

**Respect**

**Responsibility**

**Personal Best**



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**The Forest High School**

**Anti-Bullying Plan**

# 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.

## Statement of purpose

The Forest High School community recognises that bullying, in all its forms, causes significant short and long term harm to the individual. Bullying is not acceptable in any form at The Forest High School.

We aim to make The Forest High School an inclusive, safe environment so that students can develop into ethical, resilient and tolerant members of society who have the motivation to achieve their personal best.

As a school community we foster a collaborative environment in which students are confident to voice concerns and take responsibility for their actions.

It is the responsibility of the whole school community to recognise when bullying occurs and to address the issues.

Classroom teachers play an important role in effective intervention. Staff are trained to respond sensitively and effectively to reports of bullying and will treat students with respect and provide support.

## Understanding Bullying

Bullying has three key features. Bullying:

1. involves a misuse of power in a relationship
2. is intentional, targeted, ongoing and repeated
3. involves behaviours that can cause harm.

Bullying can be physical, verbal, social, emotional, and socio-relational. Bullying can be easy to see (overt), or hidden (covert), such as spreading rumours about another person or excluding them.

Bullying can also happen online using technology such as the internet or mobile devices. This is known as online bullying or cyberbullying.

A person can be bullied about many different things such as how they look, sound or speak; their background, religion, race or culture including Aboriginality; having a disability; their sex; their size or body shape or any other ways they may be different.

Some students are bullied about their academic or sporting achievements or hobbies.

## What Bullying is not

A single incident, argument or disagreement between peers is not bullying. However, these behaviours may lead to bullying and should be resolved.

## Prevention

The Forest High School reinforces the expectations of **RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY and PERSONAL BEST** to all students as part of our PBL (Positive Behaviour for Learning) program. Students are explicitly taught by their teachers and peers what these expectations look like.

Every lesson teachers are required to model and reinforce explicitly the following standard of behaviours for students:

### Respect

- Be polite
- Celebrate Difference
- Use appropriate language
- Take care of others property
- Dress appropriately
- Represent The Forest High School positively
- Take pride in yourself and your abilities

### Responsibility

- Be safe
- Care for others
- Be a positive member of the community
- Be environmentally aware
- Be prepared and on time
- Be polite and show courtesy to others

### Personal Best

- Accept opportunities and challenges
- Give your best effort
- Be a positive role model
- Make good choices
- Be resilient
- Celebrate your success and the success of others

Teachers observe these behaviours in the classroom and report on whether a student is consistently, usually, sometimes, or rarely displaying these standards of behaviour in their Semester 1 and Semester 2 reports.

### What Works Best

Staff at The Forest High School undertake annual professional learning in What Works Best, 8 quality teaching practices that are evidence based approaches to supporting school improvement. Of the eight themes, High Expectations, Classroom Management, and Wellbeing, all explore practices that foster a safe and connected school community that enhance positive social interactions.

Effective social skills and positive relationships act to prevent bullying. At The Forest High School we promote awareness, effective social skills and positive relationships through a number of programs that are run throughout each year. A range of initiatives delivered at The Forest High School is listed on the following pages.

## Stage Specific Preventative Programs

### Stage 4

- Incoming Year 7 Year Adviser and Learning Support Teacher liaise with primary schools through the student transition period to identify students with previous wellbeing issues. This allows students to be supported and monitored throughout their integration into the school environment.
- Stage 4 PDHPE focuses on respectful relationships, including: bullying, being a proactive bystander against bullying and cyber bullying.
- Stage 4 Pastoral Care Program – respectful relationships, digital identity, and cyberbullying
- Year 7 Camp – Having fun together and meeting challenges together creates bonds and a new climate within the year group. There is a specific anti-bullying component taught by camp staff. This interactive session is designed to encourage respect, compassion, and cooperation among students.
- The Peer Support Program specifically targets the issues of bullying, harassment, and resilience. Students are encouraged to see themselves as having a role to play in making their school a safe and comfortable place for everyone.
- Relationships Australia Workshops. These sessions focus on improving emotional regulation, maintaining healthy relationships, and seeking help when required.
- FRIENDS Resilience program – small group support and education promoting positive relationships and resilience.
- The bespoke Year 7 Resilience Program and Year 8 girls Empathy Program are small group intensive sessions focused on conflict resolution, empathy, self-esteem, and peer pressure.
- Educational sessions with Police Liaison Officer on cyber safety and the law.

