most individuals within a group, taking up any one, or all, of these roles at various times.

Types of bullying

There are three broad types of bullying:

1. **Direct physical bullying:** includes hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching and pushing or damaging property.
2. **Direct verbal bullying:** includes name calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, homophobic or racist remarks, or verbal abuse.
3. **Indirect bullying:** is often harder to recognise and can be carried out behind the bullied person's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Indirect bullying includes:
 - lying and spreading rumours
 - playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
 - mimicking
 - encouraging others to socially exclude someone
 - damaging someone's social reputation or social acceptance.

What bullying is not

Many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management.

- **Mutual conflict:** involves an argument or disagreement between people but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution.

Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.

- **Social rejection or dislike:** is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.
- **Single-episode acts:** of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If someone is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied. Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different people is not the same as bullying. However, this does not mean that single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression should be ignored or condoned as these are unacceptable behaviours.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is the use of technology to harass, threaten, embarrass, or target another person. It can be direct verbal or indirect bullying behaviours. This includes harassment via a mobile phone, setting up a defamatory personal website or deliberately excluding someone from social networking. Cyberbullying can be particularly damaging because of the capacity to humiliate, hurt and harm a person in front of a huge 'audience'. A dangerous feature of cyberbullying is that it can be done quickly and easily. On an impulse, a person can create emotional havoc for another and do so before the voice of reason hints at the inappropriateness of the action. A further problem with cyberbullying is that the person bullying is often unaware of the extent of the harm they are causing because cyberbullying seldom occurs face-to-face.

Cyberbullying is pervasive and incessant. It differs from face-to-face bullying in that the bully can 'follow' their victim 24/7, and continue the bullying in the home. Cyberbullies may take advantage of the perception of anonymity (e.g., using an account in a fake name, or a blocked number). The feedback is muted by distance so that they are protected from an understanding of the awfulness of their behaviour. Cyberbullying represents unlawful activity that may result in police laying charges.

Examples of cyberbullying

- Sending nasty, hateful or threatening comments or pictures via an instant messaging service, mobile phone or the Internet and by social networking sites such as Twitter, Tumblr, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat etc.
- Repeated prank phone calls.
- Using a person's screen name to pretend to be them (setting up a fake account).
- Using modern technologies to engage in the social exclusion of someone and in hate group recruitment.
- Posting rude, explicit or embarrassing messages or pictures about 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.
- '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.
- Engaging in cyber-stalking and the invading of privacy.

Sexting

Another expression of cyber bullying is 'sexting'. Sexting is taking sexually explicit photos and making them available for others to see via a carriage service such as mobile phone or computer. 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 16 years, it can be a very serious crime resulting in charges of pedophilia.

Cyber anonymity

Students need to remember that something sent electronically can never be entirely removed even with a press of the 'delete' button. One's 'digital footprint' may be accessed many years after material is posted online and used by others, e.g., prospective employers and the media. Using pseudonyms, passwords and avatars does not protect the identity of a cyberbully. Technologies exist to identify those who misuse modern technologies to harm others.

It should also be noted that even if cyberbullying is engaged in while not at school, the matter will be taken up by the School because the moral welfare of its students is of utmost importance to the School as is anything that brings the School into disrepute.

Cyberbullying differs to traditional bullying in several ways:

1. **Availability** – it can occur anywhere and anytime. Misperception that there are no real-world consequences for online actions.
2. **Anonymity** – the impression of anonymity in the 'online world' leads young people to feel less accountable for their actions and provides a false bravado to would-be bullies.
3. **Geography** – rather than being limited to the schoolyard, cyberbullying can operate wherever a young person uses the internet or mobile phone, which occurs in most areas of a young person's life.
4. **Impact** – the internet provides the means for 'bullying' comments to be available to a wider audience. Through social networking sites, these comments can be viewed by potentially an unlimited number of people. The impact of and embarrassment caused by these statements is increased many times over.
5. **Intent** – a private message or joke that is forwarded on may become offensive or harassing even though that was not the intention of the original sender.
6. **Permanence** – verbal comments are fleeting. Online content is tracked and stored, potentially resurfacing at any time.
7. **Democracy** – anyone can be a victim – students, teacher, parents.

Protection from cyber harm

Students can protect themselves from some forms of cyber harm by noting the following advice:

1. They should never tell anyone, even their friends, their passwords, private details, or access codes.
2. When speaking to someone they do not know on the internet, students need to be aware they may not be who they say they are.
3. Be aware that there are predators who use the internet to lure young people into inappropriate sexual relationships. Others use tricks, such as pretending to be a bank,

to get the victim to share their confidential financial details. This usually results in identity fraud and the stealing of money.

4. Students should never tell people they do not know well what their address is or how they can be met.
5. Students should always be careful what they say or what they show a person in confidence on the internet for it is never guaranteed to remain confidential. The information may be sent on to others.

If students find themselves the victim of cyberbullying, they should keep the evidence and report the bullying to an appropriate adult. It is generally best not to respond to the cyber bully, or give them any satisfaction they have caused you hurt. If you do respond to the bully, do not do so while hot with anger. This can result in mutual cyberbullying which means both parties become guilty of bullying. Students are also alerted to the government Cyber Safety Help Button, accessed at www.dbcde.gov.au/helpbutton

Digital technologies (mobile phones)

St Margaret's Berwick Grammar expects students to display courtesy, consideration, and respect for others whenever they are using personal technology devices.

The school acknowledges the important role that mobile phones play in providing parents and students with a means of communication, especially when students are commuting to and from school. However, the school is also mindful of the potential disruption to learning and harm to others inappropriate mobile or other digital devices can cause.

