



TAS
THE ARMIDALE
SCHOOL

Title:	Anti-Bullying Policy
Summary:	Policy for anti-bullying regarding students
Intended Audience:	Students
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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 forum). Students have open access to the School Counsellor as well as other less formal channels of support. The School Liaison Police Officer in recent years has been Ron Halliday (hall1ron@police.nsw.gov.au) and he has visited the School as part of the Year 10 STEPS Program to conduct sessions on adolescents and law. Where required, the School liaises with other agencies such as the Department of Family and Community Services (FACS), Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and the Armidale Hospital.
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 understanding that no action will be taken without the victims consent.
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 - involves the use of power in an unfair way.
6. Bullying takes many forms. It can be: Face-to-face such as provoking fighting, pushing, taunting, insulting, embarrassing, intimidating and invading personal space. It can also take the form of more discreet methods such as writing threatening or offensive messages, sending distressing emails and writing anonymous notes that are hurtful.
7. Cyber bullying needs to be considered separately as a form of bullying because of the pervasive use of technology and society today and for its capacity to cause harm via platforms such as the Internet and forms of social media, and through the use of smart phones and other mobile devices.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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.

11. 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	Deputy Head of House
External counsellor	Residential Staff	Head of House
Girls' Education Director	Director of Boarding	

12. 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.

13. Action which may be taken by the school (At all times the victim will receive the support of the staff):

Action that may be taken
Discussion on appropriate behaviour (Head of House/Girls Education Director/ Director of Boarding/Advisor – as appropriate)
Discussion/counselling involving both parties and Head of House/Director of Pastoral Care// Director of Girls' Education/ Director of Boarding/Advisor/teacher – as appropriate
Discussion/counselling involving both parties and head of House/Girls Education Director/ Director of Boarding/director of pastoral care/Advisor/teacher – as appropriate School or External counsellor and parents and DHM/Head of Middle/Junior School Restorative Justice Session
Discussion/counselling involving both parties and Head of House/ Girls' Education Director/ Director of boarding/ Director of pastoral Care/Advisor/teacher - as appropriate School or External counsellor and parents and DHM/Head of Middle/Junior School Suspension Restorative Justice Session
Discussion/counselling involving both parties and Head of House/ Girls' Education Director/ Director of Boarding/ Director of Pastoral Care/Advisor/teacher School or External counsellor and parents and DHM/Head of

Middle/Junior School

Suspension

Restorative Justice Session

Expulsion – As TAS is an independent school, this decision does not preclude the student from applying for a position in any other school.

14. Strategies to help students avoid being bullied:

- i. Ignore – by walking away and joining friends for support
- ii. Avoid – places or situations where you might be harassed.
- iii. Reaction – do not over react as a bully is often looking for a reaction.
- iv. Confidence – try to appear to be confident and show that you are not bothered. Remember that the ones who pick on others often have a problem themselves.

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:

- Employing a suitable range of sanctions to deal with and discourage bullies. These sanctions include suspension and expulsion. – See above table
- Educating Students regarding what constitutes bullying and how to manage it, and how to support others being bullied,
- Printing anti-bullying policies in student diaries and 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 classes.
- Undertaking confidential Year-level surveys of student well-being and bullying behaviour and following up on identified bullies and victims via Bullying Survey specifically adapted to the school by Professor Ken Rigby
- Ensuring effective pastoral support for students through the appointment of Advisors, Heads of Houses and the establishment of the Well Being 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. .
- Encouraging staff to adopt classroom management techniques that discourage opportunities for bullying behaviours and foster a learning environment for all students in their care
- Employing staff who model tolerance, empathy and acceptance of individual differences.
- Encouraging staff to take their supervision duties seriously so that there is a pervasive sense of staff presence when on duty.
- Reviewing the School's anti-bullying policy as required, in order 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 Head of House and Director of Pastoral Care
- Student (victim) interviewed by Director of Pastoral Care with Advisor
- Student (alleged bully) interviewed by Director of Pastoral Care with Advisor
- Statements taken after investigation of the matter
- Parents informed by Director of Pastoral Care
- Disciplinary Committee convened (Staff, students, Advisor to both victim and bully, Heads of House)
- Matter adjudicated
- Sanction and restorative justice process to follow
- Bullying survey may be conducted across a particular year group if warranted.