### Stage 5

- Stage 5 PDHPE focuses on respectful relationships, including the use and abuse of power in relationships, consent and what a respectful relationship looks like.
- Stage 5 Pastoral Care Program – respectful relationships online – consent, image-based abuse, and tools to positively support themselves and their peers.
- Year 9 Camp provides a further opportunity for identifying as a year, with adventure challenging and small group work. Students work cooperatively with each other.
- Leadership of the Peer Support Program. Students play an important role in supporting year 7 students and encouraging a positive, inclusive, and safe environment.
- Relationships Australia Workshops. These sessions focus on improving emotional regulation, maintaining healthy relationships and seeking help when required.
- FRIENDS Resilience program – small group support and education promoting positive relationships and resilience.

### Stage 6

- GP visit to all Year 11 students provides an opportunity for students to speak in small groups to general practitioners about, physical, mental and social issues in a safe and confidential environment.
- Senior Student Advocate Program, provides students a point of contact with a teacher to support them with study and personal issues.
- Life Ready Program addresses issues of relevance to youth. A wide range of speakers are engaged including speakers about safety, disabilities, motivation, inspiration, self-defence, assertiveness and self-image.
- Year 11 Camp builds on group relationships within the year group and also explores issues and strategies to cope with in relationships.

## Whole School

- The school has a Wellbeing Team including: Year Advisers, Head Teacher Wellbeing, Deputy Principals, School Counsellors, Careers Adviser, Girls Advisor, SLSOs and LaSt.
- ARCO – Anti-Racism Contact Officers, for support of all staff, students, community members and contractors in matters involving racial discrimination.
- Student advocate program – students identify a teacher to go to for support and advice.
- The Student Representative Council promotes a climate of anti-bullying at our school through various activities such as Harmony Day and a 'Bullying No Way'. This is part of a national action day against bullying.
- The SRC promote 'Wear it Purple day' to advocate for and empower rainbow young people
- Fortnightly Pastoral Care Program and Assemblies are held throughout the year where students celebrate each other's

successes and experts are able to speak on such topics as cyber bullying.

- Teacher referral of student wellbeing issues identified through Sentral to allow for appropriate support or consequences for the bully or target (can be in the form of Year Adviser, Deputy Principal or Counsellor.
- Restorative practices promote relationship-building and problem-solving, through such restorative methods as circles for teaching and conflict resolution to conferences that bring victims, offenders and their supporters together to address wrongdoing.
- Parent engagement – eg: Relationships Australia and P&C presentations. The SchoolTV website and newsletter provide resources to empower parents with credible and practical support strategies for positive relationships and bullying.

## Wellbeing Team Contacts

Position		Position	
<b>Principal</b>	Nathan Lawler	<b>Year 12 Adviser</b>	Georgia Yam
<b>Deputy Principal (8, 10, 12)</b>	Mathew Finley	<b>Year 11 Adviser</b>	Kate Board
<b>Deputy Principal (7, 9, 11)</b>	Mirjana Simic	<b>Year 10 Adviser</b>	Courtney Turner
<b>Head Teacher Wellbeing</b>	Erin McWhirter	<b>Year 9 Adviser</b>	Gordon Kovacs
<b>Girls Adviser</b>	Sophie Harper	<b>Year 8 Adviser</b>	Tim Hepburn
<b>Anti-Racism Contact Officer and International Student Adviser</b>	Thomas Golanoski	<b>Year 7 Adviser</b>	Beth Sweeny
<b>Girls Mediation and Support</b>	Julia Trout	<b>Counsellor (Mon-Tue)</b>	Catherine Walker
<b>Boys Mediation and Support</b>	Kurt Neely	<b>Counsellor (Wed- Fri)</b>	Alison Malone

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## Response

### Basic Steps for Investigating Bullying

The following steps support staff to investigate incidents effectively:

1. Listen and check your understanding of the allegation and its impact
2. Acknowledge the issue is important
3. Make a plan to keep the student safe
4. Identify any way the parent can help
5. Explain the possible next steps
6. Plan to meet again

When a teacher begins an investigation into an allegation of bullying, the following questions help to guide their understanding of the significance and impact of the behaviour:

- What has been the historical relationship between these children?
- Is there any personal meaning of the behaviour than an observer would not understand?
- Does the child find the actions hurtful or feels devalued?
- Does the student demonstrating the behaviour intend to cause hurt and knows the other student finds it hurtful?

