



Student Anti-Bullying Policy

Purpose:	The purpose of this policy is to protect students from bullying and to respond appropriately when bullying does occur	
Scope:	<p>Students, parents and employees, including full-time, part-time, permanent, fixed-term and casual employees, as well as contractors, volunteers and people undertaking work experience or vocational placements. The application of this policy is not limited to the school site and operating hours and extends to all activities and events that are school related including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> On School grounds. At any in School related activities or representing the school (including for example camps, events, excursions, incursions, retreats, sport, awards nights). Representing the School, including when off campus, or in a digital environment. Travelling to and from School, as well as to and from off-site activities. Under the school's legal duty of care. Otherwise engaging in behaviour which in the reasonable opinion of the school may affect student health and safety, student relationships, staff health and safety, staff-student relationships, or the reputation of the school. 	
Status:	Approved	Supersedes: Feb 2025
Authorised by:	School Director	Date of Authorisation: Jan 2026
References:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u><i>Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulations 2001 (Qld)</i></u> • <u><i>Australian Education Act 2013 (Cth)</i></u> • <u><i>Australian Education Regulations 2013 (Cth)</i></u> • Student Code of Conduct and Guidelines • Child Protection Policy • Child Risk Management Framework • Disability Discrimination Policy • Complaints Resolution Policy • Complaints Resolution System • Workplace Bullying Policy 	
Review Date:	Every 2 years	Next Review Date: January 2028
Policy Owner:	School Director	

Policy Statement

Samford Valley Steiner School is committed to providing a positive, respectful and safe learning environment that is inclusive and supportive for all students. All members of our school community have the right to be in an environment free from fear, intimidation, humiliation and harassment.

Bullying, in any of its forms, will not be tolerated at the school and will be treated seriously. Samford Steiner is committed to taking action to protect students from bullying and to respond appropriately when bullying does occur.

Peer to peer dynamics can be complex for students to navigate and challenging for schools to manage. Knowing exactly what bullying is, and understanding why it occurs, is critical to finding positive and lasting solutions for everyone involved. Students can play various roles within a bullying dynamic, and even those not directly involved can play a vital role as upstanders.

Bullying in any form or for any reason can have long-term negative impacts. Intervening appropriately to respond to or prevent bullying is essential. Dealing with bullying involves tapping into our students' motivations and understandings of social situations. The reasons for bullying will be found below the surface by investigating issues of power, norms and social status, tolerance and diversity. Exploring these areas and how they influence students' interactions and behaviour can provide essential insights into the most appropriate responses.

Definitions

Bullying is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening.

Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records).

Bullying of any form or for any reason can have immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.

Bullying can happen in different ways including:

- (a) **Verbal** bullying, which includes name calling, teasing, abuse, putdowns (particularly those which refer to personal characteristics and impact on self-esteem), sarcasm, insults, threats of unfair criticism, suggestive comments, rumour spreading.
- (b) **Non-verbal** bullying, which includes writing offensive notes, graffiti about others, rude gestures, damaging other people's possessions.

