Bullying: Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying in Schools Policy (2011)

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

This plan outlines the processes for preventing and responding to student bullying in our school and reflects the *Bullying: Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying in Schools Policy* of the New South Wales Department of Education and Communities.

Through consultation with the whole school community this Anti-Bullying Plan has been developed. In the initial stages teachers were consulted and contributed to the plan. Once a draft plan was developed consultation from the P & C was sought and students on the SRC were also part of the consultation. Recommendations and suggestions were actioned, resulting in this plan. The plan will be reviewed on a regular basis – once every 3 years.

**Statement of purpose**

Students have the right to expect that they will spend the school day free from the fear of bullying, harassment and intimidation.

Wollongong West Public School does and will not tolerate bullying in any form. All members of the Wollongong West Public School community are committed to ensuring a safe and caring environment that promotes personal growth and positive self-esteem for all.

- Students attend Wollongong West Public School to participate in quality education that will help them to become self directed, lifelong learners who can create a positive future for themselves and the wider community.
- Any inappropriate behaviour that impedes teaching and learning at Wollongong West Public School and interferes with the wellbeing of students will not be accepted.
- Students, teachers, parents, caregivers and members of the wider school community have a shared responsibility to create a safe and happy environment, free from all forms of bullying.
- Students, teachers, parents, caregivers and members of the wider school community can expect:
  - that students will be safe at school, free from fear of bullying, harassment and intimidation
  - to be involved in the collaborative development of the school Anti-bullying Plan
  - to know what is expected of them and others in relation to the Anti-bullying Plan
  - that all students will be provided with appropriate support when bullying occurs.
- Students, teachers, parents, caregivers and members of the wider school community have a responsibility to:
  - promote positive relationships that respect and accept individual differences and diversity within the whole school community
  - contribute to the development of the Anti-bullying Plan and support it through words and actions
  - actively work together to resolve incidents of bullying behaviour when they occur.

**Protection**

Bullying is an act of aggression causing embarrassment, pain or discomfort to another. It can take many forms: physical, verbal, gesture, extortion, exclusion and electronic (cyber). It is an abuse of power.

Bullying is any behaviour used by a person to deliberately make another person feel embarrassed, hurt or uncomfortable. Any unkind action or comment will be considered to be bullying.
To ensure the involvement of parents and carers in the school’s anti-bullying policy, which is a vital component to the school’s goal of eliminating bullying and harassment, community involvement is essential.

**What is bullying?**

- Bullying is defined as **intentional, repeated behaviour** by an individual or group of individuals that causes distress, hurt or undue pressure.
- Bullying involves the abuse of power in relationships. Bullying can involve all forms of harassment (including sex, race, disability, homosexuality or transgender), humiliation, domination and intimidation of others.
- 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, email and social media messages, inappropriate use of camera phones.
- It can be planned and organised or may be unintentional. Individuals or groups may be involved.

Each group within the Wollongong West Public School community has a specific role in preventing and dealing with bullying.

- **Students** of Wollongong West Public School can expect to:
  - know that their concerns will be responded to by school staff;
  - be provided with appropriate support (for both the subjects of and those responsible for the behaviour); and
  - take part in learning experiences that address key understandings and skills relating to positive relationships, safety, gender equity, discrimination, bullying and harassment. These experiences will be guided by the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education syllabuses and other Key Learning Areas.

- **Students** of Wollongong West Public School have a responsibility to:
  - behave appropriately, respecting individual differences and diversity
  - follow the school Anti-bullying Plan; and
  - respond to incidents of bullying according to their school Anti-bullying Plan.

- **Parents and caregivers** of Wollongong West Public School have a responsibility to:
  - support their children in all aspects of their learning;
  - 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; and
  - support all students of the school to deal effectively with bullying through the strategies of the Anti-bullying Plan.

