Anti-Bullying Policy

EHGTHS Anti-Bullying Policy

Our School Anti-Bullying Plan

This plan outlines the processes for preventing and responding to student bullying in our school and reflects the [Bullying of Students- Prevention and Response Policy](#) and the [Student Behaviour Policy](#) of the New South Wales Department of Education. The school will complete and publish its [Anti-Bullying Plan](#) each year on the school's website.

All members of the school community are active participants in building a welcoming school culture that values diversity and fosters positive relationships. Our school community, the parents, students and staff are committed to providing a quality education which meets the learning and social needs of our students to honour our school motto, *honor ante honores.*

Our purpose to provide a quality education with a technological focus which inspires our students to develop to their full potential, and contribute to their community as informed, caring citizens.

Statement of purpose

East Hills Girls Technology High School has identified Connected Learning, Sustainable Learner and Collective Wellbeing as the three strategic directions for the East Hills Girls Technology High School Plan 2022-2026. These strategic directions are aligned with the Anti-Bullying Plan and the Student Management Plan.

Our Anti-Bullying Plan aims to deal with, and effectively address, issues of bullying through the use of effective strategies for reporting issues, positive prevention strategies and support for managing interactions and anti-social behaviour within our school environment. 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. We promote positive relationships within our school environment and support all members of our school community to address issues in a proactive manner. Positive communication is promoted to all members to ensure issues are resolved in an effective and prompt manner.

Protection

At East Hills Girls Technology High School, we are committed to maintaining and developing a positive and cohesive school community which is inclusive and promotes an understanding and acceptance of individual differences.

The EHGTHS Anti-Bullying Plan provides clear definitions for understanding bullying behaviours and the processes for preventing and responding to bullying. The purpose of this plan is to outline the provision of a safe and respectful learning environment for our students where bullying is not accepted. The plan provides a clear explanation of the school's response if bullying does occur and that the school will respond accordingly.

The EHGTHS we understand that while bullying may occur for many reasons, our community has a responsibility to:

- be aware of what constitutes as bullying behaviour
- prevent bullying by promoting positive relationships and anti-bullying messages
- report bullying when it occurs
- respond to bullying according to the Anti-Bullying plan.

Students are expected to:
- report instances of unsafe behaviour to teachers that do not follow the school's honour code such as
    - use of language by a member of the school community that threatens or vilifies any member of the community.
    - creating, publishing or sharing material about community members that can be considered threatening or vilifying in any way
- In this way, students reflect the expectation, 'Don't be a bystander'.

Our school's motto, *honor ante honores* reflects our aim that all members of the school community support the school's Honour code.

These expectations are outlined in the School Behaviour Support and Management Plan, with explicit reference to the Bullying and Harassment Rules and Expectations. We promote respectful resolution of conflict and promote that the whole school community accept the responsibility to work together to address bullying and victimisation. Our school promotes positive behaviours, individual dignity and respect and maintains and develops a caring learning environment.

EHGTHS community responsibilities

All members of the EHGTHS community are expected to promote positive behaviours and have a responsibility to :
- promote positive relationships that respect and accept individual differences
- actively work together to resolve incidents of bullying behaviour
- support the school's Anti-Bullying Plan through words and actions

School Staff have a responsibility to:
- model and appropriate relationships and behaviours
- support the school in maintaining a safe, inclusive and supportive learning environment
- promote a positive and proactive school culture where bullying is not acceptable
- manage reports of bullying in a timely manner and escalate matters when necessary
- teach students the expected behaviours and support them to Expectations. We identify, report and respond to bullying at school and online
- implement school programs which teach students skills and strategies to understand and deal with bullying.

Students have a responsibility to:
- demonstrate appropriate behaviour at all times
- demonstrate respect for individual differences and diversity
- demonstrate appropriate use of technology
- communicate to school staff if bullying occurs to them or if they observe bullying behaviour
- assist someone who is being bullied by seeking assistance from a teacher
- communicate to school staff if the incidents continue

Parents and caregivers have a responsibility to:
- observe signs their child may be being bullied
- encourage students to understand bullying behaviour and use strategies to proactively manage incidents of bullying, including cyberbullying, consistent with the school's Anti-Bullying Plan
- encourage their child to report if they are being bullied or if they are aware another child is being bullied
- notify the Head Teacher Student Support or their child's Year Coordinator in a prompt manner if bullying is suspected
- support their child to become an honourable citizen within the East Hills Girls Technology High School community and beyond and to develop proactive behaviour.

