Anti-Bullying Policy

Policy Statement
Great Southern Grammar aims to provide a safe, secure and positive environment in which each student can develop the knowledge, skills, self-confidence and maturity to respect and care for himself or herself and for others.

The School aims to establish a community in which everybody feels valued and safe, and where individual differences are understood, accepted and appreciated. It is the responsibility of all students and staff to support this aim. The GSG community does not tolerate bullying or harassment in any form. Each member of the School community should demonstrate respect for others, and be respected by others at all times.

Aims
1. To teach, protect and support members of the GSG community by:
   a. Providing a learning environment where individual differences are appreciated and accepted.
   b. Modeling behaviour that shows tolerance and acceptance at all times by all members of the School community.
   c. Developing a culture that emphasises the protection of rights, the enhancement of personal responsibility, accountability, self-discipline and respect for the rights of others and their property.
2. To increase the awareness of all members of the School community by communicating:
   a. An understanding of the characteristics of bullying and anti-social behaviours.
   b. The School’s attitude as one of total opposition to anti-social behaviours such as bullying, and countering the view that they are an inevitable part of school life.
   c. That the School has strategies to detect, prevent and respond to anti-social behaviour.

Definition
Anti-social behaviour is any conduct that impinges upon the ability of a member of the School community to enjoy positive peer relationships. This includes bullying.

Elements of anti-social behaviour:
- It is hurtful or offensive to other people.
- It is intentional, uninvited, aggressive or inappropriate behavior.
- The recipient feels powerless (to do anything about it) and/or violated.

Bullying is any behaviour intended to hurt, injure, threaten, intimidate or frighten another person in such a way that the person feels hurt, marginalised, disempowered, scared and unable to resolve the situation. Bullying is perceived as an imbalance of power or the attempt to gain power over another person.
Effects
Bullying can have longer-term effects including:

- Higher levels of stress, anxiety, depression and psychiatric illness.
- Loss of self-esteem and confidence.
- Under-performance; inability to maintain a regular work.
- Increased likelihood of developing high-risk behaviours such as drug abuse and addictions.
- Physical sickness.
- Being incapable of sustaining long term relationships.
- Being incarcerated institutionally.

Examples of Bullying

Physical
- Pushing, hitting, punching, bumping, kicking
- Unwanted rough play
- Obstructing, confining
- Stealing, hiding property
- Damage to or interference with personal belongings

Verbal
- Name calling, teasing, picking on
- Making “put down” comments, belittling
- Threatening violence or physical aggression
- Insulting, shouting at, swearing at
- Comments that denigrate on the basis of gender, sexuality or race

Social/Psychological
- Visual (staring threateningly, giving “evils”)
- Standing close to a person and acting in a threatening manner
- Pulling faces
- Excluding from activities
- Ignoring
- Whispering or circulating rumours

Cyberbullying
- Sending unwanted, abusive or threatening messages
- Blocking
- Exclusion
- Spreading rumours
- Impersonating someone else
- Name calling
- Posting personal information without permission
- Posting or sharing inappropriate photos or video of someone
- Teasing or belittling
- Invading personal privacy
- Creating hate groups
• Stalking
• Sending inappropriate content
• Accessing, altering or deleting the work of others

Prevention of Bullying and Anti-Social Behaviours
All members of the School community must clearly demonstrate a commitment to supporting each other in the implementation of the Anti-Bullying Policy and procedures in a regular and consistent manner. The forum for review is the Pastoral Committee.

Staff and student leaders must recognize that preventing bullying is the responsibility of every member of the School community and it must be acted upon if witnessed.

Prevention Strategies for the Whole School

Increase Awareness
Increase awareness of relevant School policies through:
• Clear statements in School handbooks, School Diary, web site and prospectus
• Improving awareness in all facets of the School community through the Anchor, the local press, employment contracts, review at Council and Board Levels
• Apprising parents on Orientation Day of the Pastoral Care and Anti-Bullying Policies and the Code of Behaviour
• Assemblies and House meetings where students receive regular reminders of the value placed on pro-social behaviours

Staff and student leaders to be aware of:
• Their responsibilities in carrying out supervision duties – on the campus, on buses, in the classroom, all areas of School property
• The Pastoral Care and Anti-Bullying Policies and the Code of Behaviour
• When and where anti-social behaviour occurs
• Potential risks
• Modelling appropriate behaviour, especially:
  o Tolerance and acceptance of individual differences
  o Assertive behaviour versus aggressive behaviour
  o Use of alternative conflict resolution strategies
  o Cooperation and teamwork emphasised
• Active observation and looking for signs of distress in students
• Maintaining records of incidents in accordance with the School’s Pastoral Care policy via the appropriate lines of communication

Monitoring and Review of Policy Implementation
• Records of incidents are maintained in accordance with GSG’s Pastoral Care Policy
• Continually review structures, systems, and groups within the School to see that they are operating in a way that fosters pro-social behaviours and counters anti-social ones.
Pastoral Care Groups and the House System