- **Wollongong West Public School** has a responsibility to:
  - develop an Anti-bullying Plan through consultation with parents, caregivers, students and the community, which clearly identifies both the behaviours that are unacceptable and the strategies for dealing with bullying in the classroom and playground;
  - inform students, parents, caregivers and the community about the School Discipline Code and Anti-bullying Plan;
  - provide students with strategies to respond positively to incidents of bullying behaviour, including responsibilities as bystanders or observers;
  - provide parents, caregivers and students with clear information on strategies that promote appropriate behaviour, and the consequences for inappropriate behaviour;
  - communicate to parents and caregivers that they have an important role to play in resolving incidents of bullying behaviour involving their children; and
  - follow up complaints of bullying, harassment and intimidation.

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**The Anti-Bullying Plan – NSW Department of Education and Communities**
• Teachers of Wollongong West Public School have a responsibility to:
  - respect and support students in all aspects of their learning;
  - model appropriate behaviour; and
  - respond in an appropriate and timely manner to incidents of bullying according to the school Anti-bullying Plan.

Prevention
At Wollongong West Public School, strategies are in place to effectively teach the skills and understandings that will lead to eliminating bullying behaviours.

These strategies are:
• taught across key learning areas; and
• reinforced consistently through school practices that promote respectful relationships.

These strategies will:
• empower the whole school community to recognise and respond appropriately to bullying and harassment; and
• contribute to the general health and wellbeing of all students.

Programs targeting peer support, peer mediation, mentoring, transition, conflict resolution, explicit teaching of the school values – Responsible, Respectful, Safe Learners, and student leadership are effective ways of developing school culture and student skills.

The programs that are implemented include:
• Child Protection – dedicated lessons and those contained within specific Connected Outcomes Groups;
• ‘Bullying – Identify, Cope, Prevent’ Anti-bullying program – Taught in Term 1 each year across all grades;
• Doing Things Together Days
• Buddies.

• Implement a sustained curriculum approach to address:
  - appropriate use of technology (Digital Citizenship)
  - bullying (including cyberbullying issues)

Additional strategies to support those strategies already implemented:
• Visiting performance annually in Term 1 to support the Anti-bullying program;
• Classroom focus using books from student book list – class reading, discussion, associated activities (See Appendix 1);
• Parent brochure;
• Increase role and profile of student leaders e.g. captains, house captains, SRC Reps; and
• Positive Behaviour for Success (PBS) explicitly taught lessons focusing on Responsible, Respectful, Safe Learners include the anti-bullying message.
• Survey students regularly to monitor bullying and cyberbullying rates.
• Mediation - Assisting the students involved in incidents of bullying to resolve their differences and helping them find a peaceful win-win solution or compromise.

Students are encouraged to intervene when witnesses to bullying by:
• being friendly and supportive to targets of bullying behaviour;
• including targets of bullying behaviour in games and activities;
• informing teachers of instances of bullying behaviour;
• speaking out against all forms of bullying behaviour;
• displaying confident assertive behaviours in the face of bullying behaviour;
• playing a supportive role according to any specific plans devised by the school in response to bullying behaviour;

School Anti-bullying Plan – NSW Department of Education and Communities
• continuing to display behaviours that promote respect and dignity for all members of the school community. Skills and procedures outlined above are taught and reinforced regularly in lessons across all KLA’s. Specific units of work relating to the teaching of these skills are via PD/H/PE units (including units across all stages on Child Protection).

Early Intervention

For students that have been identified as being at risk of developing long-term difficulties with social relationships and those students who are identified as having previously experienced bullying or engaged in bullying behaviour, these students will:

• be placed on caseload via the Learning Support Team, with specialist support teachers;
• be referred to the school counsellor for further support;
• be encouraged to participate in positive home/school communication to support the student; and
• participate in regular ‘have a chat’ sessions with the student welfare coordinator.

