



# RAVENSWOOD SCHOOL FOR GIRLS POLICY

Policy Subject:      Bullying Prevention and Intervention

<b>Contact Officer</b>	Deputy Principal
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<b>Purpose</b>	<p>The purpose of this Policy is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote a positive culture where bullying is unacceptable</li> <li>Ensure we have a community where right of respect from others, the right to learn or teach, and a right to feel safe and secure in the school environment is a given.</li> </ul>
<b>Overview</b>	Ravenswood takes all incidences of bullying very seriously and considers all forms of bullying behaviour to be unacceptable.
<b>Scope</b>	This policy applies to staff responsible for students at Ravenswood. This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Student Code of Conduct.
<b>The Policy</b>	<p><b>Policy Statement</b></p> <p>Ravenswood School for Girls recognises its duty to students to provide a safe and positive learning environment where individual differences and diversity within the School is respected and accepted. Bullying is not tolerated at Ravenswood.</p> <p>It is our policy that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>bullying prevention strategies are implemented within the School 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.</li> <li>bullying response strategies are tailored to the circumstances of each incident.</li> <li>staff establish positive role models emphasising our no-bullying culture.</li> <li>bullying prevention and intervention strategies are reviewed on an annual basis against best practice.</li> </ul> <p>Our aim is to promote tolerance and positive behaviour in our school community by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reinforcing within the school community that no form of bullying is acceptable.</li> <li>Encouraging the school community to be alert to signs and evidence of bullying and to have a responsibility to report it to staff whether as observer or victim.</li> <li>Ensuring that all reported incidents of bullying are investigated,</li> </ul>



## RAVENSWOOD SCHOOL FOR GIRLS POLICY

Policy Subject: Bullying Prevention and Intervention

followed up and that support is provided to the victim, perpetrator and all other individuals involved.

- Seeking parental and peer group support and cooperation at all times.
- Ensuring negative behaviour not deemed to be bullying is addressed under the Student Code of Conduct.

### Definition

Bullying is the repeated and intentional behaviour of causing fear, distress or harm towards another person that involves an imbalance of power. It can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and harassment. In any bullying incident there are likely to be three parties involved: the bully or perpetrator, the person being bullied (victim), and bystanders.

Bullying can take many forms including:

- Physical bullying which involves physical actions such as hitting, pushing, obstructing or being used to hurt or intimidate someone. Damaging, stealing or hiding personal belongings is also a form of physical bullying.
- Psychological bullying which is when words or actions are used to cause psychological harm. Examples of psychological bullying include name calling, teasing or making fun of someone because of their actions, appearance, physical characteristics or cultural background.
- Indirect bullying which is when deliberate acts of exclusion or encouraging others to exclude or spreading of untrue stories are used to hurt or intimidate another person.
- Cyber bullying which is the ongoing abuse of power to threaten or harm another person using technology. Cyber bullying can occur in chat rooms, on social networking sites, through emails or on mobile phones and/or electronic devices.

Cyber bullying includes but is not limited to:

- *Flaming*: online fights using electronic messages with angry or vulgar messages
- *Harassment*: Repeatedly sending nasty, mean and insulting messages
- *Denigration*: Posting or sending gossip / photos/ video or rumours about a person to damage his/her reputation or social relationships
- *Outing*: Sharing someone's secrets or embarrassing information or images / video online
- *Exclusion*: Intentionally and cruelly excluding someone from an



## RAVENSWOOD SCHOOL FOR GIRLS POLICY

Policy Subject: Bullying Prevention and Intervention

online group

- *Cyber stalking*: Repeated, intense harassment and denigration that includes threats or creates significant fear.

### What bullying is not

There are many negative situations which, whilst being potentially distressing for students, are not bullying. These include:

- *Mutual Conflict Situations* which arise where there is disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Mutual conflict situations need to be closely monitored as they may evolve into a bullying situation.
- *One-Off Acts (of aggression or meanness)* including single incidents of loss of temper, shouting or swearing do not normally constitute bullying.

### Signs of Bullying

Major behavioural changes in a student may be indicative of bullying. Such behavioural changes may include:

- crying at night and having nightmares
- refusing to talk when asked "What's wrong?"
- having unexplained bruises, cuts or scratches
- an unwillingness or refusal to go to school
- feeling ill in the mornings
- a decline in quality of school work
- becoming withdrawn and lacking confidence
- beginning to bully siblings
- acting unreasonably.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to recognise signs of bullying and notify the School through a trusted staff member immediately (such as a class/subject teacher or School Psychologist), if they suspect their child is a victim of bullying.