Bullying behaviour

Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. Bullying can take many forms. We consider the following behaviours to be bullying:

- verbal: name calling, teasing, abuse, put-downs, sarcasm, insults, threats

- physical: hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting

- social: ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating, making inappropriate gestures

- psychological: spreading rumours, dirty looks, hiding/damaging possessions, malicious SMS/email messages, sexting, inappropriate use of camera/phones

- cyber: verbal, social and psychological bullying through the use of technology (such as blogs, websites, mobile phones), sending malicious messages, SMS and email messages and inappropriate use of camera phones.

The key features of bullying are that it:
- causes hurt and distress to the target and others,
- Is a pattern of behaviour repeated over time
- involves the abuse of power in an unfair way.

Symptoms of Bullying

For behaviour to be classified as bullying, it needs to involve repeated actions that are intended to cause hurt. Not having friends or not being popular is not necessarily a sign that a person is being bullied. It may simply mean a person lacks interpersonal skills.

There is a difference between bullying behaviour and what can be described as normal interpersonal conflict.

The symptoms associated with bullying include, but are not limited to;

- School avoidance
- change in friends and social activities
- anger
- tears
- depression
- low self-esteem
- psychosomatic symptoms such as headaches and stomach aches.

Withdrawal and reluctance to "join in" can be a warning sign, as can truancy, misbehaviour and aggressive behaviour. Cuts, bruising, torn clothing, requests for extra food or money as well as a decline in academic performance can also be clues that a student may be suffering from bullying.

Prevention

Through implementation of strategies and programs East Hills Girls Technology High School will establish and maintain a positive culture of respectful relationships where bullying is less likely to occur. This includes:

- creating a safe and respectful school environment for all students
- explicit and ongoing teaching of the school wide behaviour expectations for all students in Years 7–12
- ensuring all students are treated with dignity and respect
- consistent implementation of classroom expectations and procedures
- clear identification of anti-social behaviour via the school's Anti-Bullying Plan
- identification of strategies for dealing with bullying via the school's Anti-Bullying Plan
- promotion of the school's Anti-Bullying Plan throughout the school community via the school's website and assemblies
- encouragement of students to inform staff when bullying occurs
- acknowledgement by staff of the seriousness of the matter and active intervention in accordance with staff responsibilities
- provision of clear information to students, parents and caregivers to outline strategies that promote appropriate behaviour and the consequences for inappropriate behaviour
- establishing and maintaining supportive wellbeing strategies
- Effective wellbeing programs and student leadership opportunities including Check In Check Out Program, Inspiring Student Success Program, Peer Support, Peer Mentoring, Student Leadership Opportunities, YMCA Programs, Year 7 and Year 11 Camps, Learning Engagement Centre Programs, School Police Liaison Officer presentations, and referral through the Learning and Support Team.

- identification of bullying issues through early intervention and communicating issues to staff and parents where necessary
- clearly identified consequences for inappropriate or bullying behaviour
- reinforcement and communication to whole school community of the school's position of zero tolerance for bullying
- communicating to parents and caregivers that they have an important role to play in resolving incidents of bullying involving their children

Building Resilience
Resilience is how individuals respond to threatening or stressful situations, and is about how we 'bounce back' from challenges. In protecting against bullying, building resilience can substantially minimize the effects of bullying, and is crucial in helping students to develop the ability to cope in spite of adversity and achieve positive outcomes.

Resilience is changeable and can be built upon. Resilience programs are provided for all students through the student welfare programs organized by the Welfare Team. Resilience includes having the confidence to speak up about situations, such as bullying, and building the strength to maintain positive mental health and wellbeing in challenging situations.

Resilience is a significant protective factor in bullying situations. It gives students the confidence to stand up for themselves and others in positive ways, report bullying, and recover from bullying incidents. Resilient young people are also less likely to be bullies.

Anti-Bullying in the Curriculum

East Hills Girls Technology High School provides programs to recognise the value of diversity, the importance of positive and respectful relationships, and the negative and harmful impacts of bullying behaviour.

Prevention programs are delivered as part of the curriculum across KLAs.

