

Bullying Prevention Policy

1. Background

Bullying in any form is a risk to the integrity of Gateway Business College's (GBC) higher education operation, its reputation and the wellbeing of students and staff. Bullying prevention and mitigation are part of GBC's framework for the development and maintenance of an institutional environment in which the safety and wellbeing of students and staff are fostered and protected, where respect for all is promoted, and appropriate measures are implemented to address any instances of bullying that may occur.

2. Purpose

This policy establishes the framework for the prevention and mitigation of bullying at GBC. It outlines the principles, procedures and mechanisms to be implemented for preventing bullying, and the processes and disciplinary measures to be applied should bullying occur.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the *Compliance Framework Policy*, *Workplace Health and Safety Policy*, *Student Welfare Policy*, *Student Code of Conduct*, and *Staff Code of Conduct*.

3. Scope

This policy applies to GBC staff and students, and external members of GBC Boards and Committees.

4. Definitions

Alleged perpetrator: someone who has been accused of bullying, but has not yet been through an investigation process that follows the principles of procedural fairness.

Bullying: repeated behaviour that threatens, intimidates, humiliates or demeans an individual or group.

5. Principles

GBC will establish a bullying prevention culture in which the wellbeing of students and staff is fostered and protected through courtesy, respect and support for all.

GBC will ensure that students and staff are educated on bullying:

- What constitutes bullying behaviour
- The impact bullying can have
- The support services available
- The reporting mechanisms available for those who witness or experience bullying
- Disciplinary measures for bullying behaviour.

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GBC will provide counselling and ongoing support for staff and students affected by bullying.

GBC will ensure all processes and disciplinary measures outlined in this policy comply with GBC's legislative obligations as per the *Fair Work Act 2009*.

All staff and students at GBC must:

- Treat each other with courtesy and respect
- Promote a culture of courtesy and respect
- Identify, mitigate and report bullying.

Bullying behaviour is identified as repeated behaviour that threatens, intimidates, humiliates or demeans an individual or group.

Examples of bullying behaviour include, but are not limited to:

- Verbal bullying that is abusive or aggressive, through the use of offensive or threatening language, insulting language, derogatory language, shouting, screaming or yelling
- Physical bullying that is aggressive or violent in gesture or bodily contact causing fear or harm
- Inappropriate, rude or abusive communication via email, telephone calls, text messaging, on LMS discussion boards, or social media
- Sharing unkind, offensive or inappropriate images, messages or comments about a staff member or student, via electronic communication such as text messages, LMS discussion boards or social media
- Unreasonable manipulation of the work or study environment, by which a staff member or student is deliberately singled out, isolated, or subject to unrealistic deadlines and/or responsibilities
- Isolating or excluding individuals (or an individual) from activities within the workplace or study environment
- Harassment in physical, verbal or written form
- Spreading malicious rumours
- Sexual harassment
- Undermining a staff member's responsibility
- Allocating impossible tasks, or deliberately assigning someone meaningless tasks that do not relate to their job
- Withholding of any information that is deemed necessary for proper completion of a task
- Intentionally altering the duty/work rosters so as to inconvenience specific staff members
- Threatening or commenting on job security without any basis.

The following behaviours do not in and of themselves constitute bullying:

- Directions to adhere to GBC's policies, procedures and code of conduct
- The application of misconduct or academic integrity procedures
- The application of strategies that address unsatisfactory student progress
- The application of assessment due dates and late penalties
- Rational management practices such as performance management and disciplinary procedures
- Directions to undertake reasonable duties and instructions, even if these are not described in a staff member's position description.

6. Procedures

6.1 Promoting a culture that prevents bullying

GBC will promote bullying prevention by displaying bullying prevention materials and support materials on campus, run bullying prevention sessions for students during Orientation week and a Bullying Prevention Week each semester.

GBC will promote bullying prevention on the website and student portal by including bullying prevention and education information, links to GBC support services for those who experience bullying, and a link to Reachout.com.

6.2 Student education about bullying

Information on bullying prevention will be communicated to students during Orientation, on the GBC website, in the student handbook and reinforced in teaching and learning contexts.

Students will be provided with guidelines on what constitutes bullying, how to identify bullying, how to report bullying and the support services available to them if they experience bullying.

