

Anti-bullying Plan

BELLINGEN PUBLIC SCHOOL – revised 2016.

Next review 2019





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.

It reflects a whole school approach to the implementation of policies and programs, to support the welfare of students and has been developed and reviewed in consultation with the school community.

Statement of purpose

It is the responsibility and aim of Bellingen Public School to have effective procedures in place to ensure that a safe and secure environment, free from discrimination, is provided for all students. To achieve this all members of the school community will contribute to preventing bullying, in any form, by modelling and promoting appropriate behaviour and relationships that are respectful, caring, tolerant and supportive.

This shared responsibility will result in -

- a positive school culture where bullying is not accepted,
- all stakeholders will have the right of respect from others, the right to learn or to teach, and a right to feel safe and secure in their school environment.

This shared responsibility will look like -

STAFF

- To model appropriate caring and tolerant behaviour at all times
- To provide activities which educate students about both bullying and proactive behaviours in stage levels
- To deal with all reported and observed incidences of bullying as set out in the policy
- To ensure that children are supervised at all times
- To intervene if they are able to protect the victim from further harm
- To report incidences of bullying to the Assistant Principal, Principal if this is warranted

STUDENTS

- To 'tell/report' if they are being bullied or if they see someone else being bullied
- To help someone who is being bullied and intervene to protect the victim if they are able
- To immediately seek teacher assistance if they can't intervene safely
- To not bully others

PARENTS

- To watch for signs that their child may be being bullied
- To listen sympathetically to reports of bullying
- To speak to staff at BPS if their child is being bullied, or they suspect that this is happening
- To speak to staff at BPS if their child is showing bullying behaviour or they suspect that this is happening
- To encourage their children to 'tell/report' if they are bullied
- To work with the school in seeking a permanent solution
- To speak to staff if they are concerned about bullying in the community

Bullying is defined as the conscious desire to hurt, threaten, frighten or make someone feel uncomfortable, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. The three main types of bullying are:

- Physical (hitting, kicking, theft)
- Verbal (name calling, racist remarks)
- Indirect (spreading rumours, excluding someone from social groups)

Students who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from the school.

Students must be encouraged to report bullying at our school.

The school's teaching and support staff must be alert to signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it in accordance with the school's plan.

Protection

'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.'

<http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentsupport/behaviourpgrms/antibullyi ng/>

All definitions of bullying include three parameters.

1. Repetition – prolonged over time
2. An imbalance of power
3. May be verbal, physical, social or psychological

Bullying behaviour can include:

- **Verbal:** name calling, abusive language, putdowns, sarcasm, threats, written notes.
- **Social:** acting in an unpleasant way near someone, giving nasty looks, making rude gestures, name calling and swearing at them, exclusion from activities including in the classroom, playground and out of school time (eg cyberbullying) that carries over into school time.
- **Psychological:** spreading stories and rumours at school and within the community, including via mobile phones (eg. text messages) social networking sites (eg facebook), internet services (eg. emails), verbally, written notes.
- **Physical:** hitting, scratching, spitting, punching, tripping, kicking, 'mucking around' that is used to justify the bullying.
- **Cyber-bullying** can be social, verbal and psychological as the communication using technology is 'intended to threaten, humiliate, intimidate control or put another person down.'

Bellingen Public School community views bullying behaviour as:

- deliberate and repeated misuse of power
- a shared responsibility of students, parents and teachers
- damaging to both the victim and the perpetrator/s
- behaviour that deliberately provokes a reaction in another child

Our school community will:

- implement programs for preventing bullying (such as Habits of mind, Growth mindset, Values Education programs, 'Keeping Safe'- student leadership approach to counter bullying, BullyEd,)
- implement current programs to empower students to keep themselves safe (such as <http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/>, Buddies program, Peer Support)
- provide a transparent and effective anti-bullying plan
- provide specific strategies and processes to support the student/s being bullied and the student/s doing the bullying
- communicate openly and raise awareness about preventing and responding to bullying in our school via newsletters, phone calls, website information, access to Department of Education information for parents, students and teachers
- provide professional learning for all staff
- consistently follow-up with school rules
- teach anti-bullying units of work within the curriculum
- provide mediation and training
- offer workshops to parents and community members
- connect+ succeed = thrive (wellbeing framework)

Bellingen Public School cannot condone bullying and we are actively involved in tackling this problem, seeking the support of the students, staff and the school community to help create a safer climate. BPS has an inclusive environment recognising diversity and respecting individual differences and provides quality education to meet student learning needs in a consistent, caring and supportive environment.

