

# Policy - Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy and Procedures

At The McDonald College our mission is to nurture individual journeys in a creative and inclusive learning community that values intellectual inquiry and ethical decision-making.

This is reflected in our Wellbeing Statement -Balancing social, physical, cognitive and mental health in an inclusive and caring community.

We are committed to meeting our Student Duty of Care obligations.

## Purpose and Objectives

This Policy describes The McDonald College's strategies to prevent students from bullying other students, and how incidents of bullying are to be managed.

## Scope

This Policy applies to all College activities, including camps and excursions.

It also applies outside of school hours and off College premises where students have been involved and there is a clear and close connection to the College.

## Responsibilities

All staff are responsible for:

- modelling appropriate behaviour at all times
- dealing with all reported and observed incidents of bullying in accordance with this Policy
- ensuring that any incident of bullying that they observe or is reported to them, is recorded appropriately
- being vigilant in monitoring students that have been identified as either students who persistently bully or are persistently bullied
- considering whether any behaviour gives rise to concerns that the student exhibiting the behaviour and/or the student subject to the behaviour may be experiencing child abuse or other harm, and, if so, follows the College's procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns
- acknowledging the right of parents/carers to speak with the College if they believe their child is being bullied.

## Policy

The McDonald College is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people, to acting in students' best interests and to keeping them safe from harm.

The McDonald College recognises its duty to students to provide a safe and positive learning environment where individual differences and diversity within the College are respected and accepted.

Bullying is not tolerated at The McDonald College.

It is our policy that:

- bullying be managed through a "whole-of-the College community" approach involving students, staff and parents/guardians
- bullying prevention strategies are implemented within the College on a continuous basis with a focus on teaching age-appropriate skills and strategies to empower staff, students and parents/guardians to recognise bullying and respond appropriately
- bullying response strategies are tailored to the circumstances of each incident
- we establish procedures for reporting and responding to child safety concerns, including when the behaviour may be an indicator of child abuse and other harm
- staff establish positive role models emphasising our no-bullying culture
- bullying prevention and intervention strategies are reviewed on an annual basis against best practice.

## Procedures

### Bullying Prevention Strategies

The McDonald College recognises that the implementation of whole-the College prevention strategies is the most effective way of eliminating, or at least minimising incidents of bullying within our community.

The following initiatives form part of our overall bullying prevention strategy and our strategy to create a "no-bullying" culture within the College:

- A structured curriculum and peer group support system, that provides age-appropriate information and social and emotional competencies relating to bullying (including cyberbullying) and bullying prevention, to students over the course of the academic year.
- Education, training and professional development of staff in bullying prevention and response strategies.
- Appropriate sharing among staff of information about cyberbullying incidents.
- Regular provision of information to parents/guardians, to raise awareness of bullying as a College community issue to equip them to recognise signs of bullying, as well as to provide them with clear paths for raising any concerns they may have relating to bullying directly with the College.
- Promotion of a supportive environment that encourages the development of positive relationships and communication between staff, students and parents/guardians.

- Promotion of responsible bystander behaviour amongst students, staff and parents/guardians.
- Reporting of incidents of alleged bullying by students, bystanders, parents/guardians and staff are encouraged, and made easy through the establishment of multiple reporting channels (as specified below).
- Students are supported by their teachers, pastoral care staff and the College leadership when they report a bullying incident and during the processes that follow the submission of the report.
- Regular risk assessments of bullying within the College are undertaken by surveying students to identify bullying issues that may ordinarily go unnoticed by staff.
- Records of reported bullying incidents are maintained and analysed, in order to identify persistent bullies and/or victims and to implement targeted prevention strategies where appropriate.
- Statements supporting bullying prevention are included in students' the College diaries.
- Education of staff, students and parents/guardians on health conditions to promote understanding and to reduce stigma and fear.
- Anti-bullying posters are displayed strategically within the College.
- Promotion of student awareness and a "no-bullying" environment by participating in events such as the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence.

## Reporting Bullying

Students and their parents/guardians are sometimes reluctant to pursue bullying incidents, for fear that it will only make matters worse.

A key part of the College's bullying prevention and intervention strategy is to encourage reporting of bullying incidents as well as providing assurance to students who experience bullying (and parents/guardians) that:

- bullying is not tolerated within the College
- their concerns will be taken seriously
- the College has a clear strategy for dealing with bullying issues.