6.3 Staff education about bullying

Information on bullying prevention will be communicated to GBC staff during induction, on the GBC website and as part of ongoing professional development activities and workshops.

Staff will be provided with guidelines on what constitutes bullying, how to identify bullying, how to report bullying and the support services available to them if they experience bullying.

Academic staff will be provided with guidelines for addressing bullying behaviour they witness in teaching and learning contexts.

Supervisors will be provided with guidelines on how to address instances of bullying they witness amongst staff within their area of responsibility.

6.4 Reporting bullying

Academic staff should report bullying to the Dean or Human Resources.

Non-academic staff should report bullying to their supervisor or Human Resources.

Students should report bullying to their Subject Coordinator, Course Coordinator, the Dean or student support services.

6.5 Investigating bullying procedures and actions

GBC will investigate all reports and allegations of bullying.

Staff to staff bullying

Human Resources is responsible for responding to instances of staff to staff bullying. Human Resources will investigate all evidence of the alleged bullying behaviour before the reported behaviour is classified as bullying.

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Student to student bullying

The Course Coordinator is responsible for responding to instances of student to student bullying. The Course Coordinator will investigate all evidence of the alleged bullying behaviour before the reported behaviour is classified as bullying.

Student to staff and staff to student bullying

The Dean is responsible for responding to instances of student to staff bullying, and staff to student bullying. The Dean will investigate all evidence of the alleged bullying behaviour before the reported behaviour is classified as bullying.

In the case the allegation is found to substantiate bullying, the alleged perpetrator (staff member or student) must receive a written notification of the allegation. The notification will invite the staff member or student to attend a meeting with Human Resources, the Course Coordinator or Dean, as appropriate. They must be given at least ten days' notice of the meeting date, location, and time.

An explanation and evidence that supports the allegation of bullying must be provided to the staff member or student at the meeting. The staff member or student will be given an opportunity to respond to the bullying allegation at the meeting.

Meetings will be fair, impartial, and conducted with proper safeguards for the privacy and safety of both the person who experienced bullying and the alleged perpetrator.

After the meeting, Human Resources, the Course Coordinator or Dean, as appropriate, will make a decision based on the evidence provided and the outcome of the meeting.

The staff member or student who has been identified as bullying will be advised of the decision in writing, and disciplinary measures that apply.

The staff member or student who experienced bullying will be advised of the outcome of the meeting in writing.

6.6 Disciplinary measures

For staff

GBC may employ the following disciplinary measures for staff:

- A warning
- Compulsory attendance at bully prevention education sessions
- Demotion
- Termination of contract of employment.

For students

GBC may employ the following disciplinary measures for students:

- A warning
- Compulsory attendance at bullying prevention education sessions
- Suspension
- Termination of enrolment.

If the bullying is at a sufficient level of seriousness, GBC will report the matter to Police if necessary, and will cooperate fully with Police investigation.

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Disciplinary measures and penalties for bullying related to discrimination are outlined in the *Anti-Discrimination Policy*.

Disciplinary measures and penalties for bullying related to sexual harassment are outlined in the *Sexual Harassment and Assault Policy*.

6.7 Appeals

In the event the staff member or student accused of bullying wishes to appeal the outcome of a bullying investigation, GBC will make all reasonable attempts to resolve the issue in a way that is satisfactory to all parties internally, in the first instance.

Students can appeal as per the *Student Complaints and Appeals Policy*. If a student remains unsatisfied with the outcome of a decision, they can request an external resolution process under the *External Grievance Resolution Policy*.

This policy does not affect staff members' rights to access the Fair Work Commission.

If anyone perceives they are being victimised for reporting a claim of bullying, they should inform their supervisor and/or Human Resources.

6.8 Monitoring and improvement

All instances of bullying that are investigated by Human Resources, the Course Coordinator or Dean will be recorded, monitored and reported on for risk management and quality assurance. This data will be used for the development and improvement of bullying prevention strategies at GBC.

7. Records

Records associated with this policy will be maintained according to the Records Management Policy.

8. Related legislation

- Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Act 2011
- TEQSA Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021
- Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).
- The National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (the National Code 2018)
- the *Fair Work Act 2009*

9. Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Corporate Governance Board every three years, or more frequently should the Board deem it necessary.

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Version Control

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