



Anti-bullying Plan

Abstract

Wollongong West Public School's Anti-bullying Plan sets out the requirements for dealing with bullying behaviour at Wollongong West Public School. It includes specific strategies for identifying, reporting and dealing with bullying behaviours. The Anti-bullying Plan is a key part of the school's planning for student wellbeing and effective learning. It complements the school's Wellbeing Framework.

Context

Wollongong West Public School is an inclusive environment, where diversity is affirmed and individual differences (age, background, ability and interests) are respected.

Quality education is provided for all students to meet their learning needs in a secure, ordered and supportive environment.

For this to occur, Wollongong West Public School needs to be a place where every student can learn and grow with confidence. Students develop best in schools where teaching and learning occur in a context of student welfare.

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.

Wollongong West Public School needs to be a safe and happy place for students and their teachers. The wellbeing, safety and health of students inform school policies, programs and practices.

Student wellbeing is enhanced when all members of the school community participate in the learning programs and life of the school. Partnership with parents, caregivers, students and the wider community is central to the success of this process. All members of the school community contribute to the preventing bullying by modelling and promoting appropriate behaviour and respectful relationships.

Plan Statement

Wollongong West Public School exists 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. Bullying behaviour must be taken seriously and is not acceptable in any form at Wollongong West Public School.

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

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Bullying Behaviour

What is 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. Cyberbullying 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, medical condition, homosexuality or transgender. Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved including bystanders.

Bullying involves the abuse of power in relationships. Bullying can involve all forms of harassment (including sex, race, disability, medical condition, homosexuality or transgender), humiliation, domination, intimidation and victimisation 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 and email messages, cyberbullying (eg Facebook) and inappropriate use of camera phones.

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

What are the effects of bullying?

Bullying:

- devalues, isolates and frightens
- affects an individual's ability to achieve
- has long-term effects on those engaging in bullying behaviour, those who are the subjects of bullying behaviour (targets) and the onlookers (up-standers).

Statement of Purpose

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 adversely affects teaching and learning at Wollongong West Public School and interferes with the wellbeing of students cannot 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, intimidation and victimisation
- 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.

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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.

What are the roles of members of the school community?

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)
- participate 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
- behave as responsible digital citizens
- follow the school Anti-bullying Plan
- behave as responsible up-standers
- report 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 to become responsible citizens and to develop responsible on-line 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
- attend parent workshops and meetings regarding bullying, whenever practically possible.

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 Wellbeing Framework and Anti-bullying Plan (both available on the school's website)
- provide students with strategies to respond positively to incidents of bullying behaviour, including the development of an Up-stander's Code that outlines the responsibilities of onlookers and up-standers.
- 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
- follow up complaints of bullying, harassment, intimidation and victimisation.

Staff members of Wollongong West Public School have a responsibility to:

- respect and support students
- model and promote appropriate behaviour
- have knowledge of and follow 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 teaching and learning opportunities that supports students to develop an understanding of bullying and its impact on individuals and the broader community.

All members of the **Wollongong West Public School community** have the 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.

Strategies to prevent bullying

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
- reinforced consistently through school practices that promote respectful relationships.

These strategies will:

- empower the whole school community to recognise and respond appropriately to bullying, harassment and victimisation

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- contribute to the general health and wellbeing of all students.

Programs targeting peer support, peer mediation, mentoring, transition, conflict resolution and student leadership are effective ways of developing school culture and student skills.

Students at Wollongong West Public School are explicitly taught anti-bullying strategies and/or supported through:

- the creation of positive classroom environments
- rewarding positive and acceptable behaviour and effort
- participation in restorative practice programs
- participation in social skills programs
- participation in child protection programs
- participation in drug education programs
- participation in wellbeing programs
- participation in mental health programs
- participation in cyberbullying prevention programs
- participation in K-6 buddy programs
- participation in peer support programs
- participation in values education lessons
- listening to and discussing specific texts
- opportunities for positive student leadership (SRC, captains and leaders)
- participation in extra-curricular programs
- participation in learning assistance programs
- an active Learning Support Team
- provision of extra-curricular activities

Strategies to deal with bullying

Wollongong West Public School will deal with bullying quickly and effectively.

Strategies for dealing with bullying are described clearly in the Anti-bullying Plan and are implemented consistently by school staff.

Strategies for dealing with bullying are linked to the Wollongong West Public School Wellbeing Framework and encompass the range of options available to deal with unacceptable behaviours, including suspension and expulsion.

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 wellbeing 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.

Wollongong West Public School has adopted a four-tier approach as well as ongoing strategies to deal with bullying.

1. Primary Prevention

- Professional development for staff, relating to bullying: awareness, policy creation, action plan creation.
- Community awareness and input relating to bullying: characteristics, programs and responses.