- Prevention strategies, embracing diversity and promoting positive relationships are addressed through units in the PDHPE programs, mandatory for Years 7-10.
- The PDHPE Senior program focuses on fostering understanding and recognition of relationships, resilience and being an individual within facets of personal, social and community identity.
- Social and emotional learning is covered in the English and Drama curriculum through study of texts and characters.
- Recognition of cultural diversity and acceptance showcased in Visual Arts through multicultural studies.
- The promotion of empathy and understanding towards the Multifaceted history of Australia, including Aboriginal Australia.
- The promotion of appropriate online behaviours addressed in the Internet and Website Development unit in Stage 5 Information and Software Technology.

Welfare programs for anti-bullying and positive relationships

A range of anti-bullying initiatives are embedded in the school's Anti Bullying Plan
wellbeing policy.

All year groups:
- Harmony Day develops intercultural understanding
- R U OK? Day emphasises the need for strong relationships and the importance of friendship in mental health and wellbeing
- Public recognition, awards and rewards for positive behaviour
- National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence Initiatives

Early Intervention

Early intervention of bullying behaviour is crucial if schools are to be most effective in managing bullying.

At East Hills Girls Technology High School we will respond to issues as they are identified as it is understood that those who are engaged in bullying and are bullied can experience long term effects.

Staff will respond to and provide support of students who may be at risk of bullying or who are developing long term difficulties with social relationships or who may be identified as using anti-social and bullying behaviour.

Strategies include:

- Referral to the Year Coordinator and/or Head Teacher Student Support

- Referral to the School Counsellor

- Referral to the Student Support Officer

- Implementation of social skills and programs that support positive choices

- Celebrating student success

Response

EHGTHS has a clear plan to respond to incidents of bullying. The Anti-bullying Plan empowers the whole school community to recognise and respond appropriately to bullying, harassment and victimisation and behave as responsible bystanders. Welfare and discipline strategies will be implemented as part of this plan.

The East Hills Girls Technology High School community will recognise and respond appropriately to bullying.

School staff have a responsibility to:

- Actively supervise the playground and ensure incidents are followed up promptly and effectively
- Record all reported incidents on our Sentral Wellbeing system
- Seek involvement from Year Coordinator and/or Head Teacher Student Support
- Work with parents to identify issues and encourage them to proactively use strategies as outlines in the Anti-Bullying Plan
- Involve students in restorative practices
- Work with students who demonstrate anti-social behaviour through a support program
- Work with victims of bullying through a support program
- Be a mentor when nominated by a student who feels intimidated or bullied
- Maintain communication with parents about ongoing strategies until the matter is resolved
- Provide victims of bullying access to school Psychologist or Chaplain for support if requested and/or applicable
- Involve outside agencies in individual programs if applicable
- Follow school's School Behaviour Support and Management Plan.

Response

Students may be proactive and take responsibility to resolve issues. Students understand that they are in control and can act in the most positive and proactive manner.

Proactive steps for students:

Step 1 - Proactive strategies for bullying behaviours:
- Ignore the bullying. Turn your back and walk away.
- Act unimpressed or pretend you don't care what they say or do to you. You could say, "Okay, whatever" and walk away.
- Say "No" or "Just stop!" firmly to the person bullying you.

Step 2 - Reporting the bullying behaviour
- Talk to friends who can help report it to a teacher or Year Advisor
- Talk to parents
- Talk to a teacher or Year Advisor
- Refer it to school executive (Head Teacher Student Support, Deputy Principal, Principal)

Students:
- are encouraged to tell a staff member if they are being bullied or they suspect another student is being bullied.
- will be encouraged to seek assistance and complete an incident referral form to ensure the prompt follow up on any issues.
- may seek support through counselling and meeting with school psychologists or chaplain. This will require seeking assistance from a Year advisor, through parent, self referral or staff member referrals.
- may be involved in mediation sessions, workshops and teacher meetings to resolve issues.
- will be encouraged to follow the EHGTHS School Behaviour Support and Management Plan
- who are not bullied but are aware of others who are, will be encouraged to report it. This helps to protect those that are being bullied and also ensures that the bully can be helped too.

