

# Anti Bullying Policy

Revised 2020



## Policy Statement

**1.1** The NSW Department of Education rejects all forms of bullying behaviour including online (or cyber) bullying.

**1.2** NSW public schools works to provide safe, inclusive, and respectful learning communities that promote student wellbeing.

**1.3** The department's Behaviour Code for Students requires students to be inclusive and respect other students, their teachers, school staff, and community members, and to not bully, harass, intimidate, or discriminate against anyone in our schools.

**1.4** Schools are required to establish strategies and practices to encourage positive student behaviour, recognise and reinforce student achievement and wellbeing, and manage disruptive student behaviour, as outlined in the Student Discipline in Government Schools Policy.

**1.5** School staff need to encourage high levels of parental and community involvement in the school to improve student attendance, engagement, learning and behaviour.

**1.6** Each school must complete and implement the Anti-bullying Plan.

**1.7** Bullying behaviour has three key features. It involves the intentional misuse of power in a relationship. It is ongoing and repeated, and it involves behaviours that can cause harm.

**1.8** Bullying behaviour can also involve intimidation, victimisation and harassment, including that based on sex, race, religion, disability, or sexual orientation, both online and offline.

**1.9** Bullying can be illegal if it involves behaviours that include physical violence, threats of violence, damaging property, or stalking.

**1.10** The NSW anti-bullying website supports school staff, parents and carers, volunteers and contracted staff, and students to discourage, prevent, identify, and respond effectively to student bullying behaviour, where it does occur.

**1.11** Preventing and responding to bullying is the shared responsibility of all school staff, volunteers, and contracted staff employed by schools, and students, parents and carers.

**1.12** Teachers and other school staff are provided with support and professional development to discourage, prevent, identify, and respond to student bullying behaviour.

**1.13** Reports of student bullying can be made to any staff member at a school. A teacher or school executive staff (such as the principal, deputy principal or assistant principal, head teacher) at the school will address the reported bullying in a timely manner.

**1.14** If a student, parent or carer believes a matter is not being dealt with effectively, they can refer the matter to the school's principal (or delegate) for resolution.

**1.15** If the student, parent or carer still has concerns, after referring the matter to the school's principal (or delegate), and would like advice, they can contact the Learning and Wellbeing Advisor or Officer at the local departmental office. If the matter is then still not resolved they can contact the Director Educational Leadership, at the local departmental office, who must follow the Complaints Handling Policy.

**1.16** For incidents of physical violence, and where required, staff should administer first aid (consistent with their training and experience), and contact emergency services whenever necessary. Staff must also report the incident to the Incident Reporting and Support Hotline on 1800 811 523.

## **Audience and applicability**

**2.1** This policy applies to all NSW public schools, including those with preschools.

**2.2** This policy applies to all student bullying behaviour, including online (cyber) bullying, and applies outside of school hours and off school premises where students have been involved and there is a clear and close connection to the school.

## **Context**

**3.1** NSW public schools must comply with the NSW Education Standards Authority requirement to provide a safe, inclusive and supportive environment for students.

**3.2** Ways to prevent or respond to student bullying behaviour are addressed through teaching and learning programs across the key learning areas including the Self and Relationships strand of the mandatory Personal Development, Health and Physical Education curriculum.

**3.3** This policy relates to student bullying in NSW public schools. The Work, Health and Safety Policy applies to staff bullying in NSW public schools. When bullying involves a student and staff member, both policies apply.

## **Responsibilities and delegations**

### **4.1 Teachers**

- support the school in maintaining a safe, inclusive and supportive learning environment
- model and promote appropriate relationships and behaviours
- promote a school culture where bullying is not acceptable
- teach students to identify, report and respond to bullying at school and online
- manage reports of bullying and escalate matters to the principal (or delegate) when necessary.

### **4.2 Non-teaching staff**

- refer any report of bullying to a teacher or school executive staff.

