



# NCS ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

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*Adopted: May 2017*

*Last amended: September 2022*

*Next review: August 2025*

## Rationale

NCS recognises that every member of its community is made in God's image and is to be treated with dignity and respect. The NCS Code of Respect incorporates the spirit of 1 Peter 2:17 injunction to show proper respect for everyone. Consequently, all members of the NCS community have a responsibility to show that they believe that any form of bullying is unacceptable and to set an example that reflects that view. NCS expects all members of its community to create an atmosphere that discourages bullying behaviour in all settings and at all times. This requires all NCS members to embrace new students proactively, welcome all visitors and act in respectful ways in all settings.

NCS recognises the importance of a positive and supportive school community to the learning process. Students are encouraged to respect all and be tolerant of individual differences. We seek to provide a safe and welcoming environment. That goal requires both clear guidelines and a commitment from families to work with the school.

This policy seeks to comply with Commonwealth and State legislation such as:

- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) Act 1986
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Racial Hatred Act 1995
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984

## Definition

Bullying is repeated oppression, psychological or physical, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group of persons.

Bullying behaviours may include:

- Physical Actions: hitting, kicking, pushing, shoving, property damage, things thrown to inflict hurt
- Verbal Actions: verbal intimidation, 'jokes,' comments about looks, ridicule, rude remarks
- Exclusion Actions: excluding from activities, groups or events, ignoring
- Social Relations manipulation: manipulation of friendship groups, turning friends against each other
- Cyber-Bullying: causing hurt via information and communication technologies, such as the internet, social media, and through the use of mobile and other digital devices

What bullying is not:

- Occasional arguments or disagreements between individuals or groups
- An individual or group choosing not to mix socially with another individual or group
- Social rejection or dislike, unless that rejection involves deliberate and repeated actions to cause hurt
- One-off acts of an individual or group mistreating another individual or group

Sometimes individuals or groups will mistreat others in a way that does not constitute bullying according to the definition of that term. The School is committed to dealing with students who mistreat others, whether or not that behaviour meets the definition of bullying. Where the alleged mistreatment does constitute bullying, the School will apply the anti-bullying policy. Where such alleged mistreatment does not meet the definition of bullying, the School will apply its discipline policy and procedures.

## Signs of Bullying

NSW Education provides the following helpful signs of bullying. You may notice your child:

- doesn't want to go to school or participate in school activities
- changes their route to school or becomes frightened of travelling to or from school
- drops in academic performance
- changes their sleeping or eating patterns
- has frequent tears, anger, mood swings or anxiety
- takes money from home
- has unexplained bruises, cuts, or scratches
- loses or brings home damaged belongings or clothes
- asks for extra pocket money or food
- arrives home hungry

The signs of online bullying can be the same as signs of other bullying but may include other behaviours involving phones, computers, or devices. For example, your child may:

- be hesitant about going online
- seem nervous when an instant message, text message or email appears
- be visibly upset after using a device, or suddenly avoids it
- closes a laptop, hides a mobile phone or device when others enter the room
- spends unusually long hours online<sup>1</sup>

## Details

Our first role as individuals at NCS is to recognise that every person, as made in God's image, is to be treated with dignity and respect. This policy is simply an extension of this way of thinking in that it provides further detail on how we can and should treat each other in our different roles and the responsibilities that these roles entail. Additionally, it outlines how in circumstances where bullying is alleged, staff and students are expected to respond.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://education.nsw.gov.au/student-wellbeing/attendance-behaviour-and-engagement/anti-bullying/parents-and-carers/what-is-bullying->

## Role of students

If students are to fulfil their role as learners in a safe and supportive environment that truly reflects biblical principles, students have the responsibility to:

- Always be respectful towards other students, staff, and members of the school community.
- Report any instances of being bullied to school staff and parents or carer
- Students who witness, or know of, bullying should report it to a teacher
- Where possible, take appropriate steps to discourage or prevent bullying
- Respect and care for other people's property

These actions will contribute to an environment where students will:

- Feel safe and secure
- Be in an environment conducive to learning
- Be treated respectfully
- Know that their property is safe

## Role of staff

If staff are to fulfil their role in modelling Christian lives and helping the students to learn in a safe and supportive environment that truly reflects biblical principles, they must:

- Ensure that there is appropriate early intervention to prevent bullying
- Ensure a commitment through the implementation of proactive strategies that may include:
  - Social skills programs to build positive relationship skills in students
  - Informing classroom teachers (K-6) and Year Advisors (7-12) of students who have either been the victims of mistreatment or bullying, or are at risk of being a victim
  - Providing students who have identified social needs access to a school counsellor or an external specialist program
  - The implementation of programs designed to build resilience in students so that they will be able to manage situations where they perceive that they have been either mistreated or bullied

To do this, staff have the responsibility to:

- make every effort to value others in the school community
- treat all in the school, whether parents, teachers or students with care, courtesy, and consideration
- promote a safe, supportive environment
- abide by the NCS Staff Code of Conduct
- monitor and assess the degree of bullying happening at our school
- provide students with clear instructions of how to proactively react to bullying
- inform parents and carers of bullying incidents with the aim of gaining their support in the counselling process to both victims and bullies.

