

Student Anti-Bullying Guidelines

Last Reviewed: OCTOBER 2016

Outcomes

- Students learn in a happy, safe and caring environment where equity, diversity and acceptance are valued.
- Bullying is not acceptable in any form at Summer Hill Public School.
- Effective strategies are utilised to deal with incidents of bullying.
- Early intervention support is developed and implemented for students who are identified by the school as being at risk of being bullied or engaging in bullying behaviour.
- Preventing and responding to bullying behaviour is a shared responsibility of all NSW Department of Education (DoE) staff, students, parents, caregivers and members of the school community.

Introduction

- Bullying is a form of repeated aggressive behaviour that is usually hurtful and deliberate, and targets another person who is less powerful verbally, physically, psychologically and/or socially.
- Bullying can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.
- Conflicts or fights between equals or single incidents are not defined as bullying.
- Bullying is defined as school-related when there is a clear and close relationship between the school and the conduct of the student/s.

Bullying behaviour:

- is an abuse of power which is usually accompanied by a desire to intimidate and dominate
- can take a number of forms
- can be planned and organised or unplanned
- can be subtle or upfront, in any form
- often goes on undisclosed and may be kept secret
- can occur at school, and on the way to and from school
- can occur out of school and out of school hours

Examples of bullying include:

Physical:

- hitting, kicking, pushing, shoving, punching, pinching, spitting
- threatening or forcing others to act against their will
- interfering with another's property by stealing, hiding, damaging or destroying it
- writing offensive notes, emails or graffiti about others
- extortion (e.g. forcing others to hand over food, money, etc.)

Psychological/Social:

- intentional isolation and exclusion
- spreading untrue stories or rumours about others
- making rude gestures, pointing or giving dirty looks
- discrimination (eg: racial, gender, religion, ability)

Cyber-bullying:

- bullying through information and communication technologies, including smart phone apps, social media and malicious emails and text messages

Verbal:

- using put downs, teasing or name-calling, belittling others' abilities and achievements
- ridiculing another's appearance, family and/or culture or social background.
- making fun of someone because of their actions
- sarcasm

The impact of bullying can be significant, including:

- devaluing, isolating and frightening victims and bystanders
- stress, loss of self-esteem and self-confidence
- reluctance to attend school and effect on learning / ability to achieve
- self-blame by victim and protection of bully by victim
- long-term effects on victims, bullies and bystanders.

Identifying and preventing incidents of bullying

- *Our Values, 3Rs* and *Restorative Practice* are embedded in all aspects of school culture and are the basis of our student welfare strategies and policies. These programs operate at three levels - whole school, classroom and individual.
- Specific anti-bullying strategies are to be taught in all grades K-6 as part of the PDHPE curriculum. It is recommended that teachers have a focus on anti-bullying at the start of the year and then reinforce concepts taught as the year progresses, and when grade/class/individual student needs dictate.

Other programs, documents and support structures that can assist in preventing bullying include:

Whole School:

- Buddy systems
- Student Representative Council (SRC) involvement in discussing issues and suggesting and implementing solutions
- Transition programs pre-school to Kindergarten, Year 2 to Year 3, and Year 6 to Year 7
- Referral to the school's Learning Support Team
- Regular school assemblies that promote the school's social skills programs - *Our Values, 3Rs* and *Restorative Practice*
- Student Behaviour policy
- Community networks (such as Family Referral)
- Professional collaboration among staff and staff briefings
- Effective playground supervision (refer to the school's Playground Policy)
- Quiet Room during recess and the second half of lunch for identified students.

Classroom:

- Child Protection programs (K-6)
- Interrelate program (Year 6)
- Classroom environment where students feel happy, secure and willing to discuss issues
- Teaching students the skills to build self-esteem and empower them
- Use of curriculum to support anti-bullying programs e.g. drama, music, literature
- Effective management and behaviour modification programs to prevent or deal with bullying incidents
- Communication with parents regarding anti-bullying (and other social skills) strategies and programs being explicitly taught in class as part of the PDHPE curriculum.

Individual:

- Individual Learning Plans
- Risk Assessments
- Differentiated learning strategies
- Modelling and encouragement of positive relationships.
- Individual support for victims.
- Follow up of bullying incidents by relevant staff members.
- Communication with parents of victims, bullies and bystanders.
- Support by other DoE and non-DoE personnel as needed.

The following are strategies for members of each group to prevent or resolve bullying.

School staff have a responsibility to:

- regularly promote anti-bullying strategies within and to the school community
- explicitly teach anti-bullying programs/strategies and the school's core student welfare programs - *Our Values, 3Rs* and *Restorative Practice* - in all classes K-6 throughout the school year, with a focus at the start of the school year
- be role models for the students
- explicitly teach co-operative learning and play through the PDHPE curriculum
- be observant of signs of distress and suspected incidents of bullying
- identify bullies and possible / likely victims wherever possible
- actively supervise classroom, playground and off-site environments to minimise opportunities for bullying (particularly known 'hot spots')
- assist students being bullied by removing sources of distress without increasing the student's exposure
- support students who speak out and report incidents of bullying
- consult with students (e.g. individuals and SRC) to identify issues which give rise to concern
- report all incidents and suspected incidents to the grade supervisor and/or Deputy Principal (Student Welfare)
- communicate with parents of victims, bullies and bystanders.