### **4.3 Principals (or their delegate)**

- complete and implement the Anti-bullying Plan for their school
- maintain a positive school climate which includes respectful relationships
- identify patterns of bullying behaviour and initiate school action to respond
- manage complaints about bullying in accordance with the Complaints Handling Policy.

### **4.4 Directors, Educational Leadership**

- manage complaints about how a school has responded to a report of bullying in accordance with the Complaints Handling Policy
- where required, assist schools to implement the Anti-bullying Plan, to best meet the needs of the school community.

## **Monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements**

**5.1** The principal reviews the Anti-bullying Plan every year.

**5.2** The Director, Student Engagement and Interagency Partnerships monitors the implementation of this policy and reviews its effectiveness, at least every three years.

## Definition of Bullying

The **national definition** of bullying for Australian schools says:

*Bullying is an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more persons. Bullying can happen in person or online, and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert).*

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

*Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.*

Behaviours that do not constitute bullying include:

- mutual arguments and disagreements (where there is no power imbalance)
- not liking someone or a single act of social rejection
- one-off acts of meanness or spite
- isolated incidents of aggression, intimidation or violence.

However, these conflicts still need to be addressed and resolved.

**Bullying has three main features:**

- It involves a misuse of power in a relationship
- It is ongoing and repeated, and
- It involves behaviours that can cause harm.

## Types of Bullying

There are **three types** of bullying behaviour:

Verbal Bullying	Physical Bullying	Social Bullying
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• name calling</li> <li>• insulting/swearing</li> <li>• repeated teasing</li> <li>• racist remarks</li> <li>• threats</li> <li>• harrassment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hitting</li> <li>• kicking</li> <li>• rude gestures</li> <li>• intimidation</li> <li>• extortion</li> <li>• damaging/stealing belongings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• spreading rumours</li> <li>• exclusion/isolation</li> <li>• sharing information or images</li> </ul>

If any of these behaviours occur only once, or are part of a conflict between equals (no matter how inappropriate) they are not bullying. **The behaviours alone don't define bullying.**

## Online Bullying (also known as Cyberbullying)

Online bullying is bullying carried out through the internet or mobile devices.

### Types of behaviour in online bullying

Online bullying can include:

- sending insulting or threatening messages
- posting unkind messages or inappropriate images on social networking sites
- excluding others from online chats or other communication
- inappropriate image tagging
- sharing someone's personal or embarrassing information online
- creating hate sites or starting social exclusion campaigns on social networking sites
- sharing unflattering or private images, including naked or sexual images
- assuming the identity of the another person online and representing them in a negative manner or manner that may damage their relationship with others
- repeatedly, and for no strategic reason, attacking players in online gaming.

For it to be called bullying, inappropriate actions online must be between people who have ongoing contact and be part of a pattern of repeated behaviours (online or offline). Single incidents or random inappropriate actions are not bullying.

One action – such as an insulting comment or an embarrassing photo – which is repeated through sharing and forwarding to others, can be called bullying if the individuals involved know each other, and have ongoing contact either on or offline.

Online bullying has the potential to have social, psychological and educational impacts.

Ref: [Bullying No Way!](#)

## Managing Bullying

### Identifying Bullying Behaviour

Programs will be put into place which will ensure:

- All school students, staff and community members will be aware of the School's Anti Bullying definition and what constitutes bullying
- The development of a common language in regards to bullying, how it should be dealt with and building strategies for promoting positive behaviour