Parents may:
- encourage their child to adopt learnt strategies to deal with bullying
- encourage their child to inform the Year Coordinator or a staff member when bullying is occurring
- inform the school of incidents of bullying
- expect feedback in a reasonable timeframe
- seek involvement from a staff member

Response to cyberbullying

School staff may:
- ensure each student is safe and arrange support where required
- gather information about suspected cyberbullying
- involve the School Police Liaison Officer to address Cyber Safety to all students in Years 7–12
- report the matter to the parent involved, discuss the matter and how best to resolve the issue
- document issues on Sentral
- implement the Department of Education Suspension Procedures if required at the discretion of the Principal

Students may:
- tell a trusted adult (Year Advisor, teacher, parent)
- block the sender's messages if possible – never reply to harassing messages
- keep evidence of any cyberbullying to assist in identifying the bully and potentially reporting the matter to the police (screen captures, texts and messages)
- keep parents/staff informed of any further messages from the bully

Parents may:

- monitor their child's use of technology, including their child's use of social media sites and messaging services
- keep evidence of any bullying (see student's responsibilities)
- report any concerns to the service providers (if SMS is involved), website administrator (if social networking or chat services are involved), or internet service provider, as most have measures to assist with tracking or blocking the bully
- report to police, especially if the bullying includes physical threats. Most incidents of cyberbullying can be traced and it's a criminal offence to use a mobile phone or any form of communication to menace or harass or offend another person.
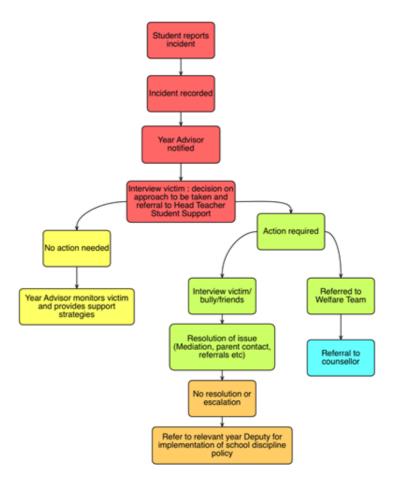
Procedures for reporting Bullying

- Students are to immediately report to Year Advisors or teachers all incidents of bullying either verbally or in writing
- Parents with concerns about bullying should contact the school by appointment, phone, email or in writing
- All bullying incidents will be taken seriously
- Each incident will be recorded on Sentral by teacher notified/teacher who witnessed incident, sending the Sentral report to appropriate Year Advisor.
- Witness and victim statements will be taken (written statements) and given to the appropriate Year Advisor.
- Teacher should verbally contact appropriate Year Coordinator to follow up incident.
- The Year Coordinator will mediate and enforce consequences appropriate for situation.
- Depending on the severity of the incident, the DP and Principal will be notified and they will follow the incident up.
- In the case of cyberbullying, the police may need to be contacted to make a report.

Serious incidents involving assault, threat, intimidation or harassment:
- may have disciplinary action taken
- may be reported to the School Safety and Response Unit by the school
- may be reported to the police by the Deputy Principal or Principal

Flowchart for reporting bullying behaviour

Child Wellbeing

Where concerns about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of children or young people are evident these concerns must be reported to the Deputy Principal responsible for the Year Group and/or Psychologist. The Deputy Principal will make a decision about the level of risk to a student and what action to take. It is critical that all relevant information is considered.

Complaints Handling Policy

The Department of Education Complaints Handling Policy Guidelines will be used to manage complaints. The school can be contacted in writing regarding concerns or issues. A response is expected within 20 days.

Every incident will be taken seriously and through reports and observations students can expect immediate response as appropriate. Students can appeal this.

In addition, staff can be directed to access the Employee Assistance Program.

Promoting and publicising the Anti-Bullying Plan

The Anti-Bullying Plan will be distributed to all staff members and relevant community groups.

The Anti-Bullying Plan will be placed on the school website for parents and they will be informed of its location.

Students will be informed of the plan by the Year Coordinator and/or the Deputy Principal responsible for their year group.

Communicating the Anti-Bullying Plan

The plan and strategies put in place will be evaluated on an ongoing basis and will be formally reviewed at least once every three years by noting if there has been a reduction in reported or observed incidences of bullying and maintaining contact with students, staff and parents regarding reported incidences. An annual plan will be published on the school website each year.

Additional Information

NSW Anti-bullying   website
Bullying of Students- Prevention and Response Policy

Kids Helpline   1800 55 1800

Headspace

Beyond blue   1300 22 4636

Think U Know: Australian Federal Police

Office of the eSafety Commissioner

National Centre Against Bullying

MindMatters