- (c) **Physical** bullying, which includes physical actions such as hitting, pushing, obstructing, rubbing, grabbing, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting, taking/damaging property, using a weapon and any other unwelcome physical contact used to intimidate or hurt someone.
- (d) **Social** bullying, which includes ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating including forming groups to leave out, ignoring and disrespect, making inappropriate gestures, looks, stares, facial expressions.
- (e) **Racial** bullying, which includes treating someone inappropriately because of their race, including by using racial slurs, making inappropriate comments in respect of a person's race, or excluding a person because of their race.
- (f) **Ableism**, which includes treating someone differently or unfairly because of a disability or additional needs, including by using inappropriate slurs, seeking to trigger a person in respect of their disability, or excluding a person because of their disability.
- (g) **Sexual** bullying, which includes any unwelcome written, verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature (including those actions which are perceived to be sexual in nature), sexually orientated jokes, drawings of or writing about another person's body, unwanted invitations of a sexual nature, showing explicit images without permission and asking questions about another person's sexual activity or orientation.
- (h) **Psychological** bullying, which includes when words or actions are used to cause psychological harm. Examples of psychological bullying include name calling, teasing, hiding or damaging possessions or making fun of someone because of their actions, appearance, physical characteristics or cultural background. Malicious SMS and email messages, voice and text messages, and inappropriate use of camera phones, photographic and video images is also a form of psychological bullying.
- (i) **Indirect** bullying, which includes when deliberate acts of exclusion or spreading of untrue stories are used to hurt or intimidate someone. Indirect bullying also includes influencing or organising someone else to bully or harass another person to hurt or intimidate someone.
- (j) **Cyberbullying**, which includes the ongoing abuse of power to threaten or harm another person using technology, this can occur in chat rooms, on social networking sites, through emails, text messaging, the internet or other online forums. Further detail on cyberbullying is set out later in this policy.
- (k) **Harassment**, which includes unwelcome or unreciprocated behaviour that makes a person feel offended, humiliated, belittled, degraded, devalued, or intimidated. Harassment may be a single incident or a series of incidents and may also include behaviour which is discriminatory on the basis of a personal characteristic such as race, age, gender, disability, religion, or sexuality.

Cyberbullying

Cyber-bullying is direct verbal or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technologies. This includes harassment via a mobile phone, setting up a defamatory personal website or deliberately excluding someone from social networking.

Cyber bullying can be particularly damaging because of the capacity to humiliate, hurt and harm a person in front of a huge 'audience'.

A dangerous feature of cyber bullying is that it can be done quickly and easily. On an impulse, a person can create emotional havoc for another and do so before the voice of reason hints at the inappropriateness of the action. A further problem with cyber bullying is that the person bullying is often unaware of the extent of the harm they are causing because cyber bullying seldom occurs face-to-face.

The feedback is muted by distance so that they are protected from an understanding of the awfulness of their behaviour. Cyber bullying represents unlawful activity that may result in police laying charges. Cyber bullying has been linked to depression, self-harm and even suicide.

Further examples of cyberbullying include:

- (a) Sending hateful or threatening comments or pictures via an instant messaging service, mobile phone or the internet and by social networking sites such as X (formerly known as Twitter), Tumblr, Snapchat, Be Real, Instagram, TikTok and Facebook.
- (b) Sending messages containing emojis intended to be hateful, threatening or otherwise harmful.
- (c) Using modern technologies to engage in the social exclusion of someone and in hate group recruitment, including through comment sections or within private group chats.
- (d) Posting rude, explicit or embarrassing messages, comments or pictures about someone online.
- (e) Stealing someone's identity or otherwise impersonating a person to harm them in some way.
- (f) Putting pressure on a person to send revealing or compromising pictures of themselves.
- (g) Covertly filming, recording or taking a picture of someone and posting the images on the Internet to cause hurt.
- (h) Disseminating confidential information about someone.
- (i) 'Flaming' and multi-messaging to clog up a person's electronic system and to cause them distress.

- (j) Using aliases and pseudonyms in chat rooms and on social networking sites to harass and upset.
- (k) Engaging in cyber-stalking and the invading of privacy.
- (l) Referring to the school in a negative or disparaging manner.

What is Not Bullying?

Many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying, even though they are unpleasant and often require staff intervention and management.

Behaviours that do not constitute bullying include:

- (a) **Single incidents** - Single episodes of nastiness, intimidation, violence or acts of physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If a student is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied. Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different students is not the same as bullying.

That said, single incidents can still constitute a breach of the School's standards and expectations and warrant disciplinary outcomes.

- (b) **Mutual conflict** - Bullying behaviour is not disagreements between equals, situations of mutual conflict or children not getting along well. In mutual conflict situations, there is an argument or disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the problem. However, unresolved mutual conflict sometimes develops into a bullying situation with one person becoming targeted repeatedly for 'retaliation' in a one-sided way.
- (c) **Social rejection or dislike** - Not liking a person or a one-off act of social rejection, meanness or spite is not bullying. 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.

