

## ANTI-BULLYING & HARASSMENT POLICY

This Policy sets out APGS' position on bullying, discrimination and harassment involving students. APGS is committed to providing all students and staff with a learning and working environment which is safe, respectful and supportive and which is free of harassment, bullying and discrimination of any kind. Accordingly, bullying, harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated under any circumstances. This is essential for student wellbeing and engagement in learning.

APGS expects everyone who is part of the School community to honour the School's commitment in this Policy and to work with the School in achieving a safe learning and working environment.

All members of the School community have a responsibility to practise tolerance and promote courteous behaviour and the values of respect, honesty, fairness and compassion.

APGS' staff and students enrolled at the School also have particular responsibilities to recognise and report bullying, harassment and discrimination that targets students, in accordance with this Policy. This Policy applies while staff and students are on School grounds, attending School related activities or events, representing the School (including online), travelling to and from School and while they are wearing the School uniform or logo. This Policy also applies to student behaviour that occurs away from School premises and outside of School hours where, in the Head of School's reasonable opinion, there is a connection between one or more of those involved and the School, such that the behaviour may affect student health and safety, student/staff relationships or APGS' reputation.

It is recognised that parents have a prime responsibility for the behavioural pattern and general attitudinal development of their children. The influence of the school is of major importance when parents and the School work harmoniously together to develop desirable attitudes and tolerance in the children.

### DEFINITIONS

**a) Bullying** means repeated intimidation, over time, of a physical, verbal or psychological nature of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group of persons. Bullying is generally deliberate and planned but may also be a result of thoughtlessness. It can be perpetrated by an individual or by groups and may be direct (such as verbal or physical acts that occur between the people involved) or indirect (whereby harm is caused by actions that involve or influence others). Examples of bullying include:

i. **Physical bullying:** hitting, pushing, pinching or threatening someone physically or hiding, damaging, destroying or stealing work or belongings;

ii. **Verbal bullying:** name calling, putting a person down, teasing or using abusive language;

iii. **Gesture bullying:** pulling faces, making physical gestures or using images to intimidate or cause embarrassment;

iv. **Extortion bullying:** use of force or pressure to obtain money, food or personal belongings from others or harassing other students to do tasks e.g. buying lunch, carrying materials;

v. **Social bullying:** deliberately excluding or isolating a person from the group, stealing friends or ignoring someone.

Conflict or fights between individuals on an equal footing or single incidents are not normally bullying. Not liking a person or a 'one off' act of social rejection, aggression or meanness (particularly where this is not directed at someone specific) is also not bullying.

**b) Cyber bullying** is a form of bullying carried out with the aid of communication technologies such as the internet (e-mails, social media, chat rooms, discussion groups and instant messaging) and mobile phones (texting or Short Message Service (SMS)). Cyber bullying does not necessarily involve a more powerful person (as normally understood)

admin@apgs.nsw.edu.au www.apgs.nsw.edu.au | T. +61 2 9518 5123 F. +61 2 8076 7620

255 Broadway, GLEBE, NSW 2037 | CRICOS Code: 02647M

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bullying a less powerful person as the technology used may reverse the usual pattern. Technology allows the bully (or a group of bullies) to intimidate other students, for example, by:

- i. teasing and making fun of them online, in groups or publicly using social media;
- ii. spreading rumours or excluding someone from online chats or groups;
- iii. insulting and ridiculing them to others online (known as “flaming”);
- iv. taking pictures or videos of someone (including explicit images) and putting them online (or sharing them through social media or by text), without consent (known as “image based abuse” or “revenge porn”);
- v. stealing their identity or tricking them into sharing private information and then sharing it/outing them online;
- vi. sending unwanted or threatening messages or nasty comments;
- vii. using aliases/pretending to be someone else.

Cyber bullying includes what is called “cyber stalking” where the bully harasses or stalks another person by e-mail or some other electronic messaging system, usually very frequently and intrusively, and often involving threats.

**c) Discrimination** refers to any behaviour or practice which reflects an assumption of superiority of one group over another and is behaviour which disadvantages people on the basis of their real or perceived membership of a particular group. Examples include doing any of the following on account of a person’s gender, sexuality, religion, intellectual or physical ability, culture, race or background:

- i. asking discriminatory questions;
- ii. making offensive comments or gestures, telling offensive jokes or showing offensive material;
- iii. calling a person names;
- iv. deliberately excluding a person and influencing others to do so.

It is unlawful to discriminate against a person on the grounds of their race or culture, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status.