### Dealing with Bullying Behaviour

**Programs will be put into place which will ensure:**

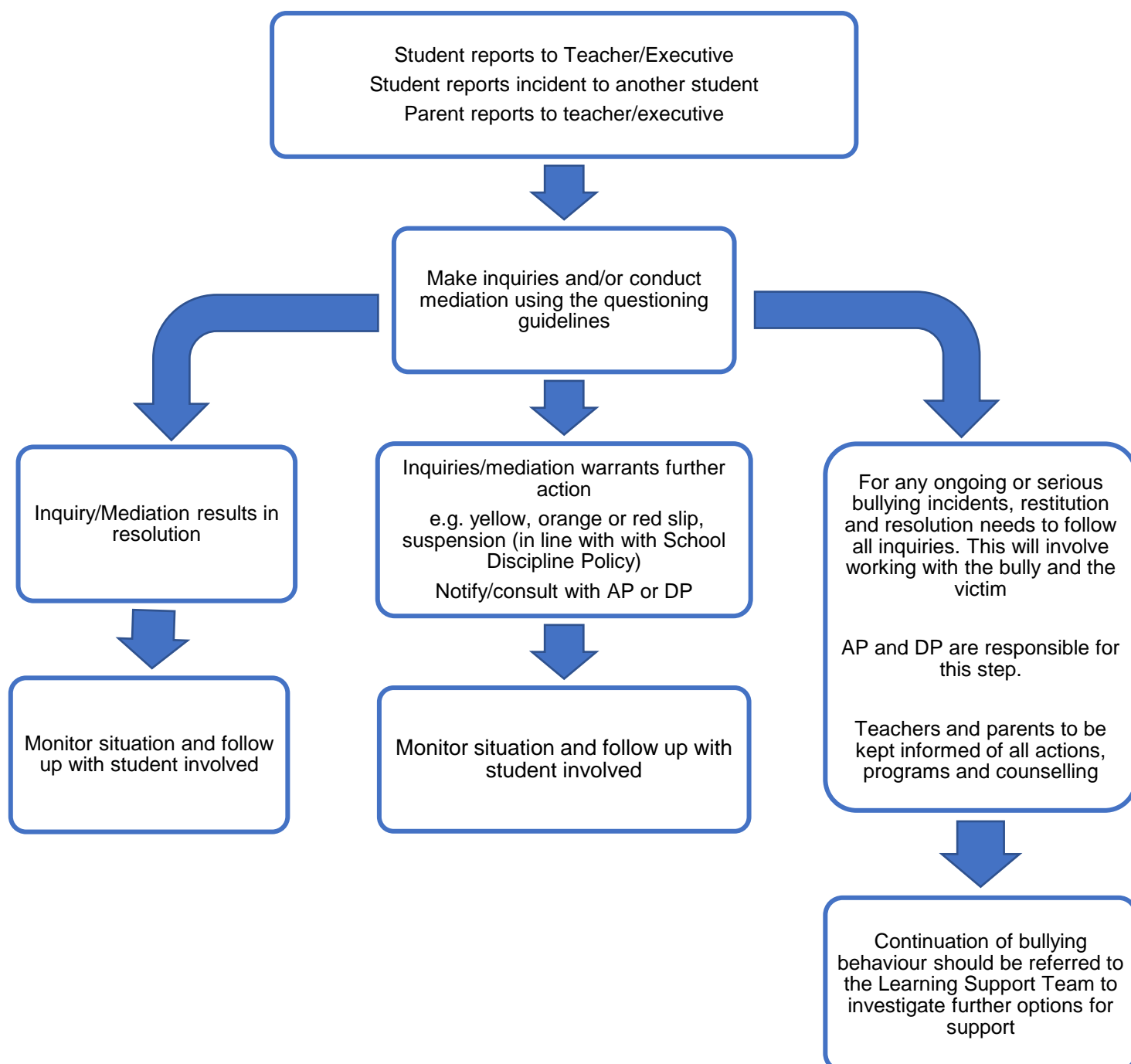
- response to bullying is principle centred – 'Bullying is not OK'
- the focus when dealing with bullying behaviour will be on behaviour change, a whole school approach through effective and consistent reporting, education, intervention, community involvement and peer support.
- consequences for bullying behaviour will be consistent with the School Student Welfare Policy
- professional development for staff to promote common investigation techniques, questioning, recording and communication of issues
- promoting the use of PBL strategies and core values to empower students in conflict resolution