Signs of Bullying

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

- (a) becoming aggressive and unreasonable;
- (b) startling physical or verbal altercations;
- (c) refusing to talk about what is wrong;
- (d) crying and night and having nightmares;
- (e) feeling ill in the mornings;

- (f) unwillingness or refusal to go to school;
- (g) unexplained bruises, cuts or scratches;
- (h) a drop in academic performance;
- (i) becoming withdrawn and lacking confidence;
- (j) beginning to bully sibling and others.

Less obvious signs could include a student that:

- (a) is often alone or excluded from friendship groups at school;
- (b) is a frequent target for teasing, mimicking or ridicule at school;
- (c) changes their willingness to speak up in class;
- (d) withdraws from friends and activities they previously enjoyed; or
- (e) appears insecure or frightened in the classroom.

Parents/carers are encouraged to recognise signs of bullying and notify the School through the classroom teacher immediately, if they suspect their child is a victim of bullying.

Responsibilities

School Responsibilities

Samford Steiner acknowledges its responsibility to:

- Raise awareness of bullying and how the school will respond to it
- Take action to help prevent bullying
- Implement a reporting mechanism for students and parents
- Educate students and parents on how to respond to bullying and how to report it
- Educate employees on how to appropriately respond to bullying
- Investigate and act upon all reports of bullying, including providing appropriate support and consequences

Employee Responsibilities

At SVSS employees have a responsibility to:

- Uphold and consistently apply this Policy
- Respond appropriately to reports of bullying, including by investigating and acting upon reports of bullying, and by providing appropriate support and consequences in accordance with the Samford Steiner Social Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Where bullying is observed, intervene immediately to stop the bullying.
- Offer both students immediate support and inform the relevant Class Teachers.
- Educate all students in an age-appropriate way (e.g. therapeutic stories for younger children through to more direct conversation, drama, role-play for older students), of their responsibilities as bystanders to a bullying incident.
- Ensure they do not model bullying behaviour in interactions they have with students.

Parent Responsibilities

At Samford Steiner parents have a responsibility to:

- Encourage their child to be socially inclusive and not to bully others.
- Encourage their child to report bullying to themselves or others.
- Encourage their child to take steps to stop bullying as directed under this Policy and the Social Health and Wellbeing Policy.
- Speak to the Faculty Director, Class Teacher or Guardian if they think their child is being bullied and/or advise their child to tell a trusted teacher.
- Take an active interest in their child's social life.
- Watch for signs of distress in their child and discuss this with the Class Teacher or Guardian.
- Ensure they do not model bullying behaviour in interactions they have with others
- Not contact other parents regarding the issue or approach the student/s involved.

Student Responsibilities

At Samford Steiner students have a responsibility to:

- Uphold the school rules and not engage in bullying behaviour towards others
- Report bullying occurring to them or others to a trusted senior student, teacher or guardian, or other staff member.

- Take steps to stop bullying as directed under this policy and the Social Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Actively support students they know are being bullied.
- Refuse to become involved in bullying of any form

Implementation, Compliance and Monitoring

Any incidents of an unhealthy relational nature will be dealt with on the spot by staff to defuse the immediate conflict. These incidents may or may not be defined as bullying behaviour.

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 incidents/problem to a staff member or senior student who notifies the relevant Class Teachers or Guardians of both parties. The Class Teachers or Guardians will notify the Faculty Director that a report of suspected bullying has been made.
2. **Initial interview:** The Class Teacher or Guardian interviews the parties separately, when developmentally appropriate, and records the details of the incident/s in writing. They will ask:

What words have been said or written?

Has anyone been physically hurt and how?

Who is usually around?

Who else has the student told about this?

Is any evidence of what has happened? This typically relates to screenshots etc. in instances of cyberbullying.