### Ravenswood Bullying Prevention strategies

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

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

- a tailored curriculum that provides age-appropriate information and skills relating to bullying (including cyber bullying) and



## RAVENSWOOD SCHOOL FOR GIRLS POLICY

Policy Subject: Bullying Prevention and Intervention

bullying prevention, to students over the course of the academic year. Our emphasis is on preventative and early intervention wellbeing programs that focus on the development of emotional literacy and skills to support and promote resilience and instil protective factors

- education, training and professional development of staff in bullying prevention and response strategies
- provision of information to parents/carers, to raise awareness of the signs of bullying and to equip them to recognise such signs, as well as to provide them with clear paths for raising any concerns they may have relating to bullying directly with the School
- promotion of a supportive environment that encourages the development of positive relationships and open communication between staff, students and parents/carers
- promotion of responsible bystander behaviour amongst students, staff and parents/carers
- reporting of incidents of alleged bullying by students, bystanders, parents/carers and staff are encouraged, and made easy through the establishment of multiple reporting channels
- regular risk assessments of bullying within the School are undertaken 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
- at the commencement of the school year each classroom teacher (K-6) or Mentor (7-12) should clarify with their students, the School Policy on Bullying Prevention and Intervention and the Student Code of Conduct located in the School Diary
- promotion of student awareness and a 'no-bullying' environment by participating in events such as the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence.
- the Student Code of Conduct and the Bullying prevention and Intervention Policy and Procedures can be viewed at any time on the school Portal.

### Reporting Bullying

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

A key part of the School's bullying prevention and intervention strategy is to encourage reporting of bullying incidents as well as providing



## RAVENSWOOD SCHOOL FOR GIRLS POLICY

Policy Subject: Bullying Prevention and Intervention

assurance to students who experience bullying (and parents/carers) that:

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

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

- informing a trusted teacher
- informing the School Psychologist
- informing a student's Class Teacher (K-6) or Year Coordinator (7-12)
- informing the Head of Junior School (K-6) or Head of Senior School (7-12)
- informing the Deputy Principal or the Principal.

### **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 School:

- takes bullying incidents seriously
- provides assurance to the victim that they are not at fault and their confidentiality will be respected
- takes time to properly investigate the facts including discussing the incident with the victim, the bully (perpetrator) and any bystanders
- 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.

The following 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/carers
- 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



## RAVENSWOOD SCHOOL FOR GIRLS POLICY

Policy Subject: Bullying Prevention and Intervention

severe incidents.

### Staff Responsibilities

All staff are responsible to:

- model appropriate, respectful and supportive behaviour at all times
- deal with all reported and observed incidents of bullying and ensure that the appropriate reporting channels are followed in accordance with this policy
- ensure that any incident of bullying that they observe or is reported to them, is recorded appropriately
- be vigilant in monitoring students that have been identified as either persistent bullies or victims
- acknowledge the right of parents/carers to speak with the School if they believe their child is being bullied.

### Student Responsibilities

- do not engage in behaviour that constitutes bullying or become involved in situations where bullying is occurring
- report incidents via the appropriate channels, either as an observer or a victim
- behave in a way that adheres to and is reflective of the student code of conduct.

### Parental Responsibilities

- take an active interest in their child's school life and become familiar with the signs of bullying to be aware of any problems arising with their child
- encourage their child to report any incident of bullying
- encourage their child to be verbally assertive rather than retaliate with physical action
- communicate via the appropriate reporting channels if they suspect their child is being bullied.

### Bullying and Other Support Services

The following support services are available to students and staff:

#### *Youth Liaison Officers*

Youth Liaison Officers are NSW Police Force members who are responsible for administering the Young Offenders Act 1997 (NSW). They are responsible for delivering cautions, referring children to youth justice conferences, and implementing strategies to reduce crime by juveniles in the community. The Youth Liaison Officer allocated to



## RAVENSWOOD SCHOOL FOR GIRLS POLICY

Policy Subject: Bullying Prevention and Intervention

Ravenswood is located at the Hornsby Police Station. The Youth Liaison Officer can be contacted on (02) 9476 9799.

### *School Liaison Police*

School Liaison Police are NSW Police officers who work with schools to reduce crime, violence and anti-social behaviour. School Liaison Police are a point of contact for the School community and the NSW Police Force. Our students are encouraged to contact the School Liaison police if they have any concerns. The School Liaison Police Officer can be contacted at Hornsby Police Station on (02) 9476 9799.

### *Ravenswood Psychological Services*

Ravenswood also provides access to Psychological Services via referral to our Head of Psychological Services. Referrals can be made by request from students, parents or by referral from a staff member.

### **Implementation**

This policy is implemented through a combination of:

- staff training
- student and parent/carer education and information
- effective incident reporting procedures
- effective management of bullying incidents when reported
- the creation of a 'no-bullying' culture within the School community
- effective record keeping procedures
- initiation of corrective actions where necessary.

<b>Date Approved</b>	17 February 2014
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Principal
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<b>Amendment Dates</b>	December 2014, May 2015; November 2015; March 2016; May 2018; 26 March 2019
<b>Date for Next Review</b>	15 March 2020