



Education

Preventing and Responding to Bullying in Schools

Anti - Bullying Plan

TAMWORTH WEST PUBLIC SCHOOL





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.

Tamworth West Public 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.

To inform the development of this plan, our school community was provided with opportunities to contribute via individual surveys of staff, students and parents. Further forums and discussions with focus groups refined the draft plan. The focus group had a range of contributors including executive, teachers, parents and students.

Regular review of the plan is to be undertaken by the school's Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) Team, Learning and Support Team and School Executive Team. These teams regularly analyse bullying incident data to inform prevention, intervention and response strategies. In addition, the plan will be reviewed by the community every three years, or as needed.

Statement of purpose

Tamworth West Public School is committed to providing a safe and positive learning environment where students are respectful, responsible and resilient learners. It does not tolerate any form of bullying. No student, employee, parent, caregiver or community member should experience bullying within the learning or working environment of our school.

Students, teachers, parents, caregivers and members of the wider community have a responsibility to promote positive relationships that respect and accept individual differences and diversity within the school community.

Our school community supports the Anti-Bullying Plan through words and actions and actively works together to resolve incidents of bullying behaviour when they occur.

Definition

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, homosexuality or transgender.

Bullying of any form for any reason can have long term effects on those involved, including bystanders.

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

Types of Bullying Behaviour

- ❖ **Verbal:** e.g. name calling, swearing, teasing, taunting, abuse, insults, using put-downs, sarcasm/ridiculing (making fun of) and threats.
- ❖ **Physical:** e.g. hitting/punching, kicking, pushing/shoving, scratching, tripping, spitting, throwing objects, intimidation (making someone do something they don't want to do), and taking/ damaging something that belongs to someone else.
- ❖ **Social:** e.g. ignoring, excluding others, alienating, put-downs and using inappropriate/threatening looks and gestures.
- ❖ **Psychological:** e.g. spreading rumours, belittling, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions and stalking.
- ❖ **Cyberbullying:** e.g. verbal, social and psychological bullying through the use of technology (such as emails, blogs, websites), sending malicious SMS and email messages, and inappropriate use of camera phones.

Protection

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 staff, students, parents, caregivers and members of the wider community.

School staff have a responsibility to:

- ❖ Model and promote appropriate behaviour
- ❖ Have knowledge of school and departmental policies relating to bullying behaviour
- ❖ Respect and support students, creating a culture where it is acceptable and encouraged to report incidents
- ❖ Respond in an appropriate and timely manner to incidents of bullying according to the school's Anti-Bullying Plan
- ❖ Implement school programs which teach students skills and strategies to understand and deal with bullying
- ❖ As a PBL school, maintain systems for rewarding and praising positive behaviour and ensure teaching programs include lessons, which address behaviour expectations around the school
- ❖ Uphold and promote the school's expectations of **Respect, Responsibility and Resilience**

Students have a responsibility to:

- ❖ Behave appropriately at all times, upholding the school's expectations of **Respect, Responsibility and Resilience**
- ❖ Show respect for individual differences and diversity

- ❖ Behave as responsible digital citizens and report any cyberbullying
- ❖ Be assertive and tell the student bullying that they don't like the behaviour and how it makes them feel
- ❖ Use the response strategies for students as outlined on page 9.
- ❖ Be an upstander and tell an adult if they are being bullied or if they see someone else being bullied at school

Parents and caregivers have a responsibility to:

- ❖ Be aware of and support the school's Anti-Bullying Plan
- ❖ Look for changes and signs that their child may be being bullied
- ❖ Assist their child in understanding bullying behaviour
- ❖ Adopt learnt strategies to deal with incidents of bullying, including cyberbullying, consistent with the school Anti-bullying Plan
- ❖ Encourage their child to speak up if they are being bullied or if they are aware another child is being bullied
- ❖ Inform the school if any bullying is suspected
- ❖ Not approach children/ parents directly to express their concerns
- ❖ Work collaboratively with the school to resolve incidents of bullying

Our school community will uphold our school values of Respect, Responsibility and Resilience and will maintain a climate of respectful relationships where bullying is less likely to occur.

Prevention

Strategies and programs the school may implement for bullying prevention are as follows.