Students have a responsibility to:

- actively participate in school programs such as *Our Values, 3Rs* and *Restorative Practice*
- behave as responsible digital citizens
- refuse to be involved in any bullying situation
- behave as responsible bystanders
- if appropriate, take some form of preventative action
- report all incidents or suspected incidents.

Parents/carers have a responsibility to:

- be aware of the school's anti-bullying guidelines and assist their child/ren in understanding bullying behaviour
- support their child/ren to become responsible digital citizens and to develop responsible online behaviour
- support their child/ren in developing positive responses to incidents of bullying consistent with the school's anti-bullying guidelines
- report incidents of school-related bullying 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 guidelines through words and actions
- work collaboratively with the school to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur.

Reporting incidents of bullying

- All incidents of bullying should be reported as soon as possible by students to a staff member. Teachers are to encourage and facilitate this process through explicit teaching of anti-bullying strategies and modelling of appropriate and positive relationships. Teachers explicitly teach strategies for students to differentiate between responsible reporting and 'telling tales' as part of anti-bullying lessons.
- Parents who become aware of incidents of bullying should report the incident to the student's class teacher in the first instance, then to the grade supervisor and/or the Deputy Principal (Student Welfare).
- Staff members who become aware of incidents of bullying should report the incident to the grade supervisor and/or the Deputy Principal (Student Welfare).
- Bullying involving racism should be reported to the school's Anti-Racism Contact Officer/s (ARCO/s), who will be involved in managing the bullying.
- Staff members, with the support of a member of the school executive, may contact the DEC *Child Wellbeing Unit* in some situations where bullying has occurred or is occurring.
- A member of the school executive may contact the local police youth liaison officer and/or school liaison police officer in some situations where bullying has occurred or is occurring.

Reporting Incidents Involving Assaults, Threats, Intimidation or Harassment

Memorandum to: Principals (DN/10/00225)

An incident is broadly defined in the Department's *Incident Reporting Policy* as an event which:

- causes disruption to an organisation, or
- creates danger or risk that could significantly affect individuals within the organisation, or
- impacts on the effective operation of the workplace, or
- attracts negative media attention or a negative public profile for the workplace or the Department of Education and Training (now DEC), or
- Workcover describes as a "serious incident" which must be reported by law.

Such incidents that involve assaults, threats, weapons, illegal drugs and criminal activity **must** be reported to the School Safety and Response Hotline on 1300 363 778.

The *Incident Reporting Procedures* (DoE Intranet only) set out the Department's incident reporting requirements for principals.

Responding to and resolving incidents of bullying

Students who are being bullied

Students who are being bullied will be supported by all appropriate stakeholders such as the class teacher, grade supervisor, Deputy Principals, principal and parents/carers. *Restorative Practice* is used as the basis for resolving all bullying issues, taking into account the safety and well-being of the victim first. *Restorative Practice* aims to:

- prevent escalation of issues and resolve conflict
- offer a sound practice framework that fosters healthy relationships and stronger school communities by focusing on harm and relationships, as opposed to blame and punishment.
- develop a common language and practice for teachers, students and parents
- introduce students to the idea that being restorative is about understanding what has happened, who has been hurt and what is needed to make things right
- support victims, bullies and bystanders

Other support could involve:

- the class teacher discussing /explicitly teaching strategies to prevent specific situations arising and discussing options available to the student if bullying does occur
- the teacher, grade supervisor and/or Deputy Principal being available to listen and talk when bullying occurs
- the teacher working with the entire class to resolve particular issues (if the bullying is class-based)
- the teacher/Deputy Principal/School Counsellor conducting group meetings to resolve an issue or develop personal skills required to deal effectively with an issue
- counselling sessions with the school counsellor
- involvement, with parental permission, in specialised programs supported by external agencies.

Students who bully others

The school's *Student Behaviour* policy will be used to manage incidents of bullying. *Restorative Practice* will be used as the basis for resolving all bullying issues. Students who persistently bully others, despite the repeated intervention of the school, may be involved in intensive intervention with parental involvement. Intervention could involve:

- intensive, individual counselling
- participation in specialised group programs, for example social skills programs
- Risk assessments and personalised behaviour management plans
- restriction of access to playground spaces and activities
- involvement of DEC support teams and/or external agencies
- suspension or expulsion (refer to the school's *Student Behaviour* policy and the DEC's procedures - *Suspension and Expulsion of School Students Procedures - information for parents* and *Suspension and Expulsion of School Students Procedures*)

Communicating, monitoring and evaluating anti-bullying strategies

- The Deputy Principal, grade supervisor and/or class teacher will follow-up after bullying incidents have been resolved.
- A member of the school's executive staff will monitor individual students via the school's Behaviour Register.
- The Student Welfare Committee will review the school's anti-bullying policy at least every three years.
- Indicators to assess the effectiveness of the school's anti-bullying strategies include:
 - The school community knows that bullying can be reported and who to report incidents of bullying to
 - A common understanding within the school community of what bullying is
 - Reports of bullying are acted on promptly
 - Records are maintained of reports and follow-up actions
 - Victims of bullying and their families are supported
 - The *Quality of School Life Survey* indicates continued improvement in the identified areas
 - Decrease in incidents of bullying
 - Enhanced student engagement and performance with increased learning outcomes and attendance
 - Increased teaching time
 - An awareness of good social behaviours and unacceptable bullying behaviours
 - A consistent and fair approach to student welfare