Anti-Bullying Policy

The Brisbane Boys' College Anti-Bullying policy has the following sections:

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1. Purpose of the Policy

Brisbane Boys' College is implementing this policy to ensure that its employees and students feel safe from bullying in all its forms. The policy sets out the requirements for dealing with bullying and is set in the context of the National Safe Schools Framework (2011).

The basic beliefs underlying the policy are:

- Every individual has value in a community.
- Every individual has the right to feel safe from bullying or harassment in all its forms.
- Every conflict can be resolved. Victims and Aggressors both need help to resolve conflict.
- Every individual in a community is responsible for the safety of other individuals in that community.
- Every individual in a community is responsible for ensuring that other individuals in that community can reach their potential in a supportive and non-threatening environment.

The Brisbane Boys’ College position statement on this issue is that bullying of any kind is unacceptable in the College community.

If the bullying incident amounts to harm as referred to in the College’s Child Protection Policy then the matter must be dealt with under the guidelines of the Child Protection Policy.

Scope
This policy applies to employees, parents, carers, students, volunteers and people visiting the school site.

Responsibility
Headmaster

Point of Contact
Bullying Reference Group: brg@bbc.qld.edu.au
2. What Is Bullying?
Perhaps the clearest definition of bullying is that of Farrington (1993), an English criminologist. He defined it as:

“Bullying is repeated oppression, psychological or physical, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person and occurs when someone, or a group of people, upset or create a risk to another person’s health and safety, or their property, reputation or social acceptance.”

For Junior School boys this may need to be simplified to aid understanding to:

“repeated intimidation of a person, using actions or words”:

Bullying occurs where there is an imbalance in power between people. This imbalance is sometimes very obvious, such as a person bullying another person, or a group combining to victimise an individual. But often it is much less obvious, such as a difference in psychological power.

In any bullying incident, there will likely be three parties involved: the bully (Aggressor), the person being bullied (Victim), and bystanders (Witnesses). Those who are the bystanders have an obligation to report bullying because, if they are aware of the problem, they are condoning bullying unless they do something about it.

There are four broad categories of bullying:

- **Direct physical bullying** e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.
- **Direct verbal bullying** e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.
- **Indirect bullying** - This form of bullying is harder to recognise and often carried out behind the victim’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
  - provoking a food-allergic reaction
  - gestural or mimicking
  - encouraging others to socially exclude someone
  - damaging someone’s social reputation and social acceptance.
- **Cyber-bullying, or e-bullying** can be overt or covert bullying behaviours using digital technologies, including hardware such as computers and smartphones and software such as social media, instant messaging, texts and other video internet websites. Cyber-bullying can happen at any time. It can be in public or in private. It includes:
  - abusive or hurtful texts, emails, images or video
  - deliberately excluding others online
  - nasty gossip or rumours
  - imitating others online or using their log-in.
  Refer to Sections 9 and 10 for more information about Cyber-bullying.

*All incidents of bullying, regardless into which category the incident falls, will be dealt with by the same procedure.*

3. What Bullying is Not
There are many negative behaviours which, although distressing to those involved, are not classified as bullying. These instances often may require teacher intervention and management. The following situations are often confused with bullying:

- **Mutual conflict**: In mutual conflict situations, there is an argument or disagreement between students, but not an imbalance of power. Mutual conflict may evolve into a bullying situation at some point if it is not resolved; for example, when one person becomes targeted repeatedly for ‘retaliation’ in a one-sided way.

- **Social rejection or dislike**: Unless the social rejection is directed towards someone specific and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others, it is not bullying.

- **Single-episode acts of nastiness or meanness, or random acts of aggression or intimidation**: Single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If a student is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion, this does not constitute being bullied. This does not, however, lessen the seriousness of the incident or the subsequent consequences.
4. **Signs of Bullying**

Staff, parents, carers or students who observe a radical change in an individual’s behaviour should discuss this with the individual and in the case of a student then the Housemaster; as such changes may be symptomatic of bullying. Behaviours that might be observed are:

- An unwillingness or refusal to go to school, feeling ill in the mornings;
- Very few friends and claims to hate the boys at school;
- A decline in quality of school work;
- Loss of interest in sport and social activities;
- Becoming withdrawn and lacking confidence;
- Change in normal eating, sleeping or mood patterns;
- Crying at night, having nightmares;
- Asking for money or starting to steal (to pay the bully), frequently lost possessions and/or money;
- Refusing to talk about what’s wrong;
- Having unexplained bruises, cuts, scratches;
- Beginning to bully other children or siblings;
- Becoming aggressive and unreasonable;
- Or implausible excuses for any of the above.