Our understanding is that ~

- "Everyone has the right to feel safe all the time" and

"It's O.K. to tell someone if you are being bullied."

Our school will:

- include anti bullying in Welfare Policy
- include the Values framework within the plan
- ensure explicit anti-bullying activities and units are taught across K-6
- promote consistency by staff in their dealings with situations and ensure follow up is prompt
- encourage parents and students to report concerns to the school as reporting incidents of bullying ensures the school can deal with the matter and support all students involved. It is their responsibility to do so
- include Cybersafety as an important component of our anti-bullying plan (strong focus on **consequences** in primary school)
- teacher reflection of the anti-bullying plan will be part of professional learning- standard 5 *‘teachers create and maintain safe and challenging learning environments through the use of classroom management skills.’*
- parents, caregivers, community members, students (**bystanders, person doing the bullying, victims of bullying**) and staff must take bullying seriously and act appropriately to address the matter promptly
- everyone must promote respectful relationships within the school community and insist that bullying will not be tolerated in any form

Prevention Strategies

The school will adopt a three phase prevention approach to bullying.

Primary Intervention: Phase 1

- Professional development for staff relating to bullying, harassment and proven counter measures.
- Community awareness and input relating to bullying, its characteristics and the school's programs and response in accordance with the National Safe Schools framework.
- To provide programs that promote resilience, life and social skills,

assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.

- Data collection from a variety of sources will be administered and acted upon annually.
- Each classroom teacher to clarify at the start of each year the school policy on anti-bullying.
- The curriculum to include anti-bullying messages and strategies eg: Promoting Positive Bystander Behaviour, Heart Masters, "Bullying. No Way!" programs.
- Student Representative Council, peer support delegates, staff, students and parents to promote the philosophy of 'No Put Downs'.
- Structured activities available to students at recess and lunch breaks.
- Embedding anti-bullying messages via P&C and newsletter Articles in regard to trends or strategies.
- Explicit cybersafety programs
- Registering as an eSmart school

Secondary (Early) Intervention: Phase 2

- Promote students and staff reporting bullying incidents involving themselves or others.
- Classroom teachers and principal on a regular basis reminding students and staff to report incidents of bullying.
- Parents encouraged to contact the school if they become aware of a problem.
- A designated safe and quiet place for children to access at recess and lunch times.
- School P & C may be informed of bullying incidents where deemed appropriate.

Tertiary Intervention: Phase 3

- Once an incident of bullying is identified each bully, victim and witness will be spoken with, and all incidents or allegations of bullying will be fully investigated and documented.
- Students identified by others as bullies will be informed of allegations.

- Both bullies, victims and witnesses will be offered counselling and support.
- If student bullying persists parents will be contacted and consequences implemented consistent with the school's Student Welfare - Code of Conduct.

Curriculum Areas

BPS will embed anti-bullying messages where possible into curriculum areas K-6. For example -

- English – discussion around texts read with themes pertaining to Anti-Bullying, debates and public speaking opportunities
- PDHPE – team building activities, social skills programs, role play, Peer Support Program
- History and Geography – cultural perspectives, teaching of tolerance and equity (preventative measures)
- CAPA – dramatisation around theme of Anti-Bullying, role play

Early Intervention

Early intervention strategies and programs at Bellingen PS will be implemented for students who are identified as being at risk of developing long-term difficulties with social relationships and those students who are identified at or after enrolment as having previously experienced bullying or engaged in bullying behaviour. These will include proactive actions that include:

- Communicate with preschools, parents and other schools (including high schools prior to transition to ensure students have transition plans if required; and with other schools for new enrolments)
- Provide structured transition programs - pre-school to primary, primary to high school, especially for students identified as being at risk
- Ensure the school welfare and discipline policy and procedures, and school expectations, are clearly communicated to students, staff and parents
- Student welfare data is carefully communicated to appropriate staff and agencies to ensure relevant, continuous and consistent support for students and their families

- Explicit teaching of social and emotional skills to ensure the development of appropriate social and emotional behaviour- this will include embedding these skills in all teaching and learning practices; also Buddies, specifically designed Social Skills program with Kindergarten (led by LaST), Structured Play, Games Hub, Year 6 Common Room and gardening programs and other incidental opportunities where students can demonstrate these behaviours in a range of settings.
- Interagency approach is employed as necessary- school counsellor, Regional support staff, LAST, non Department of Education personnel (eg: interrelate)
- Use of the five finger strategies to victims, bystanders and teachers of appropriate actions.