Identifying Bullying Behaviours Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate, by different signs or behaviour, that he or she is being bullied. The school community (i.e. students, parents/carers and teachers) should be aware of these possible signs and investigate further if:

• they directly observe bullying behaviours as covered by the definition;
• student reports that they are being bullied in one of the ways as defined in this plan; AND/ OR a student/ or your child:
  • is frightened of walking to or from school;
  • doesn’t want to go to school;
  • begs to be driven to school;
• changes their usual routine/route to school;
• becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence;
• starts stammering;
• cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares;
• feels ill in the morning;
• begins to underperform in school work;
• comes home with clothes torn or books damaged;
• has possessions go "missing";
• asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the bully);
• has dinner or other monies continually "lost";
• has unexplained cuts or bruises;
• comes home starving (money/snack/sandwiches have been stolen);
• becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable;
• is bullying other children or siblings;
• student absences from school sharply increase in frequency.

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be taken seriously and investigated as soon as possible.

It is important to understand that bullying is not the odd occasion of falling out with friends, name calling, arguments or when the occasional trick or joke is played on someone. It is bullying if it is done several times on purpose. Children sometimes fall out or say things because they are upset. When occasional problems of this kind arise it is not classed as bullying. It is an important part of children’s development to learn how to deal with friendship breakdowns, the odd name calling or childish prank. We all have to learn how to deal with these situations and develop social skills to repair relationships.

Response
Wollongong West Public School will deal with bullying quickly and effectively. As a school, we need to be flexible and assess each incident as it occurs. This may involve:

- providing first offending students with the opportunity to modify their behavior
- counselling
- specific behaviour modification support programs
- face to face interview
- mediation
- discussions between staff and parents
- time out/detention/exclusion from school

Strategies for dealing with bullying are linked to the School Discipline Policy and encompass the range of options available to deal with unacceptable behaviours, including suspension and expulsion.

Where incidents of cyberbullying are impacting on the learning of any student, our school will respond to these incidents, even if they occur out of school hours or on private equipment. The appropriate response will depend on the circumstances of the cyberbullying.

In dealing with bullying behaviour, Wollongong West Public School recognises the repeated and recurring nature of bullying and has mechanisms in place to identify patterns of repeated offending. These mechanisms include time for student welfare at weekly staff meetings, Sentral records and teacher / principal / counsellor records.

Students, their parents and caregivers are encouraged to be proactive in dealing with bullying, so that appropriate support can be provided to those students involved in any incident.

The Wollongong West Public School Anti-bullying Plan includes specific strategies for:

- reporting (by students, parents, caregivers and teachers);
- intervening (by students, parents, caregivers, teachers and other school staff);
- accessing help and support (by students, parents and caregivers);
- communicating Departmental appeal procedures (for students, parents and caregivers); and
- professional learning (for teachers and other school staff).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies for</th>
<th>by Students</th>
<th>by Parents / Caregivers</th>
<th>by Teachers</th>
<th>by Other School Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reporting</td>
<td>• Bullying survey completed annually in Term 4 • In the first instance to teachers – playground, classroom • To parents • To other school staff</td>
<td>• Assure child it will be dealt with • To teachers / other school staff • Written or verbal • Communicate &amp; cooperate with school until resolved</td>
<td>• To Principal in writing • Think sheets • To Parents (interview) • Sentral</td>
<td>• Recorded in LST Meeting minutes and discussed • Student Welfare section of staff meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervening</td>
<td>• As for reporting • Regular revision of Student Welfare Policy • Empower bystanders ‘It’s OK to tell’ • Quiet play area in garden and quad • SRC sports equipment • Library</td>
<td>• As for reporting • Parent brochure • Parent meetings • Articles / tips in newsletter</td>
<td>• Intervene in the first instance • Note behaviours – in classroom records, think sheets, Sentral • Monitor think sheets, Sentral • Anti-bullying lessons</td>
<td>• Note behaviours • Monitor think sheets • Notify executive / Principal • Contact parent / caregiver of bully &amp; victim when bullying incident has been investigated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessing help and support</td>
<td>Formal and / or informal meeting with: • Classroom</td>
<td>Formal meeting with: • Counsellor • Principal • Classroom</td>
<td>LST referral</td>
<td>Discuss referrals at LST meeting and make recommendatio ns for</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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School Anti-bullying Plan – NSW Department of Education and Communities
The Anti-Bullying Plan – NSW Department of Education and Communities

