

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Revised June 2024

RATIONALE

Bullying behaviour has three key features. It involves the intentional misuse of power in a relationship. It is ongoing and repeated, and it involves behaviours that can cause harm. The NSW Department of Education requires all NSW public schools to have an Anti-bullying Plan which details the strategies implemented to reduce student bullying behaviours.

Sydney Technical High School rejects all forms of bullying behaviours, including online (or cyber) bullying by maintaining a commitment to providing a safe, inclusive and respectful learning community that promotes student wellbeing. Executive staff are committed to establishing evidence-based approaches and strategies that promote a positive climate where bullying is less likely to occur.

RESOURCES

The NSW anti-bullying website (see: <https://antibullying.nsw.gov.au>) provides evidence-based resources and information for schools, parents and carers, and students. Schools are encouraged to visit the website to support whole-school prevention, early intervention and response approaches and strategies for student bullying behaviour.

Inclusive, Engaging and Respectful Schools Policy.

SYDNEY TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL'S COMMITMENT

Our school rejects all forms of bullying behaviours, including online (or cyber) bullying by maintaining a commitment to providing a safe, inclusive and respectful learning community that promotes student wellbeing. Executive staff are committed to establishing evidence-based approaches and strategies that promote a positive climate where bullying is less likely to occur.

SCHOOL CULTURE AND INCLUSION

All members of the school community are active participants in building a welcoming school culture that values diversity and fosters positive relationships. A key component of a supportive school culture is building respectful relationships and an ethos that bullying is not accepted, in both online and offline environments. School staff will actively respond to student bullying behaviour.

Sydney Technical High School engages in the following practices to promote a positive school culture:

STUDENT ASSEMBLIES

Student bullying and expectations about student behaviour will be discussed and information presented to promote a positive school culture where bullying is not accepted.

Communication methods include:

- Behaviour and Discipline Policy
- Wellbeing Assemblies
- Year 7 Assembly / Transition Program
- Peer Support
- Camp

STAFF COMMUNICATION AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Staff will be supported with professional learning that provides evidence-based ways to encourage and teach positive social and emotional wellbeing and discourage, prevent, identify, and respond effectively to student bullying behaviour, through the following methods:

- Twilight Professional Learning
- Registered Professional Learning
- Sentral Wellbeing
- Wellbeing Watch – distributed weekly
- School website, and Facebook page.

NEW AND CASUAL STAFF

New and casual staff will be informed about our school's approaches and strategies to prevent and respond to student bullying behaviour in the following ways:

- Staff Handbook
- Deputy Principal meeting with new staff
- HT Administration meeting with new casual staff.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY

Effective schools have high levels of parental and community involvement. This involvement is strongly related to improved student learning, attendance and behaviour. Sydney Technical High School proactively builds collaborative relationships with families and communities to create a shared understanding of how to support student learning, safety and wellbeing.

WEBSITE

The school's website provides information and offers strategies to better regulate students' emotional and social development. Information is provided to assist if children have been involved in bullying behaviour (as the person engaging in bullying behaviour, as the person being bullied or as the person witnessing the bullying behaviour).

The following are published on our school's website:

1. School Anti-Bullying Plan
2. NSW Anti-Bullying website
3. Behaviour Code for Students.

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

Sydney Technical High School will provide information to parents to help promote a positive school culture where bullying is not acceptable and to increase parent's understanding of how our school addresses all forms of bullying behaviour.

Forms of communication include:

- Tech Talk
- P&C presentations
- Parent Partnership presentations
- Parent meetings, phone calls, letters
- Orientation Day
- School website and Facebook page
- Schoolstream

SUPPORT FOR WELLBEING AND POSITIVE BEHAVIOURS

Our school's practices support student wellbeing and positive behaviour approaches that align with our school community's needs.

Social and emotional skills related to personal safety, resilience, help-seeking and protective behaviours are explicitly taught across the curriculum in Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE).

Examples of other ways our school will embed student wellbeing and positive behaviour approaches and strategies in practices include the following:

- Specialised support via Wellbeing Team (Senior Executive, HT Wellbeing, Year Advisers, Learning and Support Teachers, Careers Adviser and Transition Coordinators)
- HSC Mentor Scheme
- Student Achievement and Underachievement annual reviews with Deputy Principal, Year Advisers and parents
- Remedial Pathways – Progress Booklets, Communication Diaries, Escape Cards etc.

PROTECTION, PREVENTION, EARLY INTERVENTION and RESPONSE

Protection

- i. Sydney Technical High School is an inclusive environment, where diversity is accepted, individual differences respected and personal achievement encouraged.
- ii. The focus of quality education at Sydney Technical High School is that students can learn and grow with confidence in a secure, ordered and supportive environment free from all aspects of bullying. Bullying is not acceptable in this school nor in any other NSW government school.
- iii. Students develop best when teaching and learning occur in a context of student wellbeing.
- iv. The wellbeing, safety and health of students are the basis of Sydney Technical High School policies, programs and practices.

