



<b>Title:</b>	<b>Anti-Bullying Policy</b>
<b>Summary:</b>	<b>The School's Approach to Bullying</b>
<b>Intended Audience:</b>	<b>Students</b>
<b>Author:</b>	<b>Deputy Principal, Director of Pastoral Care</b>
<b>Updated:</b>	<b>202403</b>
<b>NESA Reference:</b>	<b>Registered and Accredited Non-government Schools (NSW) Manual Reference Number 3.6.2</b>
<b>Distribution:</b>	<b>Complispace, Website</b>

# Anti-Bullying

---

1. **The Armidale School ('the School') believes very strongly that all members of the School community (students, staff, parents) have the right to a safe, supportive and caring environment free from intimidation of any kind.**
2. The number one right of any student at TAS is to feel safe, while the number one responsibility of students is to ensure others feel safe. The students are reminded of this regularly and encouraged to look after each other. They are also closely monitored in their behaviour (including the use of bullying surveys) and encouraged to report anti-social behaviour (through such avenues as the [bullying@as.edu](mailto:bullying@as.edu) forum). Students have open access to the School Counsellor, designated pastoral leaders as well as other less formal channels of support. Where required, the School liaises with other agencies such as the Department of Community and Justice, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), NSW Police, the Armidale Hospital and other government departments.
3. The School community will not tolerate bullying or harassment in any form. Students are encouraged to support other students and to report instances of bullying to the School.
4. Bullying is the deliberate intention to harm someone who does not have the power to stop it.
5. The central features of bullying are that it causes hurt and distress, is repeated, and it involves the use of power in an unfair way.
6. Bullying takes many forms.

It can include but is not limited to:

- Face-to-face, such as provoking fighting, pushing, taunting, insulting, embarrassing, intimidating and invading personal space.
  - Relational bullying where the intent or result is to damage another's reputation and/or impact on their relationships with others.
  - In the form of exclusion or deliberately alienating people, and
  - It can also take the form of more discreet methods such as communicating threatening or offensive messages, sending distressing emails, writing anonymous notes that are hurtful or any behaviour with the intent to cause reputational damage.
7. Cyber bullying needs to be considered separately as a form of bullying because of the pervasive use of technology in society today and for its capacity to cause harm via platforms such as the Internet and other forms of social media. This includes bullying through the use of smart phones, other mobile devices and numerous social media platforms. Any proven form of cyber bullying from one student to another will result in a response from the School in line with our Behaviour Management Policy.
    - i. Modern technologies empower the individual, even the most unlikely of individuals, with an immense capacity to cause hurt. It is also an attractive means of bullying for it can, under certain conditions, be carried out with relative anonymity.
    - ii. Cyber bullying can be particularly damaging because of the capacity it has to humiliate, hurt and harm a person across all forms of social media and engage a much broader

audience than ever before.

- iii. Students need to remember that something sent electronically can never be entirely removed even with a press of the 'delete' button. The image, message, text, email becomes part of their "cyber footprint" and may emerge at any time in the future.

- 8. If you are bullied it is important to talk to someone. If telling the bully of your disapproval is not being effective, then select someone you trust to talk to:

Friend	Brother/sister	Teacher
Parents	Prefect/senior	Chaplain
Advisor	School counsellor	Director of Pastoral Care
External counsellor	Residential Staff	Head of House
Year Level Co-ordinator	Director of Boarding	Deputy Principal

Internally report through [bullying@as.edu.au](mailto:bullying@as.edu.au)  
Kids Helpline – 1800 55 1800  
Lifeline – 13 11 14

- 9. If you observe someone being bullied it is equally important to talk to someone. It is the responsibility of every member of the school community to prevent bullying by actively speaking up and advocating for those who are being targeted.