To further consolidate our *Child Safe Policy*, and create a safe school environment, students are, therefore, required to ensure all mobile phones and other digital devices remain switched off and in their lockers at all times. Mobile phones and digital devices are 'not to be used, seen or heard' while in lessons, during recess or lunchtime or during any school related activities. Students may be given permission to use their mobile phone or digital device in accordance with teacher directions relating to school work and school related activities.

Should students be found to breach the expectations outlined, mobile phones or digital devices will be confiscated. Mobile phones or digital devices may be collected as instructed at the conclusion of the school day. The school accepts no responsibility for the loss of, or damage to mobile phones or digital devices.

The consequence for a repeated breach of the 'not to be used, seen or heard' expectation is the requirement that the mobile phone is handed into Student Office at the beginning of the day and collected at the end of the day. It will be a requirement that the device be handed in daily for a week on the second breach, offence, for a month on the third breach and for a term on the fourth breach.

Devices must not be used in any way that is deemed to be a breach of a person's privacy or be of a bullying nature. The school reserves the right to intervene in any digital device matter that is school related, identifies or implicates the school in any way, and/or any member of the school community.

Disciplinary action will result from any perceived breach of this school policy and may include:

- parents being informed or required to collect the device from the Head of School as part of a meeting
- the matter and the device being referred to police as appropriate.

Please note the school is not responsible for any damage or loss to any personally owned digital device students elect to bring to school or take on school related activities.

Reporting bullying

At our school it is both a student's right and responsibility to report bullying to a member of staff, whether it happens to them or someone else. All incidents will be taken seriously, and action will follow to resolve the situation and to ensure that bullying does not continue as outlined in the Responsible Behaviour Policy.

Advice to students

Students who find themselves the target of bullying are advised to seek safety by removing themselves from the bullying situation wherever possible and alerting an adult as soon as possible. It is expected that students will report bullying to their class teacher or Mentor teacher.

If students are uncomfortable with the actions of others towards them, they are advised to look at the person directly and say, 'Stop that, it makes me uncomfortable', then walk away. Students are advised to:

- not try and 'get even'
- remove such people from their social networking list of friends where applicable
- immediately report to parents and teachers any unwanted or threatening messages they receive, including emails, text, Facebook messages etc., which they should then keep copies of as evidence.

Bystanders are expected to tell the perpetrators to stop, ensure the targeted student is safe and report incidences immediately.

Advice to parents

Mental anguish is often harder for parents to identify than the signs of face-to-face bullying. There is no definitive list of signs that indicate cyberbullying.

Although parents are advised to be alert for any signs of:

- change in mood, demeanour and/or behaviour
- change in friendship groups
- spending more time with family instead of friends
- lowering of marks
- not wanting to go places
- being extra secretive in online activities
- distinct change in online behaviours
- distress
- unwillingness to attend school
- missing equipment and/or unusual or unexplained requests for extra money.

Parents should encourage their child to report any bullying to their class teacher or Mentor tutor. Parents should also report their concerns to a teacher or Mentor tutor.

Parents are encouraged to reassure their child that once the school is aware of the situation it is highly unlikely that the bullying will continue and to ensure they update the school on their child's wellbeing and status of bullying behaviour.

Response of teachers

Staff remain alert to any signs of distress or changes in behaviour of students which might suggest bullying is occurring.

All reports of bullying will be brought to the attention of the Head of School. Both target student and alleged perpetrator/s will be interviewed, and parents notified of the outcome. The situation will be monitored until it is clear that no further bullying has occurred.

From time to time, student surveys will be carried out to check that covert bullying is not taking place within a particular year level or beyond.

Unacceptable behaviour

Unacceptable behaviour in the school environment refers to a wide range of behaviours that are not acceptable or appropriate, as outlined in a school's *Responsible Behaviour Policy* and includes harassment, discrimination, and a threat or act of violence.

Harassment

Harassment is behaviour intended to annoy, disturb, threaten or upset another person. Harassment and bullying may involve similar behaviours as both usually involve a person or group of people who have, or are perceived to have, more power deliberately upsetting someone on more than one occasion. Harassment may also occur because of perceived differences such as culture, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or religion.

Sexual harassment is unlawful behaviour under the *Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act 1984* and the Victorian *Equal Opportunity Act 1995*. It occurs when a person engages in any unwelcome or unreciprocated conduct of a sexual nature (written or verbal), in circumstances which could reasonably be expected to cause offence, humiliation or intimidation.

Examples of sexual harassment may include:

- sexual or suggestive remarks
- sexual propositions or requests for dates
- repeated questions about a person's private life
- sexual jokes, teasing and innuendo
- use of homophobic language to describe a person or object thought to be inferior or of less worth.
- physical contact such as touching, deliberate brushing up against a person or hugging against their will
- offensive mobile or telephone calls or texts, reading matter, email, screen savers, pictures calendars
- suggestive looks, leers or insulting gestures
- sexually explicit conversations
- display or distribution of offensive material or graffiti.

Violence

Violence is the damaging and destructive use of force by a person or group towards another person, group, or property. This force can be physical, verbal, sexual or another action or behaviour and can involve an ongoing relationship between the parties.

Violence may involve provoked or unprovoked acts and can be a one-off incident or can occur over time. Violence may be used by those targeted by bullying or other unacceptable behaviour to try to redress the imbalance of power. A threat of violence is words or gestures expressing intent to use an act of force against a person.

Reporting harassment and/or violence

Students who perceive themselves to be the target of harassment or violence are encouraged to report this to their teacher, Mentor Tutor or Head of School and can expect an investigation to be carried out and consequences applied according to the Responsible Behaviour Policy.

Responsibility for this Policy

Deputy Head of School (Wellbeing) and Student Wellbeing

Policy location

This Policy is published on Nexus

Policy review

Triennially or as circumstances dictate

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