NEWCASTLE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy

Policy Number (PN): 8.2.4.1

Last Revised: November 2026

NGS Policies & Procedures

8.2.4.1 Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy

Reviewed: November 2021; November 2024 – formatting and change to wording of 'Students' Responsibilities'; November 2026 – reviewed and updated to align with the NSW Anti Bullying Framework

Due for Review: January 2028 or as required

1. **Introduction**

Newcastle Grammar School (NGS) has policies and procedures that provide for student wellbeing and ensure an environment where risk of harm is minimised and students feel safe. NGS recognises its duty to students to provide a safe and positive learning education environment where individual differences and diversity within the School are respected and accepted for all.

2. **Purpose and Scope**

The purpose of this policy is to support the School to prevent and address issues of student bullying in order to support respectful relationships and our RISE (Respect, Integrity, Service, Excellence) values. NGS staff will work in partnership with parent/carer(s) who have an integral role to play in the prevention and resolution of bullying.

This policy aligns with the NSW Anti-Bullying Framework, incorporating the four key elements of Preventing, Responding, Partnering and Implementing.

This policy applies to students, families, staff, contractors, volunteers and visitors of the School.

2.1 **Definition of Bullying**

Bullying behaviour is typically:

- ongoing and deliberate
- a misuse of power in relationships
- repeated covert/overt verbal, physical and/or social
- online and/or offline
- individual or group-based
- intended to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm
- difficult for the recipient/targeted person to stop it from happening to them
- a violation of the right to dignity, safety, and education.

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 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 is the deliberate act of excluding someone from the group or spreading rumours that are used to hurt or intimidate someone.
- Cyber bullying 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. It is using technology to make malicious comments or demean another person. However, the intent and magnitude of the Cyber-bullying incident is an important factor identifying and categorising the attack.
- Mutual conflict situations 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.

What is NOT bullying:

- Mutual conflict
- One-off acts of aggression, meanness, loss of temper, shouting or swearing.

Not all conflict between people constitutes bullying. One-off incidents of meanness, arguments, disagreements or isolated acts of aggression may be inappropriate and require intervention but do not necessarily meet the definition of bullying.

3. Policy

NGS is committed to providing a safe and positive learning environment where individual differences and diversity within the School are respected and accepted for all.

NGS does not tolerate any form of bullying behaviour including online (or cyber) bullying.

Disciplinary action and/or counselling in accordance with our Behaviour Management Plan will be taken in any case where a student is found, upon reporting and investigation, to have bullied another student.

It is our policy that through the four key NSW Anti-Bullying Framework elements of Preventing, Responding, Partnering and Implementing:

- Bullying be managed through a 'whole of School community' approach involving students, staff and parent/carer(s).
- In all cases of suspected bullying, the Deputy Head of School or Head of Primary must be notified via our internal response process.
- Bullying prevention strategies are implemented within NGS on a continuous basis through teaching age-appropriate skills and strategies to empower staff, students and parent/carer(s) to recognise bullying and respond appropriately.
- Bullying response strategies are tailored to the circumstances of each incident.
- Staff establish positive role models emphasising our no-bullying culture.
- Bullying prevention and intervention strategies are reviewed on regular basis against best practice.

The School implements a multi-tiered system of support. Student reporting pathways include:

- Students in Years K-6 can report concerns to their classroom teacher or the Student Support Teacher, or any adult with whom they have a trusting relationship with.
- Students in Years 3-6 and/or their parents can report concerns online via the Wellbeing Support page on Schoolbox or the Wellbeing Support tile on their child's grade page on Schoolbox. This can be done anonymously if preferred.
- Students in Years 7-12 can report concerns to their Mentor or Head of House, or any adult with whom they have a trusting relationship with.

- Students in Years 7-12 can report incidents/concerns online via the Wellbeing Support page on Schoolbox.
- Access to School Psychologist.

Our Student Code of Conduct states:

"I have a responsibility to see that I do not laugh at, hit, push, threaten, exclude or in any way denigrate or disrespect other people in our School. I also have the responsibility to do all that I can to ensure all members of our School community are safe and treated with fairness, empathy and respect. I understand that I have a responsibility to report anything that I believe does not meet the standards and rights of each student at this School."

It is expected that bystanders to bullying will take action by reporting the behaviour through the channels listed above. Bystanders to bullying will be supported by their Head of House (7-12) or the Student Support Teacher (K-6) and will be encouraged to see the School Psychologist where appropriate.

Restorative approaches are taken on a case by case basis.

3.1 **Preventing**

Building a whole-school culture promoting positive relationships, inclusion, safety and kindness, creates school environments where every student feels valued, connected, and supported. When these values and social and emotional skills are consistently modelled and reinforced across the school, the school community is more likely to treat each other with respect, resolve conflicts peacefully, and contribute to an environment where bullying is less likely to occur or persist.