3. The teacher discusses the information collected with the Faculty Director and it is determined whether the suspected bullying is a genuine case of bullying or another form of relational behaviour. If it is determined that bullying is occurring the following initial strategies will be enacted.
 - a. Both parties will be made aware that the relational difficulties have been identified as bullying and parents will be informed.
 - b. The Class Teacher or Guardian will work with the students to devise strategies for conflict resolution.
4. **Restorative Practice:** Samford Steiner is committed to Restorative Practice which will be implemented where age appropriate. The Class Teachers or Guardians will attempt to reach a position where both parties are satisfied with the outcome, i.e. the student who has experienced the bullying behaviour feels secure and the student engaging in the behaviour is prepared to cease all bullying behaviour.

A Restorative Agreement may be developed and signed (where deemed appropriate). The student who has experienced the bullying behaviour understands that any further bullying must be reported immediately. The

student who has engaged in bullying behaviour will understand that any further acts of bullying will receive consequences in accordance with the Social Health and Wellbeing Policy. A teacher may at any time may request the support of the Wellbeing Officer, trained Samford Steiner Restorative Practitioner or Faculty Director to help conduct these conversations. Parents may be called in at any time that it is thought appropriate or necessary. At the discretion of the School Director, external agencies may be brought in to support serious incidences.

The strategy at this stage, is not to apportion blame, or to punish; but to support both/all students and make the perpetrator aware of the behaviour and the impact it is having upon the other student, parents, the teacher and the whole class.

All actions are to be recorded in the students' files on Staff Kiosk and parents are to be kept informed of the process.

Follow-up process

The Class Teacher or Guardian will closely monitor the situation and, in consultation with the Faculty Director, put into place strategies that will support resolution of difficulties. These may include:

- a. Imposing individual boundaries around play areas and eating areas
- b. Facilitating ongoing supported conversations with both parties or restorative class circles
- c. Advising all playground supervisors and specialist staff about the issues
- d. Other strategies that may be deemed to be supportive.

The Class Teacher or Guardian will “check in” daily with both/all students and will make written notes on these conversations as appropriate.

In the case of successful resolution:

1. The Class Teacher or Guardian will acknowledge the efforts of both parties in resolving the problem.
2. The Class Teacher or Guardian will continue weekly monitoring for a minimum of one Term.

If the problem is not resolved and bullying continues:

1. The Faculty Director will interview both the students individually
2. The Faculty Director will inform the student engaged in the ongoing bullying of the consequences that may follow from a repeat of the specific behaviours that have been identified as bullying. A letter will be sent to their parents outlining the same. These sanctions may include but are not limited to:
 - a. Official warnings to cease offending and the implementation of an individual behaviour contract
 - b. Detention
 - c. Exclusion from certain areas of the school premises
 - d. Internal Suspension
 - e. Major fixed term suspension
 - f. Seeking help from the Well Being Officer or a qualified external counsellor
 - g. Permanent exclusion

The Faculty Director may determine at any stage that an external mediator or

counsellor may be required to support either student.

An important consideration for schools, teachers, parents and students is that overcoming bullying is neither simple nor quick. Teachers need to be alert to the social health of the students, students need to be made aware of their responsibilities not to bully and not to condone bullying by being silent bystanders. All staff should work within the guidelines of this policy and the Social Health and Wellbeing Policy.

Student feeling bullied by a teacher

During their schooling, students may feel they are being 'picked on' or that a particular teacher is 'pushing them' in their work. There are many factors to be considered here, such as testing boundaries and teachers holding appropriate expectations of students in order to assist them to reach their potential.

It is important that the definition of bullying is to be applied. As examples, the following do NOT constitute bullying:

- Receiving poor grades for incomplete work
- Being repeatedly asked to comply with the school dress code
- Being repeatedly asked to hand in an assignment or other work by a due date
- Being expected to undertake the work as outlined in the curriculum which applies to the whole class.

Process

If a student feels bullied by a teacher, then they may report it to their parent, another teacher, the Faculty Director or to the Well Being Officer, or to another trusted adult who should take the concern to the relevant Faculty Director.

The Faculty Director will investigate the concerns using procedural fairness and decide appropriate steps to find a resolution. If it is deemed a teacher has acted inappropriately then further steps will be taken in accordance with the Employee Code of Conduct.

Resources

<https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/resources>

<https://thebullyproject.com.au/learn/resources/>

<https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/bullying>