Australian Islamic College of Sydney

Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedure

Australian Islamic College of Sydney policies have a commitment to Australian Islamic ethos and values, and should be read in conjunction with other policies and procedures and with relevant legislation.

POLICY REVIEW

The policy will be reviewed not less frequently than once every two years.

POLICY DATES			
Implemented	December 2014	Reviewed Updated	December 2022 February 2024 January 2026 15 October 2026
Next Review Due		January 2028 or earlier if required	
POLICY OWNER		**POLICY APPROVER**	
Mohammed Riaaz Ali PRINCIPAL		AICS Board	

1. PURPOSE

Australian Islamic College of Sydney (AICS) is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and respectful learning environment in which every student is valued, protected from harm and able to participate fully in school life.

Consistent with Islamic values of kindness, compassion, justice, respect and personal accountability, and the NSW Anti-Bullying Framework, the College takes a proactive, coordinated and evidence-informed approach to preventing, identifying and responding to bullying and cyberbullying. This policy is aligned with the NSW Anti-Bullying Framework's four components; **Preventing, Responding, Partnering and Implementing.**

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to bullying involving students at school, during school activities, on excursions, during travel associated with school activities and through online or digital interactions where student safety, wellbeing or participation in school life may be affected.

It applies to all students regardless of background, disability, culture, religion, gender or individual circumstances. Staff, parents and carers are expected to support the College's commitment to respectful behaviour and student safety.

3. DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying is typically ongoing and deliberate behaviour involving a misuse of power in a situation, intended to cause physical, social or psychological harm and which is difficult for the targeted student to stop.

Bullying may be:

- **Physical:** hitting, pushing, intimidation or damaging belongings.
- **Verbal:** repeated insults, threats, name-calling or humiliating comments.
- **Social or relational:** deliberate exclusion, spreading rumours or encouraging others to reject a student.
- **Cyberbullying:** harmful online behaviour, including repeated harassment, threats, humiliation or the circulation of hurtful content.
- **Covert:** hidden or indirect actions intended to isolate, intimidate or harm another student.

This is not an exhaustive list as there can be other forms of bullying.

A single incident, disagreement or act of unkindness may not meet the definition of bullying but will still be assessed and addressed appropriately. Discrimination, harassment, violence, threats and other serious misconduct will be managed under the relevant College policies and applicable requirements, whether or not they constitute bullying.

4. POLICY PRINCIPLES

The College will:

1. Maintain clear expectations for respectful behaviour and zero tolerance for bullying behaviour.
2. Respond promptly, fairly and consistently to reports of bullying and other harmful conduct.
3. Prioritise student safety, wellbeing, dignity and access to education.
4. Provide appropriate support to affected students and students whose behaviour has caused harm.
5. Apply proportionate consequences and educational interventions, taking account of the seriousness, frequency, impact and circumstances of the behaviour.
6. Protect privacy and handle reports sensitively, sharing information only with those who need it to respond appropriately.
7. Work collaboratively with students, families, staff and external support services.
8. Monitor incidents and outcomes to improve the effectiveness of prevention and response strategies.

The College does not tolerate/allow corporal punishment of any kind**.** The principles of procedural fairness will be followed at all times when dealing with cases.

5. PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION

The College will implement a whole-school approach that includes:

- Explicit teaching and modelling of respect, empathy, inclusion, emotional regulation, conflict resolution and responsible online behaviour.
- Clear, age-appropriate behaviour expectations across classrooms, playgrounds, online environments and school activities.
- Consistent supervision and early identification of students experiencing distress, exclusion or repeated peer difficulties.
- Inclusive practices that respect cultural, linguistic, religious and individual differences.
- Opportunities for students to raise concerns and contribute to wellbeing initiatives.
- Staff training on recognising, reporting, documenting and responding to bullying, including covert and online behaviour.
- Communication with families about expected behaviour, reporting pathways and strategies for reinforcing respectful relationships.
- Conduct relevant, targeted and meaningful anti-bullying programs, workshops and presentations.

6. REPORTING BULLYING

Students, parents and carers, staff and other members of the College community are encouraged to report suspected bullying as soon as possible.

Reports may be made to a teacher, class teacher, Head of Department, Head of School, wellbeing staff or the Principal by emailing on communication@aics.nsw.edu.au Students

may also approach the first available staff member or a staff member of their choice to report incident of bullying.

Reports should include, where known, the students involved, the nature and timing of the behaviour, locations or online platforms, witnesses and any relevant evidence such as screen shots or records of texts, videos, photos, calls and messaging.

Staff who receive or observe a report must:

1. Act promptly to address immediate safety concerns.
2. Listen calmly, respectfully and without judgement.
3. Report the matter to the appropriate school executive staff.
4. Record the information objectively on SEQTA.
5. Avoid promising absolute confidentiality or undertaking an informal investigation beyond their authority.

Anonymous reports will be assessed on the information available. The College will take reasonable steps to protect students from retaliation for raising concerns in good faith.

7. RESPONSE AND INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES

Step 1 — Immediate safety and support

The receiving staff member must take reasonable steps to protect students from immediate harm. Where necessary, the College will arrange supervision, separation of students, access to a trusted adult, medical assistance or other appropriate protective measures.

Serious threats, physical violence, suspected abuse or immediate danger must be escalated without delay to the Head of Wellbeing (HoW) or Head of Schools in the absence of HoW and managed under relevant emergency, child-protection and other applicable procedures. The principal must be informed as well.