5. **Policy Awareness**

Brisbane Boys’ College takes a proactive approach to dealing with bullying by establishing processes to educate and inform employees, parents, carers and students about bullying and the procedures to follow in the event that an individual is being bullied.

All Brisbane Boys’ College employees, parents, carers and students will be educated about the College’s anti-bullying guidelines as follows:

All employees, parents, carers and students will be provided access to a copy of the College Anti-Bullying Policy and the appropriate working policy, which will include the protocols to follow should a bullying incident occur.

During the induction process, employees, parents, carers and students will be informed of the intentions of the policy and where to find the policy.

Parents’ and students’ attention will be drawn to the student working policy in the Student Diary at the start of each year.

Year 7 students will be taken through a formal program on the issue of bullying during the Pastoral Care lessons, including mentor lead activities and discussions. An extension of this program will occur during Year 8 Pastoral Care lessons.

Education for all other year levels will occur through the College’s Pastoral Care program and at Year Level assemblies throughout the year.

In addition, these strategies may also be utilised:

- Articles placed in Newsletters,
- Parent information evenings,
- Anti-Bullying Forums;
- All employees will be continually educated in regard to the Anti-Bullying policy and reminded of their responsibilities,
- A bullying survey will be conducted at least once a year in the Middle and Senior School to identify bullying behaviours so that these may be addressed.
6. College Community Responsibilities

College and staff Responsibilities

The College will:

- Involve students, staff and parents in the development and review of its Anti-Bullying Policy, including its policy on cyber-bullying.
- Identify senior staff members to form the Bullying Reference Group.
- Ensure all staff members are familiar with the College’s anti-bullying policy and provide appropriate professional development on a regular basis, including at new staff induction.
- Ensure that all accessible areas of the College are patrolled thoroughly.
- Establish, and widely publicise an e-mail address (brg@bbc.qld.edu.au) for students/parents to report bullying.
- Provide a method for anonymous reporting of bullying incidents (MyBBC → Resources → Bullying Action Report – Online Submission).

Staff members will:

- Ensure they are familiar with the College’s anti-bullying policy.
- Educate all students with regard to their responsibilities as bystanders to a bullying incident.
- Ensure bullying behaviour is never modelled in interactions they have with students, parents or other staff members.
- Watch for early signs of distress in other individuals. This could be evident in any aspect of College life.
- Where bullying is observed, intervene immediately to stop the bullying.
- Offer the victim immediate support and help and outline what will now happen.
- Inform the Housemaster, Chair of the BRG or School Sergeant so that the incident can be investigated and fully resolved.

Student Responsibilities

Students should:

- Report all incidents of bullying to a trusted senior student, teacher, Housemaster, or other staff member or, anonymously, via the College’s anti-bullying email address.
- Actively support individuals they know are being bullied.
- Refuse to become involved in bullying, including as a bystander.

Parent Responsibilities

Parents should:

- Watch for signs of distress in their child, such as, unwillingness to attend school, a pattern of headaches or stomach aches, equipment that has gone missing, request for extra pocket money, damaged clothing or bruising. Early contact is essential at this point.
- Take an active interest in their child’s social life.
- Report to the Housemaster, BRG or any other member of staff if they know, or suspect, their child is being bullied.
- Keep a written record if the bullying persists: Who, What, Where and When?
- Advise their child to tell a trusted teacher.
- Tell their child that there is nothing wrong with them.
- NEVER encourage their child to hit back or respond verbally.
- Ensure they never model bullying behaviour.
7. Initiatives for Dealing with Bullying

The Bullying Reference Group:
BBC has adopted a whole school approach by establishing a Bullying Reference Group (BRG) to operate within the Junior, Middle and Senior Schools to address matters of a bullying nature. This group consists of a number of senior staff members who work closely with the Deputy Headmaster, Head of Middle School, Head and Deputy Head of Junior School, the School Counsellors, Senior Housemasters and Middle School Housemasters. The BRG members investigate possible bullying incidents, then make a report detailing recommendations to the Deputy Headmaster, Head of Middle School or Head of Junior School.

