



# Anti-Bullying

Version 4

	<b>North Academy</b> <b>Anti-Bullying</b>	Policy No:	ANT
		Revision:	04
		Implementation Date:	March 2024
Applicable to:	Principal, North Academy Staff, Students & Parents/Carers	Review Date:	December 2026
		Principal Approval:	

## School Context

North Academy is a registered non-government secondary special assistance school established to support vulnerable and disadvantaged young people who may have complex trauma, developmental and mental health needs. North Academy provides students with a flexible alternative to mainstream schooling for students who have social, emotional, or behavioural challenges.

## North Academy Anti Bullying Statement

**North Academy does not accept bullying. By providing guidelines on how bullying can be dealt with, and through education and support to members of the school community, matters of inappropriate behaviours that constitute bullying will be minimized.**

## Policy Objective

North Academy is a supportive and safe environment where every member of the community has the right to feel safe and protected. They also have the right to experience positive and respectful relationships between all members of the school community. Adults in this community need to be especially aware of their behaviour, as they are the role models for the students. The purpose of this policy is to:

- Promote a positive culture where bullying is unacceptable.
- Ensure the right of respect from others, the right to learn or teach, and the right to feel safe and secure in the school community.

## Scope

This policy applies to all members of the North Academy community: students, staff, parents/carers, and its Board members. School staff have a responsibility to support students at the school in cases of bullying behaviours.

## Anti-Bullying Aim

- Promoting positive behaviours and respect for individual differences.
- Providing on-going and age-appropriate education focussed on self-esteem, assertiveness and resilience.
- Reinforcing within the school community that no form of bullying is acceptable.
- Encouraging the school community to be alert to signs and evidence of bullying and to have a responsibility to report it to North Academy staff whether as an observer or victim.
- Ensuring that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up and that support is given to the victim, perpetrator and all other individuals involved.
- Always seeking parental and peer group support cooperation.
- Negative behavior not deemed to be bullying will be addressed under the school's Discipline Policy.

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## What is bullying?

A clear definition for bullying is required so that everyone in our school has a common starting point. This will facilitate consistent and clear expectations. Good practices can only be built on a clear and common understanding of the nature and effect of bullying. It is widely accepted that negative and **repeated** behaviours toward a person or a group that are **intended** to ‘hurt’ or put them at risk is bullying.

### A definition:

**“Bullying behaviours are about an imbalance of power where there is deliberate intent to cause harm or distress. These behaviours can be verbal, social, psychological or physical. They impact on the lives of the person/people being bullied, those doing the bullying and those looking on.”**

Peer Support Foundation (1998)

The terms ‘bully’ and ‘target’ are short-hand terms that we use because most people understand through the use of these terms the dynamic that we are addressing. We do not seek to negatively label individuals who are involved in bullying. We acknowledge that individuals that bully others are not bullies in every situation. We similarly acknowledge that targets of bullies are not targets in every situation.

**North Academy provides support given to students to make considered choices around their behaviour and the values that provide a framework for how they choose to live.** To achieve this the North Academy:

- Demonstrates respect and support for all student diversity through inclusive policy, school practice and the development of learning environments.
- Implements whole-school policies and procedures to ensure all adequate structures are in place for creating safety and wellbeing. These are available to all school community members, and it is expected that each member understands and follow them.
- Takes a strengths-based approach to student learning by offering a range of opportunities for student ownership, involvement in decision making and leadership.

**Simultaneously we recognize that bullying may still occur. We also know that bullying:**

- Devalues, isolates and frightens the targets of bullying.
- Affects an individual’s ability to achieve.
- Has long term effects on those engaging in bullying behaviour, those who are the subject of bullying behaviours and the on-lookers or bystanders.

We believe that teachers, students, parents, caregivers and members of the wider school community have a responsibility to work together to address bullying with a structured approach.

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## Types of Bullying

There are six main types of bullying:

**Direct physical bullying** – could include hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging the property of others.

**Direct verbal bullying** – could include name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.

**Indirect bullying** – harder to recognise and often carried out behind the bullied student’s back. It is designed to harm someone’s reputation and/or cause humiliation. Indirect bullying could include:

- Lying and spreading rumours
- Playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
- Mimicking
- Encouraging others to socially exclude someone
- Damaging someone’s social reputation and social acceptance

**Cyber bullying** – could include being cruel, tormenting, humiliating or harassing to others by sending or posting harmful material or engaging in other forms of social aggression using technology such as, but limited to the internet, social networking sites, blogs, emails, interactive and digital technologies, mobile phones and instant messaging. 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 rumour about a person to damage his/her/their reputation or social relationships.
- Outing: Sharing someone’s secrets or embarrassing information or images / video online.
- Exclusion: Intentionally and cruelly exclude someone from an online group.
- Cyber Stalking: Repeated, intense harassment and denigration that includes threats or creates significant fear.

