Anti-Bullying and Non-Violence Policy

1. Objective

The objective of this Policy is to define the Cheshire School's approach to anti-bullying and non-violence within the school community.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to all students enrolled at Cheshire School, their parents, guardians or carers, staff as well as to other relevant members of the community such as volunteers and visitors.

3. Context and Guiding Principles

The Head of School and Cheshire School staff are committed to ensuring a healthy, supportive and secure environment for all students.

Implementation of this Policy will ensure that:

- Every student has the right to feel safe at school (including broader learning situations such as digital environments)
- Bullying or unacceptable behaviour including harassment, discrimination or a threat (with or without a weapon) or act of violence is not tolerated
- There are clear goals, standards and expectations for student behaviour
- The school environment is inclusive of all children and young people and diversity is valued and respected
- There exists a whole school approach to promoting respectful relationships
- There is a range of initiatives and strategies utilised to prevent and respond to bullying or unacceptable behaviour.

The Head of School is responsible for:

- Ensuring that all staff have read and understood this Policy and any future revised versions
- Ensuring that the practices of staff reflect the policy guidelines
- Utilizing Performance Management procedures if a staff member is not following this Policy
- Ensuring that both staff and families receive support following Critical Incidents, and if necessary are referred to any services considered to be appropriate
- Ensuring that all Critical Incidents are referred to the Governance and Risk Team to enable an independent investigation to be carried out
- Ensuring all parents, guardians and carers as well as students are aware of this Policy including referencing in the Parent Handbook
- Ensuring that relevant Professional Development Opportunities are available to assist all staff to maintain and improve their skills
- Ensuring staff and volunteers are briefed on the critical incident response action plans for serious incidents and are confident about supporting the people affected

The staff/volunteers are responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation of this Policy

- Ensuring students are safe within the school and broader online learning environments

- Ensuring there is every opportunity for students to alert teachers and other staff/volunteers to any concerns about safety or wellbeing

- Documenting and implementing Individual Behaviour Support Plans for students exhibiting bullying or violent behaviour and ensuring that all staff understand the strategies to be used.

The families/carers are responsible for:

- Providing their full cooperation and support in the implementation of this Policy

- Playing a vital part in the responsibility for student safety, learning and skill development, and having a primary role in modelling and teaching children and young people about appropriate behaviour and respectful relations

- Ensuring a shared responsibility for the student is had by both the school and family, and that the student is aware of this consistency of approach.

4.   Definitions

Word	Definition
Bullying	• Is when someone, or a group of people, deliberately upset or hurt another person or damage their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion. There is an imbalance of power in incidents of bullying with the bully or bullies having more power at the time due to age, size, status or other reasons.
Violence	• Is the damaging and destructive use of force by a person or group towards another person, group or property. This force can be physical, verbal, sexual or another action or behaviour and can involve an ongoing relationship between the parties. • Violence may involve provoked or unprovoked acts and can be a one-off incident or can occur over time. Violence may be used by those targeted by bullying or other unacceptable behaviour to try to redress the imbalance of power.
Threat	• A threat of violence is words or gestures expressing intent to use an act of force against a person with or without the threat of or use of weapon.

5. Policy

This Policy describes strategies used to provide a healthy, supportive and secure environment for all students.

Response to bullying:

Most incidents of bullying or unacceptable behaviour will not have a serious impact on individuals or the school and should be managed as quickly and effectively as possible guided by the evidence based restorative practices such as the no blame approach, the method of shared concern or a formal apology.

The Head of School, in aiming to be a respectful and safe school, ensures all staff at the school:

- Utilise a **relationship-based pedagogy** such as cooperative learning and problem based learning which contributes to student achievement and positive peer relationships
- Provide explicit instruction on **cybersafety** and **responsible use of digital technologies** including the internet

Violent Incidents

Every violent incident must be recorded through an OH&S Incident Report Form. Violent incidents include:

- Criminal activity, burglary, theft, vandalism and graffiti and property damage
- Serious threats made against a student, staff member, parent or carer, volunteer or visitor
- A serious physical assault requiring medical attention
- Threat of the use of a weapon
- Student, staff member, parent or carer, volunteer or visitor behaviour that could result in potential risk to another student, staff member, parent or carer, volunteer or visitor

All allegations of serious child abuse must be reported through the Child Protection Policy and Procedure.

Response to Violence

Cheshire School has zero tolerance for students concealing and/or bringing weapons onto school grounds. A student's enrolment at Cheshire School may be terminated in the event that they seriously threaten harm with the use of a weapon, or the threat of a concealed weapon.

A student maybe suspended from school for serious incidents of bullying and/or violence.

It is important to ensure that the level of response is appropriate to the incident and to avoid secondary problems arising due to:

- Not dealing with incidents
- Dealing with the incident ineffectively or
- Dealing in a manner which is disproportionate to the incident

Following the initial response to incidents of bullying and/or violence

A whole of school approach to repairing and rebuilding trust and relationships is essential following an incident that has had a serious impact on individuals or the school. Restorative practices are most effective in resolving issues and restore the sense of wellbeing for all involved.

Strategies will be implemented to restore wellbeing include:

- Providing debriefing and support for those involved

- Regularly monitoring the behaviour of the people involved in the incident

- Ensuring that the person who was harmed has a clear plan to report any further concerns to someone they have chosen

- Providing the opportunity for staff to have their questions answered and to talk about the incident amount themselves it has affected a broader group or the whole school

- Enabling parents of the students involved to have the opportunity to discuss the incident with staff

- Using specialised support staff including health and wellbeing professionals in the community to assist staff, students and parents in the medium to long term

- Reviewing incidents and implementing improvement to school responses and policies

Individual Behaviour Support Plans

An Individual Behaviour Support Plan is developed for each student including specific strategies for the successful return to school, if the student has been suspended. In general, if a student is suspended from school for unacceptable behaviour:

- A formal meeting with the parents may be required, at the determination of the Head of School, to discuss a plan and to ensure appropriate supports are identified and put into place

- A re-entry meeting will be held before school on the day of the student's return. This will include the Head of School, the classroom teacher, parent(s) and the student.

- Clear strategies will be agreed upon to assist the student in supporting positive behaviour.

6. **Associated Procedures**
    - 05.008 Enrolment Policy and Procedure
    - 05.006g Cyber Safety Policy
    - 001.1 Child Protection Policy and Procedure
    - 001.2 Child Safe Policy and Procedure
    - Parent Handbook
    - Student Code of Conduct
    - OH&S Incident Report Form

7. **Relevant Legislation Sources**
    - The Children's Services Act 1996
    - The Federal Disability Discrimination Act 1992
    - The Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010
    - The Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
    - Education and Training Reform Act 2006

8.   **Other Resources**

The following websites and resources provide useful information on prevention and responding to bullying, as well as supporting students who have been the target of bullying behaviours:

- Bully Stoppers
- Kids Helpline
- Lifeline
- Bullying. No Way!