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- Programs promoting wellbeing, resilience, life skills, social skills, assertiveness and problem solving.
- Annual review of the school's Anti-bullying Plan and procedures by school staff.

2. *Early Intervention*

- Promoting students, staff, parents and caregivers to report incidents of bullying. All reported incidents to be recorded in the school's wellbeing records.
- All staff to remind students to report incidents of bullying. Encourage students to be up-standers.
- Parents and caregivers encouraged to contact the school if they become aware of a problem.
- Recognition and reward for positive behaviour and resolution of problems.

3. *Intervention*

- Immediate separation of students involved to diffuse the situation and to ensure student safety and welfare remains paramount.
- Students behaving like bullies, targets and witnesses are given an equal and uninterrupted opportunity to present their version of events, both verbally and in the written form (if developmentally appropriate), ensuring an unbiased investigation. All incidents or allegations of bullying are investigated separately by the Principal/Assistant Principal and documented.
- Students, parents/caregivers of students and staff identified by others will be informed of allegations.
- Consequences to be applied, determined in consultation with all students, parents/caregivers of students and staff involved. Consequences will be individually based and may involve:
 - ❖ Reflection periods
 - ❖ Exclusion from group /class (eg temporarily removed from class group, in class)
 - ❖ In-school withdrawal (eg removal from playground)
 - ❖ Counselling for victim and bully (eg staff and counsellor provide this opportunity)
 - ❖ Withdrawal of privileges
 - ❖ Behaviour monitoring
 - ❖ Suspension from school
- Targets and students behaving like bullies will be offered counselling and support.
- Restorative practices are to be used to restore the relationship between those involved.
- If incidents of bullying behaviour persist, parents / caregivers will be informed and further consequences and actions implemented.

4. *Post Violation*

- Ongoing monitoring of identified targets and students behaving like bullies. Further interventions to be implemented as necessary according to the process outlined above under *Intervention*.
- Feedback to the target, student behaving like a bully, teachers and parents / caregivers will be provided by the principal on the result of investigation, and the consequences and actions enacted.

Ongoing Strategies

- Support-lesson structures in place
- Reinforcement of positive behaviours
- Support structures accessible
- Recording of bullying incidents and actions noted
- Reviewing of incidents in order to determine resource allocation

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

In addition to these strategies it may be appropriate in some instances to contact:

- The Child Protection Hotline **133 627** is there is a risk of harm
- The Child Wellbeing Unit **02 9269 9400** if there are risk of harm concerns or if you are uncertain about the risk threshold
- Support services such as Kids Helpline **1800 551 800** or the Parent Helpline **1300 1300 52**
- The Police Youth Liaison Officer **0488 088 104** or **4226 7899** (Switchboard).

Strategies for	by Students	by Parents / Caregivers	by Teachers	By Other School Staff
Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the first instance, report to teacher – playground, classroom, restorative practices • To parents / caregivers • To other school staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assure child it will be dealt with • To teachers / other school staff • Written, verbal or digital • Communicate & cooperate with school until resolved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To principal – verbal, student wellbeing referrals • To parents / caregivers (interview) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To principal / teachers
Intervening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As for reporting • Regular revision of Wellbeing Framework • Empower Up-standers 'It's OK to tell' • Playground interventions • Student members of anti-bullying committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As for reporting • Parent / caregiver meetings • Articles / tips in newsletter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intervene in the first instance • Note behaviours – use of playground folder, classroom records • Monitor wellbeing records for patterns of behaviour • Anti-bullying teaching and learning opportunities. 	
Accessing help and support	Formal and / or informal meeting with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom teacher 	Formal meeting with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counsellor • Principal 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other teachers • Principal • Counsellor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom teacher 		
Communicating Departmental appeal procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal • DoE Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal • DoE Officer 		
Professional Learning		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent Workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff meetings to ensure consistent approach, understanding of plan and teaching and learning strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff meetings to ensure consistent approach, understanding of plan

Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Requirement

The Anti-bullying Plan will be reviewed annually, so that all members of the school community are aware of and remain committed to it. The Plan should reflect the current teaching and learning practices at the school. The review will provide opportunities for reflection and renewal.

Strategies to review the school Anti-bullying Plan include:

- gathering and analysing all relevant information on the nature and extent of bullying, harassment and victimisation, including data that highlights patterns and trends, such as student / teacher / parent / caregiver surveys, wellbeing records, reflection sheets, suspension data and student wellbeing discussions both formal (eg staff meetings) and informal
- evaluating the extent to which the school's Anti-bullying Plan has been effective in addressing bullying, harassment and victimisation and promoting a safe and secure environment.

Wollongong West Public School will develop and implement a revised Plan, if necessary, following a review.

Wollongong West Public School will continue to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Anti-bullying Plan on an annual basis.