



Bullying:

Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying in Schools Policy

The NSW Department of Education and Communities rejects all forms of bullying. No student, employee, parent, caregiver or community member should experience bullying within the learning or working environments of the Department.

Bullying

Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. Cyber bullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies.

Bullying can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and all forms of harassment including that based on sex, race, disability, homosexuality or transgender. Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long term effects on those involved including bystanders.

Conflict or fights between equals or single incidents are not defined as bullying.

Bullying behaviour can be:

- **verbal** eg name calling, teasing, abuse, putdowns, sarcasm, insults, threats
- **physical** eg hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting
- **social** eg ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating, making inappropriate gestures
- **psychological** eg spreading rumours, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions, malicious SMS and email messages, inappropriate use of camera phones.

The term “bullying” has a specific meaning. The school’s Anti-bullying Plan sets out **the processes for preventing and responding to student bullying**. The school has a range of policies and practices, including welfare and discipline policies that apply to student behaviour generally.

Schools exist in a society where incidents of bullying behaviour may occur. Preventing and responding to bullying behaviour in learning and working environments is a shared responsibility of all departmental staff, students, parents, caregivers and members of the wider school community.

School staff have a responsibility to:

- respect and support students
- model and promote appropriate behaviour
- have knowledge of school and departmental policies relating to bullying behaviour
- respond in a timely manner to incidents of bullying according to the school’s Anti-bullying Plan.

In addition, teachers have a responsibility to:

- provide curriculum and pedagogy that supports students to develop an understanding of bullying and its impact on individuals and the broader community.

Students have a responsibility to:

- behave appropriately, respecting individual differences and diversity
- behave as responsible digital citizens
- follow the school Anti-bullying Plan
- behave as responsible bystanders
- report incidents of bullying according to their school Anti-bullying Plan.

Parents and caregivers have a responsibility to:

- support their children to become responsible citizens and to develop responsible online behaviour
- be aware of the school Anti-bullying Plan and assist their children in understanding bullying behaviour
- support their children in developing positive responses to incidents of bullying consistent with the school Anti-bullying Plan
- report incidents of school related bullying behaviour to the school
- work collaboratively with the school to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur.

All members of the school community have a responsibility to:

- model and promote positive relationships that respect and accept individual differences and diversity within the school community
- support the school’s Anti-bullying Plan through words and actions
- work collaboratively with the school to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur.

Our School Anti-Bullying Plan

NSW public schools are committed to providing safe, supportive and responsive learning environments for everyone. We teach and model the behaviours we value in our students. [The Behaviour Code for Students](#) details expectations for all students in NSW Public Schools.

Bullying is not accepted at Woongarra Public School.

This plan applies to all student bullying behaviour, including cyber bullying, that occurs in school, and outside of school hours where there is a clear and close relationship between the school and the conduct of the student.

Preventing and responding to bullying behaviour is a shared responsibility of all staff, students, parents, caregivers and members of the wider school community.

Prevention

Prevention begins a positive school climate that acknowledges and promotes the fact that bullying is and will not be tolerated within our school community. All members of the school community contribute to the preventing bullying by modelling and promoting appropriate behaviour and maintaining a positive climate of respectful relationships where bullying is less likely to occur.

The prevention of bullying is embedded into teaching practices and programs, such as The Woongarra Way and Friendly Schools Program. Lessons focus on the forms of bullying and how to deal with issues when they arise. Students learn

about bystander behaviour and discuss the implications of such behaviour.

Students know and understand what behaviour is acceptable within our school. This occurs via the four school rules: Be Safe, Be Fair, Be Kind, Be Great. We teach students the key understandings and skills relating to positive relationships, safety, gender equity, discrimination, bullying and harassment.

Students are made to feel comfortable to report incidents of bullying to the staff and also feeling assured that their concerns will be taken seriously. Staff are committed to being alert and observant for acts of bullying in the classroom or playground and dealing with incidents as they occur.