## Reporting Bullying Incidents to the College

Bullying incidents can be advised to the College verbally (or in writing) through any of the following avenues:

Parents and students are encouraged to report cases of bullying, depending on severity, firstly to their Year Co-ordinator, then to the Deputy Principal or Director of Junior School, Director of Performing Arts (if applicable) or the Principal. Details of how to access external help services is available on the College Website. <https://www.mcdonald.nsw.edu.au/apply/wellbeing/helplines/>

## Complaints to the eSafety Commissioner About Cyberbullying Material Targeted at a Child

### Making a Complaint

Where **Cyberbullying Material** is targeted at a child under the age of 18 years, a complaint can be made to:

- the provider of a social media service, relevant electronic service, designated internet service (as defined in the Online Safety Act 2021 (Cth)) – see The eSafety Guide for information about providers
- the eSafety Commissioner under section 30 of the Online Safety Act 2021 (Cth).

Complaints to the eSafety Commissioner can be made through the online portal by the child, their parent or guardian, or an adult authorised by the child to make the complaint. The eSafety Commissioner has the power to investigate the complaint and to issue a removal notice.

For the eSafety Commissioner to investigate cyberbullying, the harmful content must have first been reported to the service or platform used to send, post or share it – at least 48 hours before it is reported to eSafety.

### Responding to Bullying

Bullying behaviours vary enormously in their extent and intent and, as a consequence, each incident needs to be dealt with on its facts.

In all circumstances the College:

- takes bullying incidents seriously
- takes seriously, and monitors single incidents of conflict or fights between students, that do not ordinarily amount to bullying, for signs of ongoing behaviour that may be an indicator of bullying
- provides assurance to the victim that they are not at fault and their confidentiality will be respected
- ensures that teachers, pastoral care and The McDonald College leadership staff support the student being bullied through the reporting process and the corresponding investigation and resolution processes
- involves the College Chaplain/Counsellor who has specialist skills in helping both students who have been bullied and students who are bullying others
- engages a Student Council, or similar, to instigate anti-bullying initiatives
- ensures that student leaders support the College's anti-bullying policy and promote anti-bullying behaviours
- takes time to properly investigate the facts including discussing the incident with the victim, the bully and any bystanders
- keeps parents and guardians of both the student who was bullied and the student who did the bullying, informed of the situation as and when appropriate to do so
- takes time to understand any concerns of individuals involved
- maintains records of reported bullying incidents

- will escalate its response when dealing with persistent bullies and/or severe incidents, even if these are not necessarily repetitive
- considers whether the behaviour gives rise to concerns that the student exhibiting the behaviour and/or the student subject to the behaviour may be experiencing child abuse or other harm, and, if so, follows the College's Child Safe Program.

Actions that may be taken when responding to bullying include:

- The "Method of Shared Concern" Approach (Pikas)
- The "No Blame" Approach (Maines and Robinson)

*These approaches may be used to intervene in group or relational bullying situations. They are only appropriate during the initial stages. They are not appropriate for persistent or severe bullying incidents.*

- notification of/consultation with parents/guardians
- offering counselling to persistent bullies/victims
- implementing effective follow up strategies
- disciplinary action, at the Principal's discretion, including suspension and expulsion of persistent bullies, or in cases of severe incidents.

## Bullying Support Services

### School Liaison Police

School Liaison Police are NSW Police officers who work with schools to reduce crime, violence and anti-social behaviour. Our students are encouraged to contact the School Liaison Officer if they have any concerns.

Our School Liaison Police Officer/s are The Principal and can be contacted on [principal@mcdonald.nsw.edu.au](mailto:principal@mcdonald.nsw.edu.au).

The College also provides access to the following support services:

Members of the Wellbeing team are available to provide support:

Class Teacher  
Year Co-ordinator (Secondary)  
Director of Junior School (Junior School)  
Head of Wellbeing  
Mentor (Years 11 and 12)  
College Psychologist  
Deputy Principal  
Principal



## Signage

Anti-bullying posters may be posted in strategic locations in the College to promote appropriate behaviour and encourage students to respect individual differences and diversity.