



St Margaret's Berwick Grammar (**SMBG**, the **School**) is committed to providing a safe, secure and caring environment for learning and social growth. All Students have the right to feel safe and be safe at School and be treated with dignity and respect by all members of the School Community. Bullying in all forms is not tolerated by the School and is treated very seriously.

Scope

This Policy applies to all Students enrolled at the School.

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.

What is Bullying

The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or online



Bullying Behaviour

Examples of bullying include, but are not limited to the following

- verbal bullying;
- physical bullying;
- emotional bullying;
- cyber bullying;
- sexual bullying; extortion;
- racism or racists behaviours; and
- homophobic, biphobic or transphobic behaviour

Each of these types of behaviours are also managed in accordance with and may also be in breach of other School policies as appropriate (for example *Responsible Behaviour Policy*)

Verbal Bullying

Verbal bullying includes but is not limited to, putting people down through comments, jokes or mimicking, name calling, teasing about another's appearance or beliefs, derogatory comments made on the basis of race, culture, sexuality, socio- economic status or any other individual difference, intimidation or verbal abuse directed towards another person; intimidating or harassing telephone calls; spreading malicious rumours, belittling others' abilities and achievements, or practical jokes which may be hurtful.

Physical Bullying

Physical bullying includes but is not limited to, hitting, poking, pushing, punching, kicking, tripping, spitting, invading personal space, unwelcome touching or brushing against another person, stand over tactics, non-verbal gestures and actions which are designed to intimidate, restraint of another person, displaying offensive materials, pictures or objects, writing offensive notes, letters and graffiti; damaging, stealing, borrowing without permission, hiding, damaging or destroying another's property or possessions.

Emotional Bullying

Emotional bullying includes but is not limited to, hurting others by damaging or manipulating relationships (for example, spreading rumours that cause individuals to be rejected by others), social exclusion by deliberately excluding another from a group of friends, writing, sending or delivering harassing notes, telling others not to associate with or like someone, involving extortion, pressuring and intimidating others to act against their will e.g. giving up possessions including money, buying food and drink for bribery purposes or doing work for others or committing minor offences on their behalf.

Sexual Bullying

Sexual bullying includes but is not limited to teasing or offensive language about another's body parts and development, sexual orientation, unwarranted or unwanted sexual attention, sexting, or producing or being in possession of notes or pictures depicting sexual content.

Extortion

Extortion includes but is not limited to demanding money or goods with attached threats

Racism

Racism, or racist behaviours, includes but is not limited to racial verbal taunts or racist graffiti including symbols that are offensive to a person of a specific religion or culture or making a racist gesture.

Homophobic, Biphobic or Transphobic Behaviour

Homophobic or biphobic behaviour includes but is not limited to bullying based on sexuality or perceived sexuality. Transphobic behaviour includes but is not limited to bullying based on gender identity or perceived gender identity.

Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying includes but is not limited to offensive use of email, text messages or other electronic messaging functionality, putting or posting offensive material on the Internet or other social networking sites, using a person's screen name to impersonate them (setting up a fake account), sharing of inappropriate images, sexting or intentionally excluding others from an online group.

Guarding from cyber harm

Students can guard 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.

Students can also find further information on how to look after themselves at [How to look after yourself if you are cyberbullied | eSafety Commissioner](#)

Harassment

Harassment any unwelcome behavior—physical, verbal, or psychological—that intimidates, offends, or humiliates a person. It often involves a pattern of conduct intended to cause distress. Sexual harassment is unlawful behaviour under the *Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act 1984* and the Victorian *Equal Opportunity Act 1995*. Sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual behaviour that could make a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. Sexual harassment can be a single incident or repeated behaviour; a suggestive comment or an offensive joke. It doesn't matter what the intention is, sexual harassment is against the law.

Examples of sexual harassment may include:

- sexual or suggestive remarks
- sexual propositions or repeated 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
- sexually explicit emails, text messages or posts on social media
- 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, psychological abuse intended to coerce, control, or cause fear 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.

School Response to Bullying/Harassment/Violence

The School undertakes to:

- treat all reports of harassment and bullying seriously, promptly and discreetly,
- take all reasonable steps to prevent harassment and bullying from occurring in any context whether directly related to School, including behaviour that occurs while travelling to and from School or during co-curricular activities, adventures, camps, excursions, and other School functions and activities,
- ensure that complainants and those involved in the complaint processes do not suffer further disadvantage, retaliation or threats,
- offer support and counselling opportunities to the complainant and the respondent and raise awareness of this Policy and the effects of bullying or relationships via promotional material, curriculum and workshops/tutorials or seminars for School Employees, parents and Students.

The School requests any person with a concern or complaint provide the School with an opportunity to resolve the matter.

Students are encouraged to take one of the following approaches:

- speak directly to the person(s) causing the concern, and inform them that it is unwelcome and that it should cease;
- talk to a friend or parent / family member for support or advice; or
- inform a trusted teacher, Head of School, Mentor, tutor or School Counsellor so that the unacceptable behaviour can be addressed

Dealing With Complaints regarding Bullying /Harassment/Violence

When an incident of bullying is reported to the School, the School will undertake the following:

- All Students identified in the bullying incident will be interviewed by an appropriate School Employee which may include the School Employee to whom the concern was reported, the Head of School, Head of Campus or Child Safety Officers. All Students will be given the opportunity to have their voice heard. There will be documented outcomes from this meeting aimed at achieving acceptable Student behaviour going forward.
- If a Student/s is identified as participating in further instances of bullying, they will be asked to participate in a further meeting with the Principal, Deputy Principal or delegate. The student/s parents/legal guardians will be informed. The Principal, Deputy Principal or delegate may determine an appropriate method to resolve the conflict, including counselling for the victim and the perpetrator; and
- If the behaviour continues, Head of Campus will refer the matter to a Principal or delegate who will take appropriate action, which may include suspension or expulsion.

Guidance for 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 guided 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.

Parent can find more information at [Parents | eSafety Commissioner](#)

Teachers and School Staff

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.

Anti-bullying programs

The School is committed to discouraging all forms of bullying, and introducing new initiatives from time to time to address bullying behaviour. These include, but are not limited to:

- training programmes and initiatives;
- reviewing this Policy periodically to ensure it remains effective and current
- modification of the biennial Safety Survey

Complaints

If a Student wishes to make a complaint about a decision made in accordance with this Policy, they should speak to their teacher or refer to the Students Complaints and Grievances Policy and Procedure

Policy location

This Policy is published on Nexus and School's website.

Review and Governance

This Policy was reviewed and approved by the Executive Team and it is reviewed triennially and/or earlier if required due to operational or regulatory changes.

Prior versions	August 2000, June 2010, November 2013, April 2016, February 2017, July 2021
Effective Date	April , 2026
Review Date	April 2029
Published	Nexus, Website