Education and Prevention
Employees, parents, carers and students are to be made aware of this policy. Regular professional development of staff on the topic of bullying will take place. Preventative programs are to be conducted through the College’s Pastoral Care Program and will be used to educate students on bullying issues and to aid in the prevention of bullying issues. The College will also incorporate Peer Mediation into the prevention strategies.

BBC has also introduced a Bullying Action Report to allow students or parents to submit reports anonymously to members of the BRG. (MyBBC → Resources → Bullying Action Report – Online Submission).

Intervention
Regular surveying of students will take place, to identify significant bullying issues within the College that may ordinarily go unnoticed by staff members. Within this process, it is possible to identify those children who are victims of bullying and those who may be perpetrators. Once identified, the College will support and provide further education to the victim/s and aggressor/s.

Any victim of bullying is urged to feel empowered to seek help and, by collaboration with staff and others, confront the influence of any bully.

Students who are aggressors may need proactive assistance with their Emotional Quotient (EQ) or (Emotional Intelligence (EI)) to develop appropriate interpersonal skills.

The issue of bullying is discussed and investigated in the Junior School (through Kidsmatter and “Do The Five”) and Years 7 and 8 Pastoral Care Programs.

Each year, during assembly this issue is specifically addressed, and should a case arise, mention is made at other appropriate times. If a student feels he is being bullied, he is encouraged to talk to his parents, a teacher, his Housemaster, a prefect, the Chaplain, a School Counsellor, School Sister, Deputy Headmaster, Head of Middle School, Head of the Junior School, the Headmaster or submit the Bullying Action Report.

The College’s bullying policy is designed to support all parties. Teachers, parents, or students who are aware of bullying are urged to initiate action through the College pastoral care system by contacting the relevant Housemaster, the School Sergeant, or a member of the College Executive. Action taken will be by mutual agreement with the victim, after full discussion.

8. Protocols for dealing with incidents of Bullying and Harassment

Please note – due to the various and at times extenuating circumstances that are part of any behavioural incident, the following are to be read as guidelines only.

The College has a ‘no-blame’ approach to dealing with bullying. The aim of the BRG and Anti-Bullying policy is to have the bullying behaviours cease, rather than just taking punitive measures against the perpetrators, although that does not preclude punitive action should the bullying behaviours persist.

For any incidents of possible bullying, a member of staff or senior student will deal with the problem on the spot, in order to defuse the immediate conflict. Once the immediate issues have been dealt with, the following steps should be taken:
1. **Identification.**
A student, parent or staff member reports suspected bullying to the Housemaster, School Sergeant, Chair of the BRG or through the BRG email address. If the incident is identified as bullying in nature, members of the Bullying Reference Group (BRG) then implement the anti-bullying protocols.

2. **Initial interview.**
Members of the BRG interview (using a “shared responsibility / restorative justice” approach) witnesses, the victim and the aggressor separately, recording the details of the incident in written interview notes. The interviewers make all parties aware of the bullying strategy and policy and then discuss the issues surrounding the particular incident. The interviewers work with the involved parties to devise strategies for conflict resolution. The interviewers attempt to reach a position where all parties are satisfied with the outcome; i.e. the victim feels secure and the bully is prepared to modify his behaviour in future. The victim understands that any further bullying must be reported immediately.

*The strategy at this stage is not to apportion blame, or to punish; but to support the victim and make the aggressor aware of the College’s policy and of the consequences if the behaviours do not change.*

3. **Report recommendations to Deputy Headmaster, Head of Middle School or Head of Junior School**
After the interview is completed the interviewers complete the “Incident Report” and enter the details into the Counter Bullying section of Teacher Assistant, making sure to attach the interview notes, Incident Report and any other relevant information. The interviewers inform the Deputy Headmaster, Head of Middle School or Head of Junior School of the suggested recommendations, which the Deputy Headmaster, Head of Middle School or Head of Junior School will consider (in consultation with the Housemaster, if required) to determine the appropriate course of action. If a student is involved, the Housemasters and Parents will be informed by the Deputy Headmaster, Head of Middle School or Head of Junior School.