Community Awareness

Involvement of parents and carers in the school’s anti-bullying policy is a vital component to the school’s goal of eliminating bullying and harassment. Community involvement will include:

- Surveys seeking to gather data related to incidence of bullying.
- Public meetings to launch the Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Public information sessions to address issues related to bullying and harassment including:
  - What they can do in the event that their child is being bullied.
  - Ways of responding.
- Strategies to identify indicators of bullying.
- Facts and research about bullying and harassment.
- What they can do in the event that their child is involved in bullying.

In all incidents of bullying, the important thing is for students to tell immediately. Once the school and/or a teacher has been notified, the incident will be investigated immediately.

Interventions or combinations of interventions will be developed and implemented depending on the students involved and the nature of the bullying.

At Wollongong West Public School we will support any students who has been affected by, engaged in or witnessed bullying behaviour through:

- placement on caseload via the Learning Support Team, with specialist support teachers;
- referral to the school counsellor for further support;
- encourage positive home/school communication to support the student;
- participate in regular ‘have a chat’ sessions with the student welfare coordinator, participation in prevention programs.

A member of the school executive will contact parents and or caregivers either by phone or in person to keep them informed and when managing incidents of bullying.

School Procedures for reporting major incidents

In the event of an incident involving assaults, threats, intimidation or harassment:

- Students / parents report incident to teacher
- Teacher reports incident to a member of the school executive
- Executive notifies principal
• Principal decides on action to be taken

Procedures for contacting Child Wellbeing Unit or Community Services

In the event of an incident involving the Child Wellbeing Unit or Community Services:

• Students / parents report incident to teacher
• Teacher reports incident to a member of the school executive
• Executive notifies principal
• Principal decides on action to be taken

The Department of Education and Communities provides a policy and guidelines for handling complaints. While most complaints should be resolved informally with the relevant employee, there are provisions for the use of formal procedures depending on the nature and seriousness of the complaint.

For more information on this policy go to: https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/general_man/complaints/resp_sugg/PD20020051.shtml

Strategies to identify patterns of bullying behaviour

All incidents of bullying will be recorded electronically in a centralised database. Staff will investigate and identify patterns of bullying behaviour and begin appropriate measures of action. When there is a clear pattern, staff will consult with their supervisor and discuss appropriate strategies to begin an immediate response.

These actions will include:
• Counselling the students involved
• Meeting with parents
• Take appropriate measures to ensure the safety of all students (e.g. separating students in class and on the playground, providing clear steps for students to follow to maintain safety).
• Follow up meetings, counselling if necessary

The Anti-bullying Plan will be promoted and publicised through P & C meetings, the school newsletter and on the school website.

The school Anti-bullying Plan will be monitored and evaluated through:

• Anti-bullying surveys: collect, collate and analyse data on an annual basis (e.g. Term 4). Adjust focus of plan as necessary e.g. increased prevalence of a method of bullying or an area in which bullying occurs
• Ongoing monitoring of ‘think sheets’ (recorded in Sentral) to establish patterns and trends in bullying methods, areas in which bullying occurs and if bullying is conducted by or aimed at particular students
• Staff and team meetings: discuss patterns or trends detected across the school
• Review anti-bullying plan at regular intervals to ensure consistency of implementation and clarify areas of concerns. Adjust plan as necessary.

Staff will continually review data of bullying incidents at Learning Support Team meetings and weekly staff meetings.

Details of the school’s Anti-Bullying Plan will be available on the school website: www.wollongwst-p.schools.nsw.edu.au

This will be advertised in the school newsletter and at a P&C meeting.

The school will report annually to the school community regarding the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy at the last P&C meeting of each year.