**d) Harassment:** includes bullying and sexual harassment and may involve:

- i. physical, verbal or psychological behaviour which makes another person feel embarrassed, offended, upset, devalued, degraded, afraid, frustrated or angry;
- ii. insulting, demeaning, humiliating, offensive, vilifying or intimidatory behaviour or behaviour which incites hatred of others;
- iii. behaviour which is unwelcome, unreciprocated, uninvited and usually repeated.

Harassment may be based on misunderstanding or be a deliberate act based on a subjective perspective.

### **CREATING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT**

a) APGS must seek to develop strategies, including by implementing this Policy, to create a safe learning and working environment and to reduce as much as possible the incidence of harassment, bullying and discrimination within the School. These strategies must be monitored and reviewed regularly.

b) All students and staff are required to become familiar with these strategies. All allegations of harassment, bullying and discrimination must be taken seriously.



c) The Head of School or their delegate must:

- i. promote this Policy within the School; and
- ii. monitor the strategies to counter harassment, bullying and discrimination.

d) Staff must:

- i. work to ensure that curriculum content and teaching practices are consistent with and support this Policy;
- ii. help students to develop competencies to challenge discriminatory attitudes and behaviours in themselves and others;
- iii. model and promote appropriate behaviour; and
- iv. ensure that claims of harassment, bullying and discrimination are speedily and constructively addressed according to this Policy and the strategies developed under it.

e) Students must:

- i. respect the rights of others to be free from harassment, bullying and discrimination;
- ii. behave as responsible digital citizens;
- iii. behave as responsible bystanders; and
- iv. be aware of and use the appropriate procedures for reporting incidents of harassment, bullying or discrimination.

### **REPORTING OBLIGATIONS**

a) Every member of the School community is expected to report bullying. To ignore bullying is to give your approval to bullying and will only serve to foster its existence in the School.

b) When reporting bullying, discrimination or harassment, it should be as immediate as possible and it is helpful to include:

i. information relating to each incident, including who was involved, what happened (what was said, whether anyone was injured or any property was damaged), and when it happened (dates and times);

ii. who may have witnessed each incident and if anyone else was told about it;

iii. any evidence, such as screen shots, texts, instant messages or pictures; and

iv. what action you are seeking from an investigation (for example, a conversation, an apology or support).

c) Any student who observes any form of harassment, bullying or discrimination involving people in the School community or who is subjected to any form of harassment, bullying or discrimination wherever it occurs is strongly encouraged to report this to their parents or carers, the Homeroom teacher or another member of staff, such as a class teacher, or Head of School.

d) Any other adult member of the School community to whom an allegation of harassment, bullying or discrimination is made or who observes or is subjected to any form of harassment, bullying or discrimination involving students or staff is strongly encouraged to report this to the Head of School.

e) While information that is reported will be treated sensitively, where required by law, the Head of School or Head of School's delegate must report harassment, bullying or discrimination to the Police, Department of Communities & Justice and/or the Office of the Children's Guardian (which administers the NSW Reportable Conduct Scheme).



## INVESTIGATION

- a) This section of the Policy applies where a student has been the target of bullying, harassment or discrimination, unless an investigation is being carried out by the Police, Department of Communities & Justice or some other state or federal authority.
- b) Reports of bullying involving students will be investigated in accordance with our Codes of Conduct and the Student Discipline Policy.
- c) Pending completion of the investigation, the Head of School or their delegate may contact the student's parents or carers, meet with the parents or carers and the student and/or suspend the student on an interim basis (in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and/or Student Discipline Policy);
- d) At the conclusion of the investigation, the Head of School or their delegate may impose consequences for a breach of this policy by a student, that will be determined based on the seriousness of the conduct.
- e) In more serious cases, in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and/or Student Discipline Policy, potential consequences include:
  - i. detention, including outside of school hours and school term time ; and/or
  - ii. attending sessions with professional wellbeing and support services (internal or external to the School).
  - iii. suspension (either internal or external);
  - iv. probationary enrolment or termination of enrolment (expulsion)
- f) The Head of School or their delegate will advise the target of the harassment, bullying or discrimination and the subject the result of the investigation and the action taken.

## PASTORAL CARE

The School:

- a) must make available its pastoral care team to provide support as required to those who have been subjected to any form of harassment, bullying or discrimination, as well as those who have been subjected to allegations of harassment, bullying or discrimination and, where relevant, their families; and
- b) may suggest or refer them to external agencies able to provide care and support.