NGS addresses this component of the Framework through the implementation of the following sub-components:

- Student wellbeing and safety programs
- Positive and inclusive whole-school culture
- Social and emotional skill development
- Positive relationships

Through our Visible Wellbeing, Positive Education (7-12) and URSTRONG Friendology (K-6) programs, our Mentor and House structure in the Secondary School and Student Support Teacher in the Primary School, NGS is committed to the promotion and facilitation of:

- social and emotional skill development

- inclusion, belonging, and psychological safety
- student participation in shaping anti-bullying strategies

These are implemented through:

- social-emotional skills learning such as relevant PDHPE syllabus implementation
- early intervention for vulnerable students such as our Wellbeing Hub (K-6) or special interest clubs
- the School's Learning Enhancement team and processes.

Other frameworks which have been reviewed and researched, and from which NGS has adopted aspects into our wellbeing program, includes:

- Visible Wellbeing – SEARCH (Strengths, Emotional management, Attention and awareness, Relationships, Coping, Habits and goals)
- PERMA – Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and Accomplishment
- URSTRONG Friendology (Friendship Skills curriculum)
- VIA Character Strengths
- Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

Indicators parents and staff may observe when a student is experiencing bullying often include:

- withdrawal
- declining academic performance
- reluctance to attend school
- changes in friendship groups
- unexplained injuries.

Parents and staff are advised to bring any potential indicators of bullying to the School's attention if identified.

3.2 **Responding**

Responding effectively and reducing harm from bullying demands a whole-school approach where every incident is consistently reported, recorded and responded to with urgency and care. When school staff effectively manage bullying incidents and support students who experience bullying in a coordinated and timely way, it builds trust, ensures accountability, and helps prevent further harm.

NGS addresses this component of the Framework through the implementation of the following sub-components:

- Transparent, coordinated and prompt response
- Structured triage systems and ongoing support for students involved
- Active engagement with students and families
- Consistent, timely and accessible reporting and recording

NGS follows the NSW Framework for responding in the following ways:

- Clear response timeframes (e.g. urgent cases prioritised)

- Report → Record → Risk assess → Respond → Support → Monitor

- In all cases of suspected bullying, the Deputy Head of School or Head of Primary must be notified via the School's internal processes.

- Once Deputy Head of School or Head of Primary receives a notification, the initial response will be within 2 School days.

- If a student is at immediate risk, the Deputy Head of School or Head of Primary must be notified. This will be addressed the same day by the Deputy Head of School, Head of Primary or their delegate. This includes mandatory reporting where required.

- The School will provide explicit support through our School Psychologists, Mentor and Heads of House (7-12) or Student Support Teacher (K-6) for:

- the recipient/target

- student displaying bullying behaviour

- bystanders

- The School's internal processes ensure the School will maintain consistent documentation, including mandatory recording of incidents and actions in the student's file under Pastoral Care in TASS including follow-up and monitoring.

Examples of implementation include:

- Communication with students and families
- Assessment and decision-making (including initial triage within 2 School days)
- Individual support such as safety plans and risk assessments
- Follow up and monitoring (including mandatory reporting (where required).

3.3 **Partnering**

Active partnerships with the school sector, within the school and with families and community services that build a strong network of support around students, are essential to reducing the harm caused by bullying. When the education sector and whole-school community work together in a coordinated and caring way, students feel safer, more connected, and confident that bullying will be taken seriously and addressed effectively.

NGS addresses this component of the Framework through the implementation of the following sub-components:

- Student voice and decision making
- Partnerships with families and communities
- Integrated school community partnerships

NGS has active partnerships with:

- Independent Schools NSW
- Maple Leaf House
- Allied Health Professionals (with parent permission)
- NSW Police Student Liaison Officer
- School psychologist

The School uses ChildStory Reporting and monitors the eSafety Commissioner's communication via the eSafety website.

Parent communication:

- The Head of Primary or Student Support Teacher (K-6) or Head of House (7-12) provide check-ins with parents
- The School psychologist has direct communication with parents (K-6)
- Section 3 of the School's Parent Code of Conduct states:

"Parent/carer(s) are expected to support the School in relation to its Behaviour Management (Discipline) policy and not do anything which undermines its authority. It must be understood that in the case of minor disciplinary matters, the School will be the arbiter of what took place and what is a fair punishment it will not engage in debate about the details of the conduct for the appropriateness of the punishment. It will share information it deems appropriate with parent/carer(s)."

Examples of implementation include:

- engagement with parent/carer(s)
- student consultation and participation mechanisms such as student wellbeing surveys (AWE) and the NGS student leadership program.

3.4 **Implementation**

Effective implementation of whole-school, evidence informed multi-tiered systems of support provides a coordinated, consistent approach to preventing and responding to bullying across all levels of the school community. When supported by aligned policies, ongoing teacher professional learning, and regular monitoring, these systems create safer environments where student wellbeing is actively protected, and harm is significantly reduced.

NGS addresses this component of the Framework through the implementation of the following sub-components:

- Whole-school, evidence-informed and multi-tiered approach
- Alignment of the School's anti-bullying policy with other School policies
- Ongoing professional learning and resources
- Regular review and analysis of anti-bullying approaches and data

NGS meets the NSW Framework requirement for data-driven continuous improvement through the regular analysis of trends and repeat behaviours. IT alerts are in place to provide the Head of Primary, Deputy Head of Primary and Deputy Head of School a summary of pastoral care entries.