### Conflict is Not Always Bullying

As mentioned earlier, a single incident, argument or disagreement between peers is not bullying. However, these behaviours may lead to bullying and should be resolved. It is important to acknowledge that sometimes teachers and parents may not agree that the behaviours being observed are bullying. When we disagree about defining behaviour as bullying or conflict, our expectations are that teachers will:

- Recognise there will be some truth in both perspectives
- Highlight areas of agreement
- Identify some first steps for exploring and addressing the issue

Often bullying behaviours can be defined on a continuum of harm. Take a potential bullying behaviour such as exclusion. Nobody can be forced into a friendship with another child. If someone does not want to be friends, they have a right to block that person from Instagram or not invite them to a birthday party.

While these actions can be hurtful and upsetting, and may require wellbeing support, these actions alone are not bullying behaviours. This invites us to consider the following question, *when does exclusion become bullying?* The following tests can be applied:

- Is the action taken public? For example, the child blocks someone from Instagram and reports this in their posts to target the individual and gain power
- Is the action taken designed to coerce the other child into doing something? For example, trying to exclude from the friendship group until the engage in a risky activity.
- Does the exclusion interfere with learning? For example, refusing to collaborate in group work.

### Reasons for differing perspectives

- Most bullying occurs when neither teachers nor parents are around, so most adults are relying on second-hand information
- Parents may not be aware of their own child's role in provoking or perpetuating conflict
- Teachers may overlook covert bullying that triggers an overt aggressive reaction
- Staff find out about less than 50% of incidents of bullying
- Students are more likely to tell parents about bullying than teachers
- Bullies often feel their actions are motivated by revenge or justice, where victims believe it is motivated by power or sadism

*Fekkes, Pijpers & Verloove-Vanhorick 2005; Rigby & Johnson 2016; Smith & Shu 2002; Fluck 2014*

### When a Parent Reports Allegations of Bullying

When a parent reports allegation of bullying, there are certain standards we expect all staff to meet in their response. These standards are:

- Ensuring your concerns are heard and that our response acknowledges the nature of the complaint/allegation.
- You are aware of how we have attempted to address the issue.
- Asking if there is a history of low-level behaviors that might not be documented, for example dating back to primary school, that have had a sustained impact over time.
- Staff do not prejudge the outcome or consequences of an investigation.
- The allegation is referred to the appropriate member of staff.

## Guidelines on Referral Process

Often information about bullying is first reported to a parent, followed by a teacher or support teacher that the child trusts.

When thinking about the referral process, the first step is assessing the seriousness of the incident and where it fits on our **Positive Behaviour for Learning framework**. Some practical examples are included in the following lists:

<b>Level</b>  <i>What is the level of the behaviour?</i>	<b>Behaviours Observed</b>  <i>What are some possible behaviours observed at this level?</i>	<b>Management Strategies</b>  <i>Who to contact to discuss this level of bullying and what are some different strategies that the school might use?</i>	
<b>Positive Behaviour</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Demonstrates respect, responsibility and personal best</li> <li>- Speaks to a parent or teacher about someone being bullied, or has observed bullying behaviours in another student</li> <li>- Supports students who have been the victim of bullying by including them in peer group, lesson activities, or other social networks</li> <li>- Blocks accounts and/or reports peer content that is bullying</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Student refers to trusted teacher, Peer Support Leader, or Senior SRC</li> <li>- Green slip merit awards</li> <li>- Communicate Anti-Bullying education in Year Meetings and Assemblies</li> <li>- Staff model PBL behaviour in classrooms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Whole School anti-bullying initiatives</li> <li>- Refer reported incidents to appropriate teacher</li> <li>- PBL messages in every classroom</li> </ul>
<b>Low Level Behaviour Classroom Bullying</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recent (e.g. last few days)</li> <li>- Has occurred in one or two classes</li> <li>- Not previously discussed with teacher/s</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Refer incident to classroom teacher</b></li> <li>- Seating Plans</li> <li>- Detentions</li> <li>- Student/Parent Interviews</li> <li>- Remind/redirect/caution</li> </ul>	

<p><b>Medium Level Behaviour</b></p> <p><b>Classroom and Playground</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ongoing and occurring in multiple classrooms, in the playground, bus, online, after school, on weekend</li> <li>- May have been previously raised with teacher but no resolution or effective action taken</li> <li>- Aggressive Behaviour</li> <li>- Racial, religious, or sexual harassment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Refer incident to Year Adviser</b></li> <li>- <b>Racial or religious harassment referred to Anti-Racism Contact Officer</b></li> <li>- Mediation - Restorative justice</li> <li>- Monitoring Card or Progress Report</li> <li>- Refer to support services</li> <li>- Formal Caution from Deputy Principal</li> </ul>
<p><b>High Level Behaviour</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Physical Aggression</li> <li>- Verbal Abuse</li> <li>- Unresolved medium level intervention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Refer to Deputy Principal</b></li> <li>- Formal Caution - Short or Long Suspension</li> <li>- External intervention or wellbeing programs</li> <li>- Risk assessment and management plan</li> <li>- Student behaviour support plan</li> <li>- Whole school monitoring - Incident Report Hotline</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Criminal Behaviour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Refer to Principal or Deputy Principal</b></li> <li>- <b>Refer to NSW Police</b></li> <li>- Long Suspension</li> <li>- Risk assessment and management plan</li> <li>- Student behaviour and support plan</li> <li>- Incident Report Hotline</li> </ul>