4. **Repeat incident**
If the person does not stop the bullying behaviours, further sanctions may be imposed. These could include, but are not confined to:

- Behavioural probation
- Detention
- Exclusion from certain areas of the school premises
- Suspension from the extra-curricular activity where the incident occurred.
- Internal Suspension
- Major fixed term suspension
- Permanent exclusion

The College keeps central records of all reported incidents of bullying. These will be analysed on a regular basis to ascertain major areas where bullying occurs, age of victims and bullies, and which strategies have been successful. A review of the College’s policy will be undertaken every 12 months, taking into account this annual data.

An important consideration is that overcoming bullying is neither simple nor quick. The College will constantly reinforce the fact that bullying is not acceptable and remind staff, parent, carers and students how to counteract bullying, as well as offering programs to improve their emotional intelligence (self-esteem and resilience); students will be made aware of their responsibilities not to bully and not to condone bullying by being silent bystanders; and parents need to be confident to approach the school with their concerns, and encouraged to work with The College in a non-blame situation so that their children are protected.
**Middle/Senior School**

- Incident
  - Parent’s Report
  - Self-Report
  - Reported by staff
    - BRG Email or Confidential Report
    - Senior Staff Member / Housemaster
      - School Sergeant/Chair of BRG
        - Reported to BRG
          - BRG members interview students involved or witnessing the incident
            - Report of incident prepared, recorded on TA and recommendations made to Deputy Headmaster/Head of Middle School
              - Monitor by BRG / Housemasters at approximately 10 days
                - Housemasters informed
                - Parents contacted
                  - Bullying Stops
                  - Bullying continues

- If not bullying, dealt with according to the behaviour management policy.

**Junior School**

- Incident
  - Reported by staff
  - Self-Report
  - Parent’s Report
    - To Head or Deputy Head of Junior School
      - Reported to Deputy Head Junior School or Chair BRG
        - Interview students involved or witnessing the incident by Deputy Junior School
          - Monitor by Deputy Head
            - Report of incident prepared, recorded on TA and recommendations made to Head of School.
              - Parents contacted
                - Bullying continues
                - Bullying Stops

- Dealt with as repeat incident – as per the processes mentioned in the diagram.
- If incidents continued to be repeated the cycle continues with increased sanctions and involvement of parents and Heads of School. Ultimately this may result in a student’s place at BBC being placed in jeopardy.
9. Cyber-bullying
Cyber-bullying, or e-bullying, is bullying which involves the use of information and communication technologies such as email, (mobile) phone and text messages, instant messaging (SMS), chat rooms, applications (e.g. KiK, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Ask.fm) and video internet sites (e.g. YouTube) to support deliberate, repeated and hostile behaviour by an individual or group to hurt others. It may also include defamatory personal Web sites where one person establishes a website which includes unkind comments and photographs about another person. It can be particularly harmful because it can happen anywhere and at any time. Thus young people who are the victims of cyber-bullying have no place where they feel safe.

If the bullying is of a serious and threatening nature then obviously it becomes a legal issue and students and parents should seek advice by reporting the matter to the police.

Cyber-bullying is different from other forms of bullying because:

- it is often difficult for adults, who are not as technologically savvy as their children, to detect;
- it is often outside the reach of schools as it happens on home computers or via mobile phones; and
- hurtful messages can be communicated to a very wide audience, around the world, with remarkable speed.

It is also a particularly cowardly form of bullying because the cyber-bully can effectively hide behind the anonymity of the Internet and is able to reach the victim at home. Thus, the home is no longer a refuge for students bullied at school.

Forms of cyberbullying

- Flaming – heated exchange
- Harassing and threatening messages eg ‘text wars’, ‘griefers’
- Denigration – sending nasty SMS, pictures or prank phone calls ‘Slam books’ (websites or negative lists)
- Impersonation - Using person’s screen name or password eg message to hate group with personal details
- Outing or trickery – sharing private personal information, messages, pictures with others posting ‘set up’ images/video eg ‘happy slapping’
- Ostracism – Intentionally excluding others from an online group eg knocked off buddy lists
- Sexting – sharing explicit material by mobile phone.

