



## **BULLYING (Including Cyberbullying) POLICY**

The agreed national definition for Australian schools describes bullying as

- ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm;
- involving an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening;
- happening in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records);
- having immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.

Behaviours that do not constitute bullying include:

- mutual arguments and disagreements (where there is no power imbalance)
- not liking someone or a single act of social rejection
- one-off acts of meanness or spite
- isolated incidents of aggression, intimidation or violence.

However, these conflicts are still considered serious and are addressed and resolved. At Mackay North State High School our staff work quickly to respond to any matters raised of this nature in collaboration with students and parents.

### **Cyberbullying**

Cyberbullying is treated at Mackay North State High School with the same level of seriousness as in-person bullying. The major difference with cyberbullying however, is that unlike in-person bullying, cyberbullying follows students into their community, their homes and their bedrooms, giving them no opportunity to escape the harassment or abuse during the evening, weekends or holidays.

In the first instance, students or parents who wish to make a report about cyberbullying should approach the regular Home Group teacher or year coordinator, or make a report using Stymie (see below). Staff can be approached directly by students or parents for assistance in preventing and responding to cyberbullying.

Mackay North State High School utilises the resource of STYMIE, a social media anti bullying reporting framework to allow students and parents the opportunity to report bullying anonymously. [stymie.com.au](http://stymie.com.au) encourages students to support their peers by making anonymous notifications through their site. These notifications will be about other students who are being bullied or experiencing harm at MNSHS. Students can also make notifications about illegal activity and any other kind of harm to the school community. The notifications can include evidence such as screen shots of Facebook conversations or text messages and are automatically forwarded to the school administration at MNSHS. The first conversation the Administration will have, will be with the student who is experiencing harm - they will know they are not alone. Mackay North State High School is committed to supporting all students in being able to make positive choices about bullying and harm in our community.



Stymie promotes the pro-social responsibilities of bystanders and outlines their responsibilities in the cycle of bullying. We are empowering Mackay North State High School students to stand up for each other without fear. Stymie Notifications provide supporting documentation to assist the person being bullied, the parents and the teachers, to stymie the bullying cycle.

Stymie fosters pro-social values, physical and emotional safety and enhances interpersonal skills and self-awareness. It is important for students, parents and staff to know that state school principals have the authority to take disciplinary action to address student behaviours that occur outside of school hours or school grounds. This includes cyberbullying. Parents and students who have concerns about cyberbullying incidents occurring during school holidays should immediately seek assistance through the [Office of the e-Safety Commissioner](#) or the Queensland Police Service.

Students enrolled at Mackay North State High School may face in-school disciplinary action, as per the stages of behaviour management outlined in the Student Code of Conduct, such as detention or removing of privileges, or more serious consequences such as suspension or exclusion from school for engaging in behaviour that adversely affects, or is likely to adversely affect, other students or the good order and management of the school. This includes behaviour such as cyberbullying which occurs outside of school hours or settings, for example on the weekend or during school holidays. It also applies to inappropriate online behaviour of enrolled students that is directed towards other community members or students from other school sites.

Parents or other stakeholders who engage in inappropriate online behaviour towards students, staff or other parents may be referred to the Office of the e-Safety Commissioner and/or the Queensland Police Service. State school staff will be referred for investigation to the Integrity and Employee Relations team in the Department of Education. Any questions or concerns about the school process for managing or responding to cyberbullying should be directed to the school Principal.

## Mackay North State High School - Cyberbullying response flowchart for school staff

### How to manage online incidents that impact your school

#### Student protection

If at any point the principal forms a reasonable suspicion that a student has been harmed or is at risk of harm, they have a responsibility to respond in accordance with the [Student protection procedure](#).

#### Explicit images

If the investigation involves naked or explicit images of children, staff should not save, copy, forward or otherwise deal with the content, as per the [Temporary removal of student property by school staff procedure](#). This includes onto OneSchool records. Refer to the investigative process outlined in 'Responding to incidents involving naked or explicit images of children' from the [Online Incident management guidelines](#).

#### Report

Refer to the [Online incident management guidelines](#) for more details, or if assistance is required, contact the Cybersecurity and Reputation Management (CSR) team on 3034 5035 or [Cybersafety.ReputationManagement@qed.qld.gov.au](mailto:Cybersafety.ReputationManagement@qed.qld.gov.au).

Does the online behaviour/incident **negatively impact the good order and management** of the school?