Responses:

The following steps should be taken when dealing with incidents:

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached.
- A clear account of the incident will be recorded and given to the Principal or delegate.
- The Principal or delegate will interview all concerned and will record the incident.
- The class teacher will be informed.
- Parents will be informed.
- Consequences and appropriate measures will be used as outlined in the Welfare Policy and in consultation with all parties concerned.
- Implement departmental procedures where appropriate e.g. Child Well-Being Unit, Police, Security Unit

5 Finger strategies



Consequences:

This will be individually determined and may involve:-

- exclusion from class or playground or both
- withdrawal of privileges
- structured playground program
- support structures including advice from the Learning and Support Team, recommendation for counselling from appropriate agency for both victim and perpetrator.
- school suspension
- ongoing monitoring of students identified as displaying bullying behaviours
- reinforcement of and rewards for more appropriate behaviours

Students who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with the class teacher or another member of staff of their choice.
- Offering an opportunity to address the students as any bullying behaviours arise
- Reassuring the student.
- Offering ongoing support (see page following).
- Programs restoring self-esteem and confidence.

Procedures and timeframes:

In conjunction with the Student Welfare and Discipline policy the school will publish the the Anti-Bullying strategies including the Five finger strategies (hand) in newsletters and in parent packs for new enrolments. The Five Finger strategies will ve displayed across the school and talked about regularly on assemblies and in classrooms. Explicit teaching of what constitutes bullying and Anti-Bullying strategies will be taught regularly in classrooms.

Teachers report bullying incidents to their supervisors and/or principal immediately. Action to be initiated by executive by the end of the school day where feasible. After full investigations are carried out parents are immediately advised of the incident and consequences for their child.

Intervention Support for Students Affected By Bullying Behaviours may be provided by:

School Intervention: Teacher counselling, buddy class, school counsellor / psychologist, Learning Support Team, LaST, SLSOs, Assistant Principal (Supervisors) and Principal, partner pre-schools/high schools, ARCO

District Intervention: Early Intervention Program, Senior Psychologist, school counsellor, specialist teachers for hearing/vision, Assistant Principal LaST, HSLO (Home School Liaison Officer), Learning and Wellbeing advisor.

Community Intervention: Family Support Services, Departments Of Human Services, Health / Sport and Recreation, **Non-government agencies** - i.e. Burnside, NSW Police Service, private counsellors (relationships, family), Council Community Development Officers, AECG, Local Land Council members, Youth workers, NORTEC, community Care Options

Medical Intervention: NSW Department of Health, area health centres, community nurses, general practitioners, psychologists, psychiatrists, paediatricians

Individual Behaviour Plans

When a student exhibits particularly challenging bullying behaviours a case management plan is formulated for the student in consultation with a team consisting of any of the following:

- Principal, Assistant Principal, counsellor, class teacher, parents, student, LaST, regional DoE personnel, other relevant community agencies

The team will meet when required to review the anti-bullying plan and to ensure continuing support and consistent management.

The case management plan could involve:

- behavioural contracts

The Anti-Bullying Plan – NSW Department of Education

- behaviour modification plans - rewards and consequences
- inclusion in social skills programs for small groups of students
- use of support teachers and SLSOs
- counselling within the school
- family counselling
- medical investigation
- consulting other government agencies – NSW Human Services, Health, NSW Police

Management of Bullying Incidents:

Within the bounds of privacy legislation the school would work collaboratively to provide opportunities to ensure student safety and wellbeing. To maintain confidentiality the school would hold private interviews with both the victim and perpetrator's parents/caregivers and offer ongoing and follow up support.

Our school –

- will provide regular updates to parents and caregivers about the management of bullying incidents that have been reported to the school
- staff will **listen, believe, act** (within the bounds of the policy and school community expectations and procedures)
- will analyse playground data weekly at communication meeting
- will track patterns of behaviour and intervene with relevant support
- will use school personnel and interagency support
- will notify the Safety and security directorate
- will ring police
- will notify the School Director
- will contact the Child Well-Being Unit when required

Bellingen PS will contact the Child Wellbeing Unit, or Community Services where appropriate, by using the CWU tree to determine the course of action.