NGS provides professional learning to staff through policy and procedure training and the URSTRONG Program. Staff are trained with regard to accountability and oversight of the NSW Anti-Bullying Framework.

Families will have information regarding the Framework shared with them including access to information regarding bullying prevention via School TV and the School's Learning Institute for Parents.

Examples of implementation include:

- staff professional learning contextualised to the whole-school approach to anti-bullying and the school's responding procedures
- ongoing evaluation and research of the School's approach and its implementation.

4. **Roles and Responsibilities**

4.1 **Head of School, Executive and Primary Leadership Team**

The Head of School will ensure NGS implements and regularly reviews this Bullying Prevention and Intervention policy and the Behaviour Management policy and procedures, which outline the steps to build a safe and supportive learning and teaching environment that aims to reduce or avoid bullying incidents.

The Head of School and Executive staff will ensure the provision of training for staff on how to reduce the incidence of bullying, how to report and respond to any incidents of bullying and promote the development and maintenance of respectful student relationships.

The Head of School and Executive staff will provide students with age-appropriate support and education about bullying behaviours, respectful relationships and processes for reporting bullying to ensure their safety.

The Head of School and Executive staff will ensure bullying complaints are investigated and responded to in a timely and procedurally fair manner in accordance with the Behaviour Management Plan. This includes provision of wellbeing support for all students involved in bullying.

The Head of School will maintain and regularly analyse confidential records to identify students involved in bullying behaviours, through patterns and trends.

4.2 **Heads of House, Mentors (7-12) and Student Support Teacher (K-6)**

Heads of House, Mentors (7-12) and Student Support Teacher (K-6) will take reasonable care for the safety and wellbeing of students at School or when involved in a School activity. Heads of House, Mentors (7-12) and Student Support Teacher (K-6) will implement classroom anti-bullying education and preventative strategies which promote respectful relationships. Heads of House, Mentors (7-12) or Student Support Teacher (K-6) will notify Executive staff or the Primary Leadership Team and maintain a confidential record of any alleged bullying matter that is brought to their attention.

Heads of House, Mentors (7-12) or Student Support Teacher (K-6) will notify parent/carer(s) of bullying incidents that involve their children in a timely manner and will collaborate with students, parent/carer(s), wellbeing staff and external agencies such as NSW Police where appropriate, in identifying and addressing bullying behaviour.

4.3 **NGS Staff**

NGS staff will take reasonable care for the safety and wellbeing of students at School or when involved in a School activity.

NGS staff will always model our RISE (Respect, Integrity, Service, Excellence) values and non-bullying behaviour including tolerance and acceptance.

In all cases of suspected bullying, the Deputy Head of School or Head of Primary must be notified via the School's internal processes.

4.4 **NGS Students**

At NGS, all students and members of staff are bound by our RISE (Respect, Integrity, Service, Excellence) values and are encouraged to interact with each other abiding by these values and conduct themselves responsibly on a daily basis.

All students must abide by the *Student Code of Conduct* and adhere to the following responsibility:

"I have a responsibility to see that I do not laugh at, hit, push, threaten, exclude or in any way denigrate or disrespect other people in our School. I also have the responsibility to do all that I can to ensure all members of our School community are safe and treated with fairness, empathy and respect. I understand that I have a responsibility to report anything that I believe does not meet the standards and rights of each student at this School."

At NGS we aim for each student to take responsibility for their actions and to have regard for the wellbeing of all others. When a student observes someone bullying another, that student is encouraged to report this behaviour. This might require courage, but it should be remembered that the idea of not reporting bullying allows it to continue.

4.5 **Parent/Carer(s)**

Parent/carer(s) are encouraged to recognise signs of bullying and notify the School through a trusted staff member immediately (such as a classroom teacher, Mentor, Head of House, Student Support Teacher, Deputy Head of School, etc.) if they suspect their child is a victim of bullying.

Parent/carer(s) are expected to support the values of NGS and abide by the *Parent Code of Conduct*. Parent/carer(s) are required to work collaboratively with NGS staff to prevent and resolve allegations of bullying in the School. Parent/carer(s) are required to not engage in bullying behaviours toward any NGS students, staff or other parents.

If parent/carer(s) become concerned with aspects of the School's Behaviour Management Plan or Student Code of Conduct, they are encouraged to contact the appropriate member of staff – usually in the first instance the student's classroom teacher (K-6) or Student Support Teacher (K-6) or Head of House (7-12), or Deputy Head of School. Parent/carer(s) are encouraged to refer to

the *Complaints Resolution Policy and Procedures - School Community* in the event they are dissatisfied with an educational and/or operational matter relating to services provided by the School.

5. **Related Policies**

Student Code of Conduct

Parent Code of Conduct

Behaviour Management Policy (Discipline)

Complaints Resolution Policy and Procedures - School Community

Child Safe Policy

Child Protection Policy

Enrolment Policy