Early Intervention

Teachers:

- ensure students know and understand what behaviour is acceptable with consistent class and school rules
- Teach the 'High Five' and what it looks like in practice



- Provide opportunities to practise social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and communication skills
- Regularly remind students to report incidents
- Reinforce the message: **It's OK to Tell**
- Recognise & acknowledge positive behaviours
- Implement early intervention support for students identified as being at risk of long-term difficulties with social skills

Other strategies include:

- parent nomination at the time of enrolment
- the student's previous school will identify any issues around bullying
- social skills groups and programs may be accessed when available
- Kindergarten Orientation Program will inform parents of school policy and procedures
- the School Counsellor service may be accessed for advice by staff or parents
- Students of concern are discussed at executive or Student Welfare meetings. Subsequent plans to prevent and/or deal with particular instances of bullying are identified.

Reporting Bullying

- Students and parents can report incidences of bullying to any teacher or executive.
- A box is located in each classroom for students to report concerns in writing if needed.
- Teaching staff are responsible for ensuring that incidences of bullying are dealt with in a manner

consistent with the policy and as soon as possible after it is reported.

- Attempts will be made to resolve matters at the school level in the first instance.

Response

For students:

- **Use the High Five**
- Tell the bully to stop. State quite clearly that the behaviour is unwelcome and offensive
- Try to stay calm. Be firm and strong even if you don't feel it. Look them straight in the eye and stand up tall.
- Try to speak in a strong voice. Say something like: "You might think that but I don't" or "That's not allowed at our school", or "Why are you doing this?"
- Use an "I" message. Express your feelings in an assertive way, e.g. "I want you to stop" or "Please don't do that. I don't like it."
- Tell the bully "If you keep doing that, I will tell a teacher"
- Walk away quietly, without looking back
- Go to a safe place, e.g. with other children, near a teacher
- Talk to someone who can help you. Tell them what has happened, how you feel and what they can do to help.
- Speak up – **It's OK to Tell**

Advice to students who know someone else who is being bullied:

- intervene as the bullying occurs by telling the offender to stop

- refuse to join in with the bullying or laugh at what the bully is doing
- support the student who is being bullied
- tell an adult if you are concerned about the bullying – **It's OK to Tell**

Strategies that do not work:

- Fighting back – this is just as bad as bullying and usually makes the problem worse. Fighting is against school rules because it is never a good answer.

For teachers:

- Once identified, speak with the bully, victim and witnesses. Investigate all incidents or allegations of bullying
- Give consideration as to why the bullying occurred, the bigger picture/contributing factors
- Offer assistance and support to both bully and victim
- Take appropriate action
- Use restitution where possible so that students learn to take responsibility for their own action
- Liaise with and report to parents
- Convene a meeting of relevant people following on-going bullying behaviour

For parents - If your child is being bullied:

- Listen carefully to your child
- Assure your child that it is not his / her fault
- Stay calm
- Get accurate details
- Give your child some strategies to cope. Practise the strategies

- If the problem persists seek assistance from the school
- Encourage your child to seek help in the playground or classroom from the teachers

For parents - If your child is bullying others:

- Initially you may be defensive and unbelieving. This is natural.
- Find out all the facts, preferably from the school. Telephoning other parents can stir up a lot of unnecessary concern
- Talk to your child, but do not blame
- Emphasise that bullying is not acceptable in your family
- Role-play alternative behaviours
- Seek assistance from school or health professionals
- Be specific, re consequences for continuing unacceptable behaviours

The school Discipline Policy outlines appropriate procedures of the consequences for inappropriate behaviour in the classroom and in the playground, including bullying.

Additional Information

The following internet sites are useful:

www.bullyingnoway.com.au
<http://www.kidshelp.com.au/kids/>
<http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/>
<http://au.reachout.com/>
<http://www.takeastandtogether.gov.au/>
Kids Helpline - 1800 55 1800