**School programs will aim to:**

- embed a philosophy of Anti - Bullying and zero tolerance into school life
- provide students with conflict resolution skills
- develop bystander skills

- build productive school citizens who capably deal with a variety of social situations and willingly support their peers
- encourage positive and supportive intervention
- promote community education and problem solving skills
- establish clear consequences for bullying activity
- implement behaviour modification plans for students exhibiting ongoing bullying behaviour
- encourage staff vigilance

### Procedures for Reporting Bullying



### Principles for Reporting and management of bullying

- It is vital that the teacher who the student reports to follows up the incident, informs the student that they have investigated and followed up the incident, and checks back with the student to monitor. Consequently it is anticipated that a culture of trust will develop where students are confident that they will be listened to.
- Effective reporting and management must be supported by thorough communication to all parties involved.

## Managing Bullying – Guidelines for Inquiry and Mediation

### Student/s report the incident:

- Take down any details offered in this first instance
- let the student/s know that you will be speaking to the suspected bullies
- Ask what has happened to them and who was involved
- Make sure that you write down the students name and class
- Empathise with the student, acknowledge how they are feeling and reassure them that you will be speaking to them again once you have spoken to all other students involved

### Before you look into the claims:

- Wait until all parties involved are calm, allow for cool off time if needed
- Allow all students involved the opportunity to have a say, uninterrupted
- Do not send students who are involved in the incident to get other students who are involved

### The Method of Shared Concern

Investigation and Mediation is based upon The Method of Shared Concern. This aims to make the students exhibiting the bullying behaviour a significant part of the resolution. It aims to encourage them to empathise with the victim and propose solutions to the problem and acknowledge more appropriate ways to behave.

#### Stage 1

- Speak to each individual child accused of bullying behaviour
- Ask each of them 'What do you know about what has been happening/happened?'
- Be constructive and pose probing questions which are neutral and do not accuse any wrong doing at this point.

*Most children will be co-operative and share events that have happened which allow you to ask questions which encourage the bully to consider their actions, how the victim felt and more appropriate ways to respond.*

#### Stage 2

- Speak to the victim
- Ask the student generally how they have been going at school
- Ask the student if there is any reason that they can see why the students may want to intentionally hurt them?
- Ask the student what they think could be done to improve the situation
- Let the student know that you have been talking to the other students involved and that everyone is working to find a solution to the problem (a way to make it better)
- Invite the student to meet with other students involved to all work together to resolve the situation

#### Stage 3

- Meet with the bully/group of bullies
- Compliment the group on the progress that has been made
- Respond to, (or elicit) a suggestion that the victim be invited to join them for a final meeting to assess whether the situation has been resolved
- Reassurances must be given by group members that they will act positively towards the victim at the meeting
- You should NOT arrange this meeting until you are certain that it is evident that a constructive outcome can be obtained

#### Stage 4

- The final meeting is to provide confirmation that the bullying is over and acceptable relations between all the students have been established
- Where the victim has behaved in a provocative manner, you need to ensure that adjustments in behaviour are committed to from both sides

- Mediate an agreement on how the students will behave towards each other in the future. Older students can sign an agreement if deemed appropriate and useful

*It is important to note that if serious incidents have occurred, (eg violence) consequences should occur as per the Student Welfare Policy. If the steps are unsuccessful in reaching acceptable resolutions the situation is to be monitored, continuous support offered and the Student Welfare Policy/School Discipline policy followed.*

### **Accountability and Restitution**

To promote productive accountability and reflection any student who has been issued with an orange slip or suspension following bullying behaviour will spend time with the Stage Supervisor discussing the incidents in which they were involved.

For example:

- what has been happening?
- what were your actions?
- what were the implications upon the other person?
- What school rules did you break?
- What could you do to help make things better?
- How will other people know that you are trying to make things better?

Where appropriate a student reflection sheet should be sent home for further consolidation. This should only be done in consultation and with the support of the parent. It needs to be signed by the parent and returned to the Deputy Principal.