Trinity Anglican School (TAS) seeks to be an inclusive environment that welcomes children and families of all backgrounds. Within the context of a Christian school, children of every race, colour and creed are welcomed and celebrated and the overarching concern is that the safety, wellbeing and best interests of each child are paramount. Every child has a right to be protected from harm or risk of harm at school.

A Definition of Bullying

Bullying is a systematic and repeated abuse of power. It is deliberate, calculated and intended to hurt. In general, bullying may include:
- dominating or hurting someone;
- unfair action by the perpetrator(s) and an imbalance of power;
- a lack of adequate defence by the target and feelings of oppression and humiliation.
(Rigby, 2010)

Bullying may manifest in a number of ways.

1. **Physical Bullying**

This is when a person (or group of people) uses physical actions to bully, such as hitting, poking, tripping or pushing. Repeatedly and intentionally damaging someone's belongings is also physical bullying.

2. **Verbal Bullying**

This may involve repeated or systematic name-calling, insults, homophobic or racist, discriminatory remarks about religion and other verbal abuse.

3. **Covert Bullying**

Might involve lying about someone, spreading rumours, playing nasty jokes that make another person feel humiliated or powerless, mimicking or deliberately excluding someone.

4. **Psychological Bullying**

This might include threatening, manipulating, excluding or stalking someone.

5. **Cyber Bullying**

Using technology, such as email, mobile phones, chat rooms, social networking sites to bully verbally, socially or psychologically. *(National Centre Against Bullying)*

**What is Not Bullying**

Dr Ken Rigby (2010) identifies that for some people the term ‘bullying’ is a highly emotive term and its use may lead to an over-reaction. It is important therefore to identify what bullying is not.
The National Centre Against Bullying acknowledges that while the following behaviours are often upsetting to those involved, they do not constitute bullying:
- 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.

While these behaviours would not be considered bullying (because they do not involve deliberate and repeated harm and the exploitation of a power imbalance) they need to be addressed in the same way as other inappropriate student behaviours.

Dealing with Bullying at TAS

In addressing the issue of bullying at TAS, the school seeks to pursue a path that holds the principles of a restorative approach in dealing with young people recognising their age, stage of development and relative immaturity.

In addressing issues of bullying at TAS, there are four, school based pathways to be followed.

**First Pathway - Open Discussion**

When an issue of bullying is first reported in our school, the parties involved will be interviewed separately and written statements will be obtained and later filed. The parties will then be brought together to allow each to communicate their position and understand the position of the other in the presence of the interviewer. The party or parties at fault will apologise and will be asked to modify their behaviour without retribution. A letter will be sent to parents or the parties involved documenting the process.

**Second Pathway - Formal Interview (punitive response and counselling offer)**

A repeat of an issue dealt with via the first pathway will lead to a formal interview comprising the following people:
- Students involved (victim and perpetrator)
- Parents of both students
- Class Teacher (White Rock or Kewarra Beach Junior) or Head of House (White Rock Senior) of both students
- Head of Junior School (White Rock or Kewarra Beach Junior) or Deputy Principal

Punitive measures will be implemented as deemed appropriate along with the suggestion that both parties seek either internal or external counselling. Letters to all parties involved will document the process.

**Third Pathway - Suspension**

A repeat of an issue dealt with via the second pathway will lead to the guilty party / parties being suspended from TAS. Parents will be contacted by telephone and asked to come to the school to meet with the Principal and Head of House. It will be a condition of return that a student suspended as above will have sought professional counselling either internally or external to the school during their suspension. The suspended student and their parents will be required to provide the Principal with a counsellor’s report indicating that significant progress has been made in terms of the counselling process. A formal letter confirming the above will document this whole process.
Fourth Pathway - Withdrawal / Exclusion

A repeat of an issue dealt with via the third pathway will lead to the Principal asking that the guilty party / parties be withdrawn from TAS. Failure to withdraw would lead to official exclusion from the school. This decision would not be made lightly and would involve the school taking all reasonable steps to assist the family of the affected student pastorally in rebuilding their child's educational opportunities elsewhere.

Responding to an Incident

While this process is clear and while it provides a structure to be followed, it is fair to say that each situation and the individuals concerned are unique. The school therefore reserves the right to assess each situation on its merits and respond in the most appropriate manner.