Staff have the responsibility to provide a supportive and caring school culture through the provision of an age-appropriate curriculum designed to:

- educate students about bullying, social responsibility and building personal resilience
- educate students to exercise digital responsibility in the appropriate use of technology
- ensure that students understand what constitutes bullying
- stop bullying behaviour
- rebuild relationships based on the biblical pattern

- develop appropriate social skills and attitudes in the victims, perpetrators, and bystanders of bullying; and empower students to resist bullying
- promote and reinforce the Christian ethos of care and respect for each individual
- include external providers such as Brainstorm Productions to reinforce the harmful effects of bullying behaviour.

### Role of Parents/Carers

In accordance with this policy, parents and carers are required to:

- Keep the school informed of concerns about changes of behaviour that may be a sign of bullying
- Report bullying concerns to the school
- Allow the School sufficient time to investigate allegations of bullying according to the procedures set out in this document
- If dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation and subsequent actions taken by the school, an appeal may be made as described in the Complaints Handling Policy
- Understand that potential bullying behaviour that has occurred outside of school will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Parents also have the right to consider contacting relevant outside authorities (eg police)

### Role of Senior Executive

The Senior Executive have the responsibility to ensure that the following procedures occur:

- Yearly staff review of our Anti-Bullying Policy this will make staff aware of the procedure to be followed in the event of bullying incidents
- Annual reinforcement of anti-bullying strategies involving:
  - Teacher explanation of the negative consequences of bullying behaviours
  - Teacher instruction of proactive ways students can confidently report bullying incidents
  - Review of data relating to potential bullying behaviours (via SEQTA)
  - Communication via NCS Bytes and Facebook
  - Promoting the NCS 'bully free' vision via school assemblies, class discussions and other means
- Ensure an efficient and 'safe' procedure for students to report bullying incidents to teachers
- Ensure that all relevant staff are aware of students involved in frequent bullying incidents.
- Ensure appropriate communication with relevant parents and carers to develop an appropriate response plan.

### Related Documents

- NCS Staff Code of Conduct
- NCS Student Code of Conduct
- NCS Child Protection Policy & Procedures
- NCS Choose Respect Poster
- NCS Social Media Policy
- NCS Secondary ICT Use Policies & Student Agreements
- NCS Primary Cyber Safety Poster
- NCS Primary ICT Use Agreement

## Procedure

The school will follow a four-stage process.

**Stage One** - The Primary class teacher or Secondary Year Advisor will conduct student interviews, as part of the follow-up to reported incidents. This process will include the following steps:

- Create a confidential written record of the alleged bullying, including:
  - the date the allegation was reported to the investigator
  - the name(s) of those who may have some connection with the alleged bullying'
- If verified:
  - an initial warning is given to the person accused
  - parents or carers of relevant parties will be informed by phone call
  - all parties involved are required to maintain confidentiality
  - the matter will be recorded on SEQTA using the Counter-Bullying tool. The entry will include a written and dated statement from all relevant parties
  - relevant consequences as per the School's discipline policy and procedures will be considered
  - the School's pastoral care and counselling team will be informed as appropriate

**Stage Two** - Should a second related bullying incident occur, it will be referred to the designated Primary Stage Leader or Secondary Coordinator for appropriate investigation as per the steps outlined in Stage One.

**Stage Three** - Should further related incidents of bullying occur, these will be referred to the relevant Head of School for appropriate investigation as per the steps outlined in Stage One. Such a continuation of bullying incidents will be treated with due seriousness.

**Stage Four** - Any further related incidents will immediately be referred to the School Principal. Such further incidence would give the school cause to question the ongoing enrolment of the perpetrator.

**Severity Clause** - for severe incidents of bullying, these steps may be fast tracked.

**Time Clause** - should a second incident of bullying occur sufficiently distant from a previous incident then it is appropriate to consider beginning the process at the first incident stage. This judgement will be made at the discretion of the appropriate supervising authority.

Support agencies/personnel include:

- Police Youth Liaison Officer
- Kids Helpline–1800551800
- Lifeline–131114
- Salvo Youth Line–93603000
- Websites: – [www.bullyingnoway.com.au](http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au) – [www.kidshelp.com](http://www.kidshelp.com)