**Psychological Bullying** - This is when someone, or a group of people, repeatedly or intentionally uses words or actions which cause psychological harm. Intimidating someone, manipulating people, stalking a person are all examples of psychological bullying.

**Sexual Bullying** - This might include unwanted sexual inferences, touching or brushing against others, writing/drawing/commenting about someone’s body sexually, sexual name calling etc.

## Clarification of Bullying

Other forms of hurtful behaviour are often mistaken for bullying. Upsetting and harmful things happen but **not all of them are bullying**. These may include:

- Mutual arguments or disagreements are upsetting but usually everyone involved wants to solve the problem and there is not power imbalance. This is not bullying.

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- Unless a person deliberately and repeatedly tries to cause someone distress, excludes them or encourages others to dislike them; not liking someone is not bullying.
- Single acts of meanness, spite, conflict, rejection, exclusion, physical harm and emotional aggression hurt people and can cause great distress. However, these things are not examples of bullying unless someone is repeatedly and deliberately doing it to the other person.

## North Academy Anti-Bullying strategies

The role of adults at school is to support, nurture and direct students towards socially accepted behaviours. Young adults make mistakes, and they will also test boundaries. As they learn about relationships and explore their own powers and their impact on others, they may display behaviours that fall within the bullying definition.

It is the responsibility of the school to take the appropriate steps to modify those behaviours in a positive manner with due regard for the circumstances, age and developmental stage of the student. This means that not every instance of reported bullying will result in punitive consequences.

### Strategies

- Preventative and early intervention wellbeing classes that focus on the areas such as social skills and promote resilience.
- Encourage students to engage in the Replay program to adopt, refine and incorporate new skills.
- Curriculum that includes open discussion on anti-bullying strategies.
- Anti-Bullying Policy is available on the school website and stored on the school SharePoint.
- Encourage a culture where students can report incidents.

## Teacher Obligations

Teachers should:

- Assist students who report negative behaviours that may not be bullying, with options to address the current situation.
- Openly discuss and provide strategies to students to deal with others who are upsetting or hurting them in an age-appropriate manner.
- In cases of bullying, counsel the bully about their behaviour and its impact.
- Counsel the target providing guidance and strategies to deal with bullying behaviours targeted towards them (perceived or otherwise).
- Conduct Replay and other classroom activities to address bullying behaviours.
- Provide mediation with both the bully and the target.
- Consistently reinforce the school's core values.
- Encourage and model tolerance and acceptance.
- Be observant of signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying.
- Confer with parents/carers if necessary.

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- Make efforts to remove opportunities for bullying through proactive supervision.
- Take steps to help victims and remove sources of distress.
- Listen to and respond to all complaints of bullying.
- Record student’s unacceptable behavior.
- Report incidents of behaviour to the Head Teacher and then the principal.

## Student Obligations

Students should:

- Refuse to be involved in bullying situations.
- Report incidents to the appropriate teachers, either as an observer or a victim.
- Behave in a way that reflects their understanding of the student code of conduct.

## Parent/Carer Obligations

Parents and Carers should:

- Take an active interest in their young person’s school life to be aware of any problems.
- Encourage their young person to report and deal with the problem themselves.
- Encourage their young person to be verbally assertive rather than retaliate with action.
- Communicate with North Academy if they suspect their young person is being bullied.
- **Parents/carers are strongly advised to bring matters to school staff and not to approach other students or their parents/carers to deal with incidents.**

## Contact Numbers for Support Services Available to the School Community

**Crisis Support:**

- Emergency: 000 (Mobile 112)
- Lifeline: 131 114
- Kids Help Line: 1800 55 1800
- Beyond Blue: 1300 224 636

**For advice, personal support and referral to social services:**

- Salvation Army Youth Line: 1300 363 622
- Poisons Information Help Line: 1300 302 980
- Domestic Violence Line: 1800 656 463
- Rape Crisis Centre: 1800 424 017

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#### Lake Macquarie Police Districts:

- **Belmont:** 02 4922 8899
- **Charlestown:** 02 4942 9999
- **Toronto:** 02 4088 1099

#### Family Helplines

- Family Relationship Advice Line: 1800 050 321
- Parent Line: 1300 1300 52
- Child Abuse Prevention Service: 1800 688 009
- Health Direct Australia (after hours GP help line): 1800 022 222

#### Support Services

- Cybersmart: 1800 880 176
- Legal Aid Youth hotline: 1800 101 810

#### Counselling

- Family Relationship Advice Line (Anglicare): 1800 050 321
- Centacare: 9390 5366
- Credit Help Line: 1800 007 007
- Family Information Service: 1800 049 956
- Gay, Lesbian & Transgender: 1800 184 527
- Interrelate: 1300 736 966
- Lifeline: 13 11 14

#### Related Documents

- Student Code of Conduct
- School Community Code of Conduct
- Discipline and Behaviour Management Policy