10. Cyber Bullying Process

In the event that a person feels that that they have been cyber-bullied they should;

- report the bullying to parents (in the case of students) and to the school via the Bullying Reference Group - brg@bbc.qld.edu.au
- not respond to cyber-bullying messages as this is only likely to encourage the bully. Bullies want them to respond;
- not erase or delete messages from cyber-bullies even if they really don’t want anyone else to see what is written – these messages may reveal clues about who has written them;
- never be ashamed to tell someone if they receive a frightening message. It’s not their fault that there are some very strange people in the world; and
- report that they have received a bullying message to their ISP (Internet Service Provider). If the message is forwarded to the provider, it may be able to trace the sender.
11. Resources

The Australian Government recognises student well-being and safety are essential for academic and social development. All students should be able to learn and develop in safe, supportive and respectful environments. Australian schools, families and communities all have a responsibility to provide safe online environments and teach children how to use technology in positive and productive ways.

The Department of Education works closely with the Department of Communications, which has primary responsibility for Cybersafety matters along with the Australian Communications and Media Authority to ensure evidence-based Cybersafety education is available to all Australian schools for all members of the school community.

The following resources provide information for teachers, parents, students and the broader community about creating safe online and offline environments.

Safe Schools Hub

The Safe Schools Hub – www.safeschoolshub.edu.au is a one-stop shop for information and resources underpinned by the National Safe Schools Framework. The Hub assists school communities to nurture student responsibility and resilience, build a positive school culture, foster respectful relationships and support students who are impacted by anti-social behaviour, including bullying and cyberbullying.

Bullying No Way!

Bullying No Way! – www.bullyingnoway.gov.au is an educational website for Australian school communities and the general public. As well as providing information for individuals, the website provides online curriculum and other resources to support the bullying prevention work of schools. Cybersafety resources and information aimed at children, parents and teachers are provided on the website.

The Alannah and Madeline Foundation

The Alannah and Madeline Foundation is a national charity keeping children safe from violence and its devastating impact. The foundation runs innovative programs and initiatives such as; Children Ahead, Buddy Bags, National Centre Against Bullying, eSmart Schools, eSmart Libraries and eSmart Homes.

Cybersmart Program

The Australian Communications and Media Authority’s Cybersmart Program - www.cybersmart.gov.au is a national Cybersafety and Cybersecurity education program designed to encourage participation in the digital economy by providing information and education which empowers children to be safe online.

The Cybersafety Help Button

The Cybersafety Help Button – www.dbcde.gov.au/helpbutton is a FREE downloadable resource providing a one-stop-shop for Cybersafety information. The Help Button is easy to install and use, and can be downloaded onto computers and mobile devices. Users have the option to TALK to someone about online issues that are of concern, REPORT inappropriate online content or behaviour, and LEARN about good cybersafety practices.

The Easy Guide to Socialising Online

Cybersafety Help-Australian Government Facebook page

The Australian Government’s Cybersafety Help Facebook Page – www.facebook.com/cybersafetyhelp provides a gateway to online resources and discussion about cybersafety issues. Through the page, visitors can be kept up to date on current cybersafety news and find links to educational resources. Further information on other Australian Government cybersafety initiatives is available from the:

- For younger children parents might consider the use of filters, labels and safe zones so they can restrict the sites their child can access or the materials they can receive (see the CyberSmart site at http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/ for advice about filters and other ways to restrict access to dangerous materials).
- For younger and junior secondary school students parents should consider keeping the computer in a public area of the house, such as the family room, so they can see what sites are being accessed and the type of messages their child is receiving.
- For all young people, parents should be advised to talk to their children about the ways they can protect themselves when using information technologies. For example:
  - to be careful who they give their telephone number to or their online handle;
  - never give out or share personal information numbers (PINS);
  - don’t believe everything you read online – just because someone tells you they are fifteen, it doesn’t mean they are telling the truth;
  - never send a message to others when you are angry. Remind them that what they write becomes available in cyberspace and cannot be taken back;
  - never open a message from someone they don’t know;
  - be polite in all online or text message dealings; and
  - never arrange to meet someone they have met online unless they take their parents or (for older children) a trusted friend with them.

12. POLICY RELEASE DETAILS

Date of Policy
February 2016

Approved by Executive

Review Date
Annually, in consultation with students, staff and parents

13. RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS
Child Protection Policy
Allergies Policy
Anti-Harassment Policy
National Safe Schools Document Policy
ISQ Anti-bullying Policies
Cybersafety in Schools
PMSA Staff Modules