Procedures for reporting incidents of bullying to the Police:

In accordance with the DEC guidelines the school will notify Police, Safety and Security, School Director and CWU of any serious incidents of bullying such as assaults, threats, intimidation or harassment of which they need to be made aware. The school will continue to work with the

community and its organisations, including the Police, to continue to provide a safe community environment.

Procedures for contacting government agencies:

Government agencies will be contacted when a student is determined to be at risk of harm regarding a bullying incident. All school staff will be made aware of the mandatory requirements and legal issues in relation to bullying (maltreatment, harassment and violence.)

Appeals Procedures:

If a parent or caregiver feels the incident has not been dealt with fairly or resolved adequately, the person will be directed by the school of their rights according to the DoE Complaints Procedures and/or to contact Regional Office and speak to the School Director.

Bullying behaviours:

Understanding underlying concerns and motivations

Understanding the purpose of students' behaviour allows the school community to make the best choices in managing the behaviour. Unacceptable, "acting out" behaviour sometimes has complex causes such as:

- inappropriate curriculum and / or poor teaching methods
- lack of knowledge or skill in behaving appropriately
- inappropriate behaviour management at home or at school
- a need to control reaction to a lack of choices and control in the student's life
- after a traumatic experience, misbehaviour may be a way that a student seeks or indicates the need for support

A range of options for managing unacceptable bullying behaviours:

- reprimand, re-direction, reminder of the rule and consequences
- loss of privilege e.g. exclusion from the playground for a period of time

- in class or playground isolation, "time out" An area of the classroom or playground observed by the teacher but separate from peers
- exclusion from class, sent to a reflection class
- peer or teacher mentoring
- timeout (detention)
- reclassification of a behaviour category
- restitution repairing the damage done where relevant to the offence committed
- individual behaviour or case management plans
- suspension or exclusion from school

NB: Situations may arise where the student will not be part of the Behaviour Categories outlined because they do not fit the consequences available. New strategies will need to be developed and implemented to suit and only when the behaviour meets acceptable standards will the student re-enter the normal school routine.

The Coordinator of the Learning Support Team (LST) together with stage leaders will regularly review recorded behaviour issues in order to identify any emerging patterns of bullying. If such patterns are identified then the above strategies and secondary and tertiary interventions are put in motion to deal with the arising issues.

Promoting and Publicising the Anti-bullying Plan:

The school will promote and report on the Anti-bullying plan through the:

- ***Annual School Report.***
- ***school newsletter and the school web site***
- ***assemblies,***
- ***student and student leaders reinforcing appropriate behaviours and through***
- ***explicit, planned classroom lessons and opportunistic learning moments (unplanned)***

Three Yearly Evaluation procedure:

The Anti-Bullying plan will be reviewed with the whole staff, student body, parents and community members through surveys, parent forums, SRC meetings, staff meetings and P&C meetings to determine future support, guidance and reforms if needed.

Anti-Bullying team that developed this plan:

Libby Jarvis- Parent Representative

Vicky Greer- Parent Representative

Elektra Mac Donald- Parent Representative

Carrie Hain – Teacher Representative, Reading Recovery

Lisa Mathews- Teacher Representative, Stage 1

Katherine Sutherland – Assistant Principal, Stage 1

Craig Ellem- Teacher representative, Stage 2

Kate Somerville- Relieving Assistant Principal stage 3

Dylan Harry- Assistant Principal Stage 2

Elizabeth Mulligan- Relieving Principal

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Additional Information

NSW Police Youth Liaison Officer
Coffs Harbour
Ph: 0266519961

Kids Helpline
Ph: 1800 551800 (Freecall)

Principal's comment

Elizabeth Mulligan – R. Principal

School contact information

Bellingen Public School

William st

Bellingen 2454

Ph 66551147 Fax 66552615

Web: www.bellingen-p.schools.nsw.edu.au

Email bellingen-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au

<http://www.curriculum.edu.au/values/default.asp?id=14515>

<http://www.bullyingnoway.gov.au/teachers/classroom-resources/primary.html>

<http://www.cyh.com/HealthTopics/HealthTopicDetailsKids.aspx?p=335&id=2514&np=286>