- Find opportunities to increase awareness of what acceptable behaviour is (through discussion, role playing, suggestion box, poster competitions etc)
- Promote and reward resilient behaviours
- Discuss areas of the School which students consider safe (and unsafe) and what action might maintain this safe area (or transform the conflicted area into a safe area)
- Promote a collective responsibility: encourage students to be active bystanders and interventionists
- Display posters about pro-social behaviours
- Remind students that there is always someone to talk to about troubling matters—friend, tutor, homeroom teacher, Director of Pastoral Care, Heads of House, Heads of Year, Chaplain, favourite teacher, student leader, parent, etc.
- Training and implementation of Peer Support practices

Prevention Strategies for Parents

Encourage your child to:

- Consider alternative ways to respond (model these if appropriate)
- Tell a trusted staff member, student leader or friend about anti-social behaviour he or she has experienced
- Have faith in the system

Responses to Bullying and Anti-Social Behaviours

Response Strategies for Parents

- Watch for signs of distress
- Check for possible sources of anxiety; where you have concerns, contact the School immediately
- Take the child seriously, but act calmly
- Maintain contact with the School and work with the School to seek an appropriate solution

It is not advisable to contact the parents of the student perceived to be engaging in anti-social behaviour.

Response Strategies for Students

Students should be taught that if they are affected by anti-social behaviour, there are alternatives available to them:

- Decide how serious the present incident is. If it is not serious or especially hurtful, such as a singular incident of name-calling or put down, ignore it. If it is hurtful, or frequent you should act to stop it.
- Tell someone you trust about the situation: a teacher, Head of House, Director of Pastoral Care, older student, Peer Support Leader, School Nurse, Counsellor, Chaplain or parent
- Be assertive, not aggressive; tell the person you won’t put up with this behaviour and tell them to stop it; do not try to fight back or trade insults.
- If it does not stop, report the incident immediately to a member of staff or school leader.
- Develop personal skills of resilience.
The Role of the Bystander
The role of the bystander is crucial in repairing incidents of anti-social behaviour and needs to be clearly understood by all community members. Bystanders have the responsibility and the power to effect social change.

Bystanders may assist by:

- Not encouraging bullying through their words or actions
- Providing support to the target of bullying
- Peer mediation, if trained
- Moving to align themselves with the target
- Simply saying, “Stop it”
- Drawing the instigator’s attention to the bullying
- Reporting bullying to staff and/or student leaders
- Acting in unison to intervene

The School’s Response to Bullying
The School will always respond to bullying that is witnessed by or reported to a staff member. Parents and children are asked to notify the School about any incident that may constitute bullying as soon as it occurs so that the issue can be handled quickly and decisively.

Response to the Student Being Bullied
Students experiencing bullying or anti-social behaviour will be offered:

- The assurance that the incident they have reported will be investigated, acted upon and resolved in an appropriate and speedy manner
- Counselling and support

Response to the Student Bullying
Great Southern Grammar has a three stage process to deal with bullying. Essentially, the various stages deal with an escalating series of offences by a student who has become habitual in their bullying behaviour and needs the assistance of both the School and their parents to change their behaviour.

In most cases students who are exhibiting behaviours that are making other students uncomfortable need to told to stop their behaviour in very clear terms.

Unless the form of bullying is obvious to everyone concerned, the incident will not be considered a first offence unless the perpetrator has been told to desist by the student they are bullying, a bystander, or a staff member. Once this warning has been issued the three stage process will be put in place.

If the initial bullying behaviour is very clear in its intent, the perpetrator can be taken straight to Stage One.

Stage One: First Offence
On becoming aware of a bullying incident through whatever channel, staff inform the appropriate person in their Sub-School in writing. Details of the incident, including the identity of the bully and victim, are reported as quickly as possible after the bullying incident has occurred. Persons to inform are:
• Senior School: Head of House  
• Middle School: Head of Year  
• Junior School: Head of Junior School

Once the report on the incident has been received, these staff members will conduct an investigation. The result of the investigation will determine the course of action for the students involved. At this initial stage the goal is to counsel and proceed, if possible, without recourse to punishment. Parents of both the offending student and victim will be advised of the nature of the behaviour.

Stage Two: Repeated Offence
After investigation as above and referral to the Head of Sub-School, the re-offending student will be counselled and sanctions imposed. The parents of the students will be notified by letter. The offending student will be put on notice and the parents informed that their son/daughter’s behaviour must change if they are to remain enrolled at the School.

Counselling will continue until the School Counsellor is confident that the student is aware of what behaviours need to change, and has strategies to avoid any recurrence of their negative behaviours. Students do not progress to Stage Three until this counselling process has concluded.

Stage Three: Continued Offence
At Stage Three, following investigations that have concluded that the bullying has become habitual and that the student has not responded to counselling and/or sanctions, then the student will put his or her enrolment at GSG in jeopardy.

Response to the Bystander
The School will:

• Determine the observations and actions of bystanders  
• Reiterate the Code of Behaviour  
• Stress the important role that bystanders should be playing in stopping and/or tempering future bullying incidents  
• Emphasise that they have the power to stop bullying  
• Stress that they are failing in their responsibility to themselves and the School if they do not intervene in or report bullying  
• Keep notes regarding each contact, for future reference, according to the lines of communication as outlined in the Pastoral Care Policy.  
• As necessary, counsel bystanders regarding bullying, or involve them in more thorough discussions regarding the resolution of the incident in question.