Step 2 — Recording and initial assessment

The incident must be documented as soon as practicable. The Principal or delegate will assess the reported behaviour, immediate risks, potential impact, relevant history and any previous incidents.

Incidents will be triaged according to their seriousness, urgency, recurrence and impact. High-risk matters will receive immediate leadership attention. Other matters will be managed through an appropriate and timely response.

Step 3 — Prompt response and investigation

The College will make reasonable efforts to respond within two school days of becoming aware of an incident, consistent with the NSW Anti-Bullying Framework. This includes taking steps to assess safety, provide initial support and commence appropriate action. Complex investigations may require additional time.

The Principal or delegate will, as appropriate:

- Speak separately with the students involved and relevant witnesses.
- Obtain relevant accounts, messages, screenshots or other available evidence.
- Give students a fair opportunity to respond to the allegations.
- Consider the context, pattern of behaviour, power imbalance, impact and any relevant history.
- Maintain impartiality, procedural fairness and appropriate confidentiality.
- Determine whether the behaviour constitutes bullying, another form of misconduct, conflict or an inconclusive allegation requiring further monitoring.

Students will not be required to confront one another or participate in mediation where this would compromise their safety or be inappropriate in the circumstances.

Step 4 — Findings and action

Following assessment, the Principal or delegate will determine appropriate action based on the available evidence and applicable policies.

Possible responses include:

- Clear behavioural directions, education and restorative processes where appropriate and safe.
- Counselling, mentoring, social and emotional skills development or targeted behaviour support.
- Increased supervision, adjustments to school routines or individual safety plans.
- Formal disciplinary action under the College's behaviour and discipline policies, including suspension, expulsion or other lawful consequences where warranted.
- Referral to external agencies or authorities where required or appropriate.

Actions will be proportionate to the behaviour, its impact, the student's circumstances and the risk of recurrence. Supportive interventions do not prevent the College from imposing appropriate disciplinary consequences.

Step 5 — Communication and follow-up

The College will communicate appropriately and respectfully with the relevant parents or carers, subject to privacy and legal obligations. Parents will be informed of matters affecting their child, the support available and relevant next steps. Information about another student's personal circumstances or disciplinary details will not ordinarily be disclosed.

The College will check whether the behaviour has stopped, whether affected students feel safe and whether interventions are effective. Additional action will be taken if bullying continues, retaliation occurs or new information emerges.

8. SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

The College will consider the individual needs of all students involved, including:

- Students experiencing bullying: emotional support, safety planning, trusted staff contacts, supervision adjustments and referrals where appropriate.

- Students engaging in bullying: clear accountability, proportionate consequences, behavioural goals, mentoring and support to develop respectful alternatives.
- Witnesses and other affected students: guidance on reporting concerns safely, supporting peers and avoiding participation in harmful behaviour.

Support may be universal, targeted or individualised according to the student's needs. The College will make reasonable efforts to involve students and parents in developing appropriate support plans.

9. CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying reports will be assessed and addressed with the same seriousness as other bullying reports. The College may take appropriate action where online conduct affects student safety, wellbeing or participation in school life, even where the conduct occurs outside school hours.

Students and parents should preserve relevant evidence, report concerns to the College and, or seek assistance from the eSafety Commissioner or other relevant authorities. Students must not retaliate, redistribute harmful content or engage in further harassment.

10. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Board of Directors

- Provides governance oversight and ensures the policy is reviewed and supported by appropriate school-wide systems, legislation and regulations.

Principal

- Leads implementation, ensures reports are appropriately assessed and managed, oversees serious matters, allocates resources and monitors compliance and outcomes.
- Provides staff training and professional development.

School Executives and Wellbeing staff

- Coordinate incident assessment, support plans, investigations, referrals, documentation and follow-up within their delegated responsibilities.

All staff

- Model respectful behaviour, supervise students, respond to concerns, report incidents promptly and maintain accurate records.

Students

- Treat others respectfully, refrain from bullying and retaliation, report concerns and cooperate honestly with reasonable school processes. Live by Islamic values such as kindness, care, unity, respect and honesty.
- Don't use a mobile phone/ device or Artificial Intelligence (AI) to engage in bullying, harassment, threats, inappropriate messaging/photos/videos or other misconduct.

Parents and carers

- Encourage respectful behaviour, report concerns through appropriate College channels, provide honest and relevant information and work collaboratively with the College. Do not resort to aggression, violence and malicious acts.

11. RECORD-KEEPING, MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Principal or delegate will maintain accurate, objective and secure records of reports, assessments, actions, communications and follow-up. Access will be restricted to authorised personnel in accordance with applicable privacy, records-management and child-protection requirements.

The Principal or delegate will periodically review incident trends, repeat reports, locations, student wellbeing information and the effectiveness of interventions. Findings will inform supervision arrangements, prevention programs, staff training and policy improvements.

This policy will be reviewed at least annually, with input from relevant staff, students and parents where appropriate, and updated to maintain alignment with applicable requirements and the NSW Anti-Bullying Framework.

12. RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

This policy must be read in conjunction with the College's relevant:

- Student Behaviour and Discipline Policy.
- Student Wellbeing Policy.
- Child Protection Policy.
- Complaints Handling Policy.
- Student Attendance Policy.
- Phone and Social media policy.