- 10. Action which may be taken by the school include:

Facilitated discussion regarding appropriate behaviour with alleged perpetrator, making clear how current behaviour is making other(s) feel and outlining expectations moving forward. This can be facilitated by the most appropriate Pastoral Leader at the Director of Pastoral Care's discretion, including but not limited to:

(Advisor, Head of House, Year Level Co-ordinator, Head of Middle/Junior School, Director of Boarding, Director of Pastoral Care– as appropriate)

Facilitated discussion/counselling involving both parties regarding appropriate behaviour with alleged perpetrator, making clear how current behaviour is making the victim feel and outlining expectations moving forward. This can be facilitated by the most appropriate Senior Pastoral Leader at the Director of Pastoral Care's discretion, including but not limited to:

(Head of House, Year Level Co-ordinator, Head of Middle/Junior School, Director of Boarding, Director of Pastoral Care– as appropriate)

If considered significant acute behaviour or ongoing harassment post intervention exists; consequences ranging from an after-school detention to expulsion may be implemented by The School. The Director of Pastoral Care or teaching member of the Executive will ensure procedural fairness through investigations and discussions with students and parents of both parties. This may include support persons such including School or External Counsellors.

At the discretion of the School, if interventions have not worked a significant response from the School will be in line with the Behaviour Management Policy and can include Suspension or Expulsion – As TAS is an independent school, this decision does not preclude the student from applying for a position in any other school.

Note: Parents of both victim and alleged perpetrator will be kept informed throughout the process.

## 11. Strategies to assist students in managing negative behaviour:

The methods used by the School to discourage bullying will vary from time-to-time, with new initiatives being introduced when thought appropriate. Strategies at The Armidale School include but are not limited to:

- Educating Students regarding what constitutes bullying, how to manage it, how to report it and how to support others being bullied,
- Employing a suitable disciplinary action to deal with and discourage bullies. This disciplinary action can include suspension and expulsion. – See above table
- Displaying anti-bullying policies on the School's website.
- Promoting a bully-free environment in assemblies, chapel, advisor periods,
- Promoting a bully-free environment in the staff handbook, in School policy documents
- Promoting a bully-free environment in PDHPE and *The Path I Choose* classes.
- Undertaking confidential Year-level surveys of student well-being and bullying behaviour and following up on identified bullies and victims via Bullying Surveys. Note that these surveys are not anonymous and require student to enter their email so that the Director of Pastoral Care can follow-up on concerns.
- Ensuring effective pastoral support for students through the appointment of Advisors, Year Level Coordinators Heads of Houses and the establishment of the Wellbeing Committee chaired by the Director of Pastoral Care.
- Employing Chaplains and School Counsellors who have specialist skills in helping both victims of bullying and identifying bullies.
- Having a Prefect team of Year 12 students who support the School's anti-bullying policy and who students feel free to inform about any bullying.
- Providing members of the Student Representative Council opportunity to report any bullying behaviour in regular meetings.
- Encouraging staff to adopt classroom management techniques that discourage opportunities for bullying behaviours and foster a learning environment for all students in their care.
- Ensuring an effective monitoring system of student interactions on School's Learning Management System.
- Employing staff who model tolerance, empathy and acceptance of individual differences.
- Reviewing the School's anti-bullying policy as required, to ensure that it remains effective and relevant.

The effectiveness of these strategies rests with all members of the School's community.

## **Guidelines for a response to a claim of bullying**

- Clear understanding of what is “bullying” as outlined.
- Responsibilities of the first person approached. i.e. report to Advisor, Year Level Co-Ordinator, Head of House, Head of Middle or Junior School, and Director of Pastoral Care.
- The Student (victim) will be interviewed by a staff member at the discretion of the Director of Pastoral Care. Depending on the severity of the concern, this will be conducted by the Advisor, Year Level Coordinator, Classroom teacher (JS), Head of House, Head of Middle or Junior School or Director of Pastoral Care. Statements will be taken in the investigation of the matter.
- Student (alleged bully) will be interviewed by a staff member at the discretion of the Director of Pastoral Care. Depending on the severity of accusation, this will be conducted by the Advisor, Year Level Coordinator, Classroom teacher (JS), Head of House, Head of Middle or Junior School or Director of Pastoral Care. Statements will be taken and used in the investigation of the matter.
- Students interviewed will be invited to bring a support person to any meeting held.
- Parents of both students will be informed by a relevant pastoral leader throughout process.
- Matter will be managed by the Director of Pastoral Care or a teaching member of the School Executive.
- If applicable, clear expectations and/or disciplinary action will follow according to consultation with person bullied, Senior Staff, and the School’s Disciplinary and Behavior Management Policies.
- Bullying survey may be conducted across a particular year group if warranted.