

Aotearoa Infinite Academy

Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy



Purpose

Aotearoa Infinite Academy is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and respectful online and community-based learning environment. Bullying, harassment, and discrimination of any kind — whether in person or online — are not tolerated.

This policy explains what bullying is, how we prevent it, and what students and staff should do if it happens. It reflects our legal obligations under the Education and Training Act 2020, Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, and Harmful Digital Communications Act 2015, and aligns with our wider Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

What Counts as Bullying or Harassment

Bullying is repeated behaviour by an individual or group that causes harm, fear, or distress. It can be:

- Verbal or written — name calling, threats, teasing.
- Social or emotional — exclusion, humiliation, spreading rumours.
- Physical — hitting, pushing, or intimidation (including threats).
- Digital (cyberbullying) — sending hurtful messages, posting offensive content, sharing private images, impersonating someone online.

Harassment includes any unwanted, offensive, or intimidating behaviour that targets someone's identity (e.g. race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion).

Preventing Bullying

Aotearoa Infinite Academy actively builds a culture of respect and safety by:

- Teaching safe and respectful digital behaviour through our Learning for Life (LfL) and wellbeing programmes.
- Reinforcing expectations for kindness and positive conduct in our Student Code of Conduct.
- Moderating online platforms and chat functions to keep digital spaces safe.
- Providing clear reporting options for students and families.
- Offering staff training to recognise and address bullying, including online.

Reporting Bullying or Harassment

Students, families, and staff are encouraged to speak up early if bullying or harassment occurs.

Students can:

- Talk to their Form Teacher or Dean.
- Reach out to the School Counsellor for confidential support.
- Contact a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) directly.
- Use the “I Need Help” button in Infinite Learn or fill in the online Report a Concern form.

Parents and caregivers can:

- Contact the Form Teacher or Dean directly.
- Email the Safeguarding team if the issue is serious or ongoing.

Every report is taken seriously, recorded confidentially, and followed up.

Netsafe has helpful resources for children & young people: <https://netsafe.org.nz/>. Extra support outside of Aotearoa Infinite Academy may be obtained through the following:

- Email: help@netsafe.org.nz
- Call: 0508 638 723 (Open Mon–Fri, 8am–6pm)
- Submit an online harm report: netsafe.org.nz/report
- Text: “Netsafe” to 4282

Response to Bullying

Aotearoa Infinite Academy investigates and manages bullying and harassment case by case, guided by fairness, respect, and student safety.

We will:

- Act promptly and impartially — gather facts quickly and fairly.
- Treat everyone with respect and dignity — maintain privacy and avoid blame before facts are clear.
- Give each person involved the right to be heard.
- Remain unbiased — decisions are made neutrally and transparently.
- Consider culture and context, including whānau engagement and cultural safety.

Where needed, AIA may:

- Contact and meet with parents/guardians.
- Facilitate restorative or mediated conversations between students.
- Provide education or coaching on safe and respectful behaviour.
- Apply our Behaviour Management Policy for sanctions (including stand-down or suspension in severe cases).

- Involve Police, Oranga Tamariki, or other agencies where there is serious risk or harm.

Support for affected students may include:

- Access to the School Counsellor or pastoral care team.
- Regular check-ins from Form Teachers or Deans.
- Referral to external wellbeing or specialist services.

Online Safety

Because most learning at Aotearoa Infinite Academy happens online, we pay particular attention to cyberbullying and digital harm. Online spaces are part of our classrooms, and safety there matters just as much as in-person.

We work to keep digital learning environments safe by:

- Preventing and removing harmful content: Aotearoa Infinite Academy monitors school platforms and will act to block, report, or remove harmful or offensive material.
- Helping students use safety tools: we teach our students how to mute, block, or report inappropriate messages, and support them if they are unsure how to respond to something unsafe.
- Teaching privacy and safe sharing, including how to protect personal information, understand the risks of sharing images or personal details, and manage online presence responsibly.
- Educating about the law: we teach our students about New Zealand's Harmful Digital Communications Act 2015 and how serious online harassment, image-based harm, and threats can have legal consequences.

Please also refer to our Online Safety Policy, which explains how we manage technology use, digital risks, and our students' rights and responsibilities in Aotearoa Infinite Academy's online learning environment.

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