The school will review this Anti-Bullying policy every three years, more if required.
Additional Information

Police Youth Liaison Officer: Alison Burke, 4226 7899
Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800
School Counsellor: Michael Jordan, 4229 2096

Appendix 1

Student Book List (available from Library)

- Dog Star Janeen Brian S F BRI
- Dog Star Janeen Brian GR F BRI
- Jordan’s Football Jenny Giles GR F GIL
- Bowled Over Sharon Greenaway GR F GRE
- Kev and Borax Lorraine Orman GR F ORM
- The Bully Kathryn Sutherland GR F SUT
- The Monster Shop Julie Beech J F BEE
- Hooray for Horrible Harriet Leigh Hobbs J F HOB
- Horrible Harriet Leigh Hobbs J F HOB
- Titchy Witch and the Bully Boggarts Rose Impey J F IMP
- The Two Bullies Junko Morimoto J F MOR
- The Chocolate Moose Carly Patrick J F PAT
- Snap! Margaret Clark J F CLA
- The BFG Roald Dahl S F DAH (video also available)
- Matilda Roald Dahl S F DAH
- Someone Like Me Elaine Forrestal S F FOR
- I Am Jack Susanne Gervay S F GER
- Don’t Pat the Wombat Elizabeth Honey S F HON
- The Gizmo Again Paul Jennings J F JEN
- Undone! Paul Jennings S F JEN
- Unmentionable! Paul Jennings S F JEN
- Buzzard Breath and Brains James Moloney S F MOL
- Captain Mack James Roy S F ROY
- Snap Margaret Clark M F CLA
- Sid and the Slimeballs Phil Cummings M F CUM
- The Bugman Andrew Donkin M F DON

- Mean Charlotte and the Good Idea Judy Fitzpatrick M F FIT
- Adventure at Ocean Bay Helen Hooper M F HOO
- May’s Riding Lesson Bonnie Bryant S F BRY
- The Freezing Eye Claire Carmichael S F CAR
- The Sandpit War Meredith Costain S F COS
- Don’t Pat the Wombat! Elizabeth Honey S F HON
- The Ant Bully: movie novel Judy Katchke S F KAT
- Stinky Ferret and the JJs Candice Lemon-Scott S F LEM
- Clever Sandwiches Rowena Cory Lindquist S F LIN
- Birds of a Feather Sophie Masson S F MAS
- Mr Katz’s Amazing Cream Julie Mitchell S F MIT
- Princess Belinda Ray S F RAY
- How to Tame a Bully Nancy Wilcox Richards S F RIC
- Just One Wish Sally Rippin S F RIP
- Magic Mix-up! Margaret Ryan S F RYA
- Survivor Colin Thompson S F THO
- City to Surf Gordon Winch S F WIN

Teachers Resource Books

- The Bully Kathryn Sutherland TR F SUT
- Bullying Nicola Edwards N F 371.5 EDW
- All about Bullying Lesley Ely N F 371.5 ELY
- Stop Picking on me: a first look at bullying Pat Thomas N F 371.5 THO
- Bullying. Lower Primary: Identify, Cope, Prevent TR 371.5 BUL
- Bullying. Middle Primary: Identify, Cope, Prevent TR 371.5 BUL
- Bullying. Upper Primary: Identify, Cope, Prevent TR 371.5 BUL
- A literature based approach to bullying Lyn Linning TR 371.5 LIN
- Primary health and values Book C Jenni Harrold TR 613 HAR

Additional Student Books (not available from Library)

- Ambushed Fleur Beale
- Dream master nightmare! Theresa Breslin
- Jake Drake bully buster Andrew Clements
- The Dog King Paul Collins
Principal’s comment

All staff were involved in the process of developing this policy. The community will be involved at the draft stage through P&C meetings. Students will be involved at the draft stage through SRC meetings.

The school team members that developed the Anti-bullying Plan were:

Cathy Reade – Principal
John Akhurst – Assistant Principal
Nadine Risi – Assistant Principal
Jane Carnevale – Learning Support Team Coordinator
Sharlene Poljasevic – P & C Representative

School contact information

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