- ❖ Creating a safe, stimulating and enjoyable school environment for all students
- ❖ Explicit and ongoing teaching of the schoolwide behaviour expectations for all students K-6 through PBL lessons
- ❖ Consistent implementation of negotiated classroom expectations, routines and procedures
- ❖ Clear identification of the behaviours that are unacceptable via the school's Anti-Bullying Plan and behaviour consistency guide
- ❖ Identification of strategies for dealing with bullying via the school's Anti-Bullying Plan and behaviour consistency guide
- ❖ Promotion of the school's Anti-Bullying Plan throughout the school community via the school's website, assemblies and newsletter
- ❖ Encouragement of students to inform staff when bullying occurs
- ❖ Acknowledgement by staff of the seriousness of the matter and active intervention in accordance with staff responsibilities
- ❖ Provision of clear information to students, parents and caregivers to outline strategies that promote appropriate behaviour and the consequences for inappropriate behaviour
- ❖ Promotion of student leadership opportunities across the school
- ❖ Explicit teaching for all K-6 students of stage appropriate programs which promote positive relationships and incorporate strategies to deal with bullying. For example: Positive Behaviour for Learning, Anti-bullying program, Child Protection Program, Interpersonal Relationships (PDHPE) activities, development of personal and social capabilities through learning across the curriculum areas in all syllabuses
- ❖ Participation by all K-6 students in days of inclusion e.g. Anti-Bullying Day and Harmony Day activities
- ❖ Participation by Year 5 leaders in the Kindergarten Transition Program, promoting a support system for students entering Kindergarten
- ❖ Provision to students of strategies to respond appropriately to incidents of bullying behaviour, including responsibilities as bystanders and observers
- ❖ Communication of bullying incidents to parents when needed, as per behaviour consistency guide
- ❖ Communication to parents and caregivers that they have an important role to play in resolving incidents of bullying behaviour involving their children

Early Intervention

Early identification of bullying behaviour is vital if schools are to be most effective in managing bullying.

It is important that schools respond when issues are identified as it is understood that those who are engaged in bullying and are bullied can experience long term effects.

Some students are identified as being at risk of bullying or developing long-term difficulties with social relationships.

Some students are also identified as using bullying behaviour.

Strategies the school may implement for these students include:

- ❖ Referral to the Learning and Support Team
- ❖ Implementation of specific social skills and values activities and programs promoting positive self-image and self-worth
- ❖ Implementation of specific emotional-social teaching and learning programs to assist development of self-awareness and self- management capabilities
- ❖ Implementation of specific emotional-social teaching and learning programs to assist development of social awareness and social management capabilities to assist with friendship development

- ❖ Use of role play situations
- ❖ Identification of student strengths and celebration of success
- ❖ Development of an individual action plan on how to manage situations
- ❖ Communication with parents/ caregivers to ensure consistent messages and support from school and family

Response

The school community will be empowered to recognise and respond appropriately to bullying, harassment and victimisation and to behave as responsible bystanders.

School staff may:

- ❖ Maintain active playground supervision and deal with incidents quickly and effectively
- ❖ Assess behavior according the school's Anti – Bullying Plan and Behavioural consistency guide.
- ❖ Record all reported incidents in correct category on EBS Ontrack +
- ❖ Regularly review incidents to identify patterns of bullying behaviour through Learning and Support team, PBL team and Executive team
- ❖ Communicate and work with parents to look at underlying problems and investigate solutions
- ❖ Conduct restorative conferences
- ❖ Work with students demonstrating bullying behaviour through an Anti-bullying support program
- ❖ Work with victims of bullying through a support program with an executive staff member, student identified teacher mentor, member of the learning support team and / or counselling team
- ❖ Be a mentor when nominated by a student who feels threatened, intimidated or bullied
- ❖ Maintain communication with parents about ongoing strategies until the matter appears satisfactorily resolved
- ❖ Seek involvement of the school Anti Racism Contact Officer (ARCO) if applicable
- ❖ Refer students and families to external support agencies as appropriate
- ❖ Involve the Department of Education Learning and Wellbeing Officers in individual programs if required
- ❖ Take disciplinary action as per the school discipline procedures
- ❖ At the discretion of the principal, implement the Department of Education Suspension and Expulsion Procedures if required
- ❖ Report the matter to authorities, including police, if required

Response

Students may be proactive and need to decide what action to take.

Students know that they **can** control what happens. They will not retaliate by using bullying and will try not to show fear, as the bully is no longer rewarded and the bullying may stop.