Prevention

All members of the Sydney Technical High School community have a shared responsibility to ensure that respectful relationships exist and are maintained. Together we will create and maintain a happy and safe environment that maximises and supports student learning.

- i. Students can expect to:
 - know that their concerns will be responded to by school staff in a sympathetic and discreet manner;
 - be provided with appropriate support (for both the subjects of and those responsible for the behaviour); and
 - take part in learning experiences that address key understandings and skills relating to positive relationships, safety, gender equity, discrimination, bullying and harassment. These experiences will be guided by the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education syllabuses and other Key Learning Areas.
- ii. Students have a responsibility to:
 - behave appropriately, respecting individual differences and diversity;
 - refuse to participate in bullying situations; and
 - report incidents of bullying, as observer or victim, and help break down any code of secrecy.

Early Intervention

All members of the Sydney Technical High School community have a shared responsibility to ensure that respectful relationships exist and are maintained. Together we will create and maintain a happy and safe environment that maximises and supports student learning.

i. Teachers will:

- respect and support students in all aspects of their learning;
- model appropriate behaviour, in word and actions, at all times;
- reassure the student being bullied that their complaint will be taken seriously and in confidence;
- report incidents of bullying to the relevant Year Adviser, head teacher wellbeing or senior executive; at their discretion, an early intervention notification letter can be generated in Sentral and distributed to the parents of the children involved.
- remove opportunities for bullying to occur: banter, group inclusiveness in the classroom, arriving on time, orderly lessons according to the classroom management policy, avoidance of popular nicknames if offensive and ridicule of students who appear different, actively supervise potential high risk areas; and
- Avoid attitudes and actions which favour biased bullying such as
 - Isn't it part of growing up?
 - It was just banter!
 - It was just a joke!
 - What can I do?
 - I didn't see it so how do I know he is telling the truth?
 - Surely the victim provoked it?
 - Nobody likes or respects a snitch, wimp, cry-baby.
- STHS non-bullying curricula in English and PDHPE in particular have recently updated their programs to include information about effects of bullying on young people.

ii. Parents and caregivers will:

- support their sons in all aspects of their learning;
- encourage their sons not to retaliate to incidents of bullying;
- encourage their sons to report incidents of bullying and seek help from the Year Adviser, head teacher wellbeing, senior executive; and
- Watch for signs of distress and if unable to gain a response, inform the Year Adviser, Head Teacher Wellbeing or Senior Executive.

Response - Managing Bullying

1. Students who are bullied should contact their Year Adviser immediately rather than let actions build over time. The Year Adviser will set in place appropriate counselling procedures. The Year Adviser can inform the Head Teacher Wellbeing and/or the school counsellor and seek further advice or assistance. If the incident is traumatic and/or ongoing, the relevant Deputy Principal should be informed.
2. Students, teachers and parents who witness or hear about bullying should inform the relevant Year Adviser. If the Year Adviser is unavailable then inform the Head Teacher Wellbeing or a member from the Senior Executive.
3. The school's Wellbeing and Engagement Team will organise and educate students via anti-bullying programs such as Peer Support and Wellbeing Assemblies i.e. on-site performances of bullying awareness plays annually – Brainstorm Productions (Sticks & Stones, Verbal Combat, The Flipside, Cyberia) and so on.
4. Teachers and students may also refer incidents to the ARCO or ADCO if relevant. Trained staff members fulfil the roles of ARCO and ADCO and have procedures that they will follow.
5. Bullies will be placed on the appropriate remediation path, such as tracking diary, mediation by student leadership team, No Bullying! Workbooks A or B, and parents contacted. These strategies have been designed by the school wellbeing team for the unique context of this school (ie selective school).
6. Serious offences which may also contravene other aspects of the school discipline policy (such as malicious comments on websites, physical abuse, or repeat offences) should be referred to the relevant Deputy Principal for action and parental contact.
7. Cyber bullying may contravene the school computer and intranet policy and have additional consequences.
8. The school discipline policy includes sanctions for offenders which may include suspension for repeat offences or serious breaches. New DEC suspension policy does allow schools to suspend students for bullying outside of the school grounds i.e. online, via mobile devices.
9. Students and parents who feel that the issues have not been resolved may contact the Principal, and following that, the School Education Director using grievance procedures.
10. Ongoing training of staff regarding the management of bullying is incorporated in the school's annual Professional Learning Plan.
11. Information regarding procedures for managing bullying is provided to parents in the first Tech Talk of each year.
12. The school's student welfare and discipline policy is discussed annually at meetings of the P&C Association.
13. All incidents should be recorded in Sentral Wellbeing.
14. Annual Wellbeing Team conference where planning and practices can be evaluated appropriately.

RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION

Sydney Technical High School rejects all forms of racial and religious discrimination and is committed to the elimination of such actions and attitudes in accordance with the department's anti-racial policy <https://policies.education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/anti-racism-policy>. This includes direct and indirect racism, racial vilification and harassment- in all aspects of school life. Our school strives to create a safe and welcoming environment and we firmly support the view that no student, staff member or parent should be subject to racism in and outside our school setting. We believe that all staff members are responsible for supporting students to develop an understanding of racism and its impact on individuals and the broader community by promoting acceptance of Australia's cultural, linguistic and religious diversity. STHS will challenge prejudiced attitudes and ensure that appropriate sanctions are applied against racist and discriminatory behaviours.

HOMOPHOBIC BULLYING

Homophobic bullying generally looks like other sorts of bullying, and can include verbal, physical and cyberbullying.

STHS will follow procedures as outlined in this policy in response to homophobic bullying. However, the fact that young people are particularly reluctant to report incidents is a distinctive aspect of this type of bullying, and highlights the importance of identifying the homophobic nature of it when it occurs.

It is STHS policy that students' rights and confidentiality around issues of sexuality are respected. We encourage students to disclose homophobic bullying to a staff member, and will ensure that bullying will be taken seriously. No assumptions will be made about the students' sexual preference, nor should the student feel the need to disclose their sexual preference. The following responses may be required when homophobic bullying is identified.

RESPONDING TO HOMOPHOBIC LANGUAGE

The use of homophobic language to suggest that someone or something is inferior is unacceptable. This includes comments such as "That's so gay", or "Those shoes are so gay". It is this school's policy that:

- Students are aware that homophobic language will not be tolerated in the school
- When an incident occurs students will be informed that homophobic language is offensive and will not be tolerated
- If a student makes homophobic remarks, staff will explain the effects that homophobic bullying has on people
- Persistent use of homophobic language will result in the implementation of the consequences within the school's Behaviour and Discipline Policy
- Parents may be contacted by the school
- Serious incidents of homophobic bullying may require police involvement

PREVENTION

STHS will take steps to prevent homophobia by:

- Teaching students so that they understand what constitutes homophobic language, and why it is offensive
- Assessing and monitoring the extent of homophobic bullying
- Using inclusive language throughout school curriculum
- Use of curriculum opportunities to promote respect for others
- Provide professional learning and support
- Working with bodies such as the Student Representative Council and external providers ie Twenty Ten and 2 Connect

CYBERBULLYING

The DoE recently defined cyberbullying as “... an intentional, repeated behaviour by an individual or group to cause distress or undue pressure to others using technology. Today’s technology allows children to communicate instantly with others in both positive and negative ways. Cyber-bullying includes all communications that seek to threaten, humiliate, intimidate, control or put another person or persons down.”

STHS applies the same reporting and discipline procedures to instances of cyber-bullying as it would to all other forms of bullying. STHS interprets “technology” as SMS, MMS, social media platforms, phone calls, video clips, websites, email and chat rooms.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Police Youth Liaison Officer Senior Constable Kelly Stewart St George Area Command 0437 881 135

WEBSITES

Headspace: www.headspace.org.au Reach Out: www.au.reachout.com

Kids Helpline: www.kidshelpline.com.au Lifeline: www.lifeline.org.au

Beyond Blue: www.beyondblue.org.au

National Centre Against Bullying: www.ncab.org.au Raising Children: www.raisingchildren.net.au

Bullying No Way: www.bullyingnoway.com.au

I Am A Witness: www.iwitnessbullying.org

Racism No Way: www.racismnoway.com.au

BONDING TO BULLYING AT SYDNEY TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL

Alleged bullying is reported

- Staff are informed verbally (in person, over the phone) or by email.
- Staff directly witness an incident that they perceive to be bullying.
- A victim, parent and/or up-stander reports the bullying or suspected incident of bullying to a member of staff (preferably YA).

NB: More serious incidents are to be escalated to relevant Deputy Principal.

Staff who witness and report incidents of bullying are then to refer student/s to the relevant Year Adviser.

Year Adviser will investigate at the earliest instance then document in Sentral Wellbeing. Incident report forms (written statements) are to be used to establish details/facts from all students involved.

IS IT BULLYING?

NO

Students counselled and monitored closely by YA and Staff. Parents notified by YA.

YES

Referred to the relevant Deputy Principal or Wellbeing Head Teacher with Incident Report completed from students involved.

The DP or HTW will give positive recognition to up-standers of bullying through Wykeham Award Scheme and record in Sentral - Positive incidents.

DP or HTW further investigates incident. An appropriate disciplinary response to be issued, parental contact and recording of incident on Sentral. School counsellor referrals for all students directly involved in bullying incidents.

NB: More serious incidents of bullying will be reported to the Police Youth Liaison Officer.