



Term 2 Assembly Morning Comment

Friday 15 May 2026

Deputy Head Prefects, Lila Waghorn and Jake Farrelly



Lila: Good morning everyone. Today, we are not here just to talk about bullying. We are here to talk about the kind that happens here every single day. Not always with shouting. Not always with bruises. Sometimes it is quieter than that.

Jake: Sometimes bullying sounds like, "Relax, it's just a joke." But if one person is laughing and another person goes home thinking about it all night... maybe it was not that funny.

Lila: And bullying is never just one moment. It is repeated again and again. The same comments. The same exclusion. The same people being targeted until they start believing they deserve it.

Jake: It is the party everyone is talking about, except you were the one taken off the invite list. It is the group chat that suddenly goes silent when you message, then starts again without you. It is walking into school on Monday hearing everyone laugh about Saturday night, knowing you were deliberately left out. It is seeing photos posted online and realising your exclusion was public.

Lila: And for all those in Year 11, as Semi-formal gets closer, many of you are probably feeling excited. Your first Formal. The dresses, the suits, the photos. But sometimes that excitement turns into anxiety very quickly. Because suddenly it stops being about the Formal and starts being about the pre-functions. Who is invited. Who has somewhere to go. And who does not.

When we were in Year 11, this was no different. Exclusive pre-functions were being planned for months, invites were all over Snapchat, and it became the conversation before school, at morning tea, at lunch, and after school.

I could see people being left out, pretending they did not care if they did not make the cut. But you could tell it hurt. And I realised that for some people, this could completely shape what was supposed to be one of the most exciting nights of Year 11.

So instead of ignoring it, one of the boys and I decided to do something about it. We hired a local rugby clubroom and opened the invite to everyone in Year 11, including parents.



People judged it. People called it lame. We copped a lot of bullying for doing it this way. And honestly, we were not even sure who was going to turn up because a lot of people would not commit to coming.

But guess what? Everyone turned up. And honestly, it ended up being one of the best nights because everyone felt included.

And that is the thing about being an upstander. Most of the time, it is not some huge heroic act. It is just noticing something is wrong, showing empathy, and deciding not to ignore it.

Jake: And that is the thing about bullying. A lot of the time, it is not obvious. It is not physical. It is quieter than that. Sometimes it is exclusion, rumours, eye-rolling, comments under someone's breath, or making someone feel like they do not belong.

We also need to be honest about something, especially in boys' spaces. A lot of us use humour and banter as a way of connecting, and most of the time it is harmless. But sometimes it goes too far. A joke gets made, everyone laughs, and it keeps happening because no one wants to be the person who "can't take a joke." And when everyone laughs, the message is clear about who belongs – and who doesn't.

But impact matters more than intent. Even if something is meant as a joke, it can still make someone feel embarrassed, targeted, or excluded, especially when it keeps happening or everyone joins in. Most people do not mean harm, but that does not mean harm is not happening.

And sometimes we see it happening and do nothing. I think most people here have probably had a moment where they knew something was not right but stayed quiet because it felt awkward, because they did not want attention turned on them, or because they thought someone else would step in instead. I know I have.

And afterwards, it never feels good. You keep thinking maybe you should have said something, maybe you should have checked in, maybe you could have changed how that person felt in that moment.

Lila: Somehow, we made kindness embarrassing. Somehow, we made exclusion normal. But what actually changes if one more person gets included? And what could it mean to someone if they are not?

And the scary thing is, exclusion does not stop when school ends anymore. It follows people home through Snapchat, private stories, and group chats. Sometimes all it takes is one removed name from a group chat for someone to start questioning their worth. Sometimes people cannot even escape it when they leave school.

During high school, the people with the greatest power to shape how someone feels are often not teachers or parents – they are the people sitting beside them every day. Their peers. Which means every one of us has the power to make someone feel included... or completely alone.



Jake: That is why being an upstander matters so much. An upstander is not someone who is fearless or perfect. It is just someone who chooses to do something instead of nothing. It's someone who stays true to their values and speaks up for others. The little moments matter.

And honestly, those moments do not have to be dramatic. You do not have to stand in the middle of a crowd and give some huge speech. Sometimes being an upstander is just quietly sitting beside someone who is alone, inviting someone to join in, checking in afterwards, or saying, "That's not funny," when everyone else is laughing.

Those small actions seem small in the moment, but to the person on the receiving end, they can mean everything. Because when someone is being targeted, what they remember is not just who hurt them. They remember who noticed. They remember who stood beside them.

Lila: I want everyone here to think about that honestly for a second. Have you ever seen someone deliberately left out? Have you ever stayed quiet because speaking up felt awkward? And if we are being completely honest, have you ever been part of the excluding?

Jake: But speaking up is hard. A lot of people stay silent because they think they might make things worse or look stupid. But courage doesn't mean you don't feel fear; courage is acting despite it.

Lila: Because school is not just where we learn subjects. It is where we learn who we are. And bullying does not just happen because of bullies. It happens when good people decide it is easier not to get involved.

Jake: And the more people who choose to act, even in small ways, the more our culture changes. One person speaking up gives other people permission to do the same. It shows that kindness is not weak, inclusion is not uncool, and making people feel safe actually matters.

Lila: So next time you get the chance...

Jake: ...even if it is a small act...

Lila: Include someone.

Jake: Help somebody.

Lila: Notice someone sitting alone.

Jake: Stop a joke from going too far.

Lila: People might forget what was said in this assembly. But they will never forget how people made them feel at school. Always choose kindness!