- ❖ **Step 1:** Ignore it. Show that it does not upset you. The bully is then not rewarded and the bullying may stop. *If it does not stop:*
- ❖ **Step 2:** Talk to the person bullying you. Tell him or her to stop. *If it still does not stop:*
- ❖ **Step 3:** Walk away and talk it over openly with teacher in class or teacher on duty in playground. They can help you decide what to do. *If the bullying still does not stop:*
- ❖ **Step 4:** Talk with a trusted adult (i.e. mentor, class teacher or parent) who can refer your concerns to school executive e.g. Stage Assistant Principal, Deputy or Principal

Students who are not being bullied but are aware of others who are, will be encouraged to report it, to protect those that are being bullied and so that the student of concern can be helped too.

Parents may:

- ❖ Encourage their child to adopt learnt strategies to deal with bullying
- ❖ Encourage their child to inform mentor or staff member when bullying is occurring
- ❖ Inform the school of incidents of bullying
- ❖ Work with the school in addressing and managing the problem

Response to Cyberbullying

School staff may:

- ❖ Ensure each student is safe and arrange support where required
- ❖ Gather facts about the suspected cyberbullying
- ❖ Report the matter to the parent involved, discuss the matter and how best to deal with it
- ❖ Document incidents
- ❖ Implement the Department of Education Suspension and Expulsion Procedures if required at the discretion of the principal

Students may:

- ❖ Tell a trusted adult (mentor, teacher, parent, older sibling or grandparent)
- ❖ Block the sender's messages if possible, never reply to harassing messages
- ❖ Keep evidence of any cyberbullying to assist in identifying the bully and potentially reporting the matter to police (screen captures, bully's screen name, text and images)
- ❖ Keep parents/staff informed of any further messages from the bully

Parents may:

- ❖ Monitor their child's use of technology, including their child's use of any social media sites and messaging services
- ❖ Keep evidence of any bullying (see students' responsibilities)
- ❖ Report any concerns to the administrator of the service used, including the mobile phone provider (if SMS is involved), website administrator (if social networking or chat services are involved) or internet service provider, as most have measures to assist with tracking or blocking the bully
- ❖ Report to police, especially if the bullying includes physical threats

Procedures for Reporting Bullying

- ❖ Students are to immediately report to mentors or teachers all incidents of bullying either verbally or in writing to their classroom teacher
- ❖ Parents with concerns about bullying should contact the school by phone, email or in writing
- ❖ All bullying incidents will be taken seriously
- ❖ On discovery of incidents of bullying, staff will contact the parents of the student being bullied and the student displaying the bullying behaviour. All staff to be informed so they can monitor students in the playground.
- ❖ In the case of cyberbullying, the police may need to be contacted to make a report.

Serious incidents involving assault, threat, intimidation or harassment

- ❖ May have disciplinary action taken as per school discipline procedures
- ❖ May be reported to the School Safety and Response Unit by the school
- ❖ May be reported to the police by the Principal, Deputy Principal or Assistant Principal, where necessary

Child Wellbeing

Where concerns about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of children or young people are evident these concerns **must** be reported to the Principal.

The Principal will make a decision about the level of risk to a student and what action to take. It is critical that all relevant information is considered.

Complaints Handling Policy

The Department of Education Complaints Handling Policy Guidelines will be used to manage complaints.

In addition, staff can be directed to access the Employee Assistance Program.

Promoting and publicising the Anti-Bullying Plan

The Anti-Bullying Plan will be available on the school website and information will be posted in the school's newsletter.

Additional Information

Police Youth Liaison Officer – Contact Tamworth Police 6768 2999

Kids Helpline www.kidshelpline.com.au

Bullying. No Way! www.bullyingnoway.com.au

Helping your child with bullying www.schoolsatoz.nsw.edu.au

Principal's comment

The safety and wellbeing of the children in our school is our first priority. The Anti-Bullying Plan is a positive step in developing a consistent community approach to understanding behavior and to deal with instances of anti-social behaviour in a sensitive, consistent and supportive way. Tamworth West promotes students to be respectful, resilient and responsible citizens and school and in the community.

Clear guidelines and a consistent approach by all members of our school community to educate our children about becoming responsible citizens, provides more opportunities to be engaged in learning and maintain a cohesive and harmonious school community.

Team members who developed the plan

- ❖ School student representatives. School Captains. Emerson Flick and Noah Beecham
- ❖ Parent representative. P&C President. Renae Mumford
- ❖ Teacher representatives. Infants classroom teacher and PBL committee member. Jo Sheedy
- ❖ Executive staff. Primary classroom teacher and Assistant Principal Primary. Joh Mulligan, Assistant Principal PBL. Sally O'Connor, Relieving Principal. Grant Scarborough

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