**When a teacher receives information about bullying these 4 steps assist us in planning our response:**

1. Gather Information
2. Form Hypothesis
3. Plan Intervention and Implement
4. Monitor Progress

### **1. Gather information**

When allegations of bullying have been made, we need to ensure that our judgement is based on observation and evidence.

### **2. Develop a hypothesis about what's happening**

Once we have collated our evidence we can form a hypothesis of what is happening. This helps us to implement the appropriate response, based on our Positive Behaviour for Learning model.

### **3. Make a plan to improve the situation**

Three targets for improvement are central to improving the outcomes for students who are the victims of bullying. We need to address the bullying behaviour as either low level, medium level, or high level. We need to support the student who has been bullied. Finally, we need to improve relationships between students where possible. This includes restorative justice, mediation, and support groups.

### **4. Monitor Progress**

When monitoring the impact of interventions, we will more closely supervise your child in the classroom or playground, check in on their progress, and contact home if necessary.

## How it Feels When Your Child is Being Bullied

The following are normal feelings to have when your child discloses they are a victim of bullying:

- Confused
- Scared
- Frustrated
- Sad
- Worried
- Dismayed
- Sympathetic
- Shocked
- Disappointed
- Helpless
- Regretful
- Guilty
- Concerned
- Angry

Don't assume you will have the same reaction as another parent. Everyone responds differently. It is always important to recognize how bullying is impacting on your child, but also how it is impacting on you. This information helps us to support you and your child through this trauma.

## Self Reflection

Children are more likely to report bullying if they trust that adults understand the nature of their complaint. The following strategies can be utilised by teachers and parents to support a child making an allegation about bullying.

### Receive

**Stop what you are doing and focus on the disclosure. Just listen.**

Notice	Notice your own physiological response and feelings and accept these.
Centre	Tune into yourself. Breathe deeply to help regulate your emotions.
Listen again	Listen to understand content and feelings.
Reflect back	Check you have understood by saying back what your child has said in your words.
Clarify and explore	Ask questions to better understand the child's concerns.
Repeat	Continue listening until the child seems calmer and appears to feel heard.

## Know the problem and refer accordingly

- Take notes on the who, what, where, and when.
- See if your child has any primary evidence, such as messages or online posts.
- Try to separate what they have observed (what actions the bully has taken) and their experience (how they feel).
- It is important to ask your child why they think this is happening. But remember, research tells us that often the bully and the victim have different perspectives on why it has occurred that cannot be reconciled. Expecting an admission of motive because of a school investigation is unrealistic.
- Refer to the appropriate teacher to address – if all the incidents are happening in a Year 7 English class then the Year 7 English teacher needs to be the first point of contact and the first responder to dealing with the allegation.

## Cyber Bullying

Social media and other online platforms have increased the risk of bullying for children and blurred the lines of where responsibility lies for disciplining children for their online behaviours.

The role of educators in supporting and responding to incidents:

- apply concepts of rights and responsibilities in making online decisions
- understand the psycho-social impacts of cyberbullying and the legislation that is used to protect young people from serious cyberbullying
- identify situations where an imbalance of power plays a role in cyberbullying incidents and practise strategies that can be put in place to deescalate or redress the power balance
- evaluate the most appropriate sources of support if they experience cyberbullying
- offer empathetic support to someone else who has experienced cyberbullying.

## Reporting Guide for Families

The following steps should be taken by children and their families when responding to online bullying.

1. Screenshot evidence of bullying

It is always important to document evidence of the bullying. One of the greatest challenges in dealing with bullying is that it is often subtle and covert. Relying solely on allegations can make the discipline of students who are committing bullying challenging.

2. Report immediately to the company responsible for the application or website

Social media community standards outline how to behave on social media. They discourage the use of a service to harass or bully others or act in other ways that are anti-social or illegal. Social media companies are required under Australian Law to investigate and close accounts that are engaged in these behaviors. The school cannot control the accounts or content that your children use outside of school, and we cannot request that accounts be removed or blocked on your behalf.

3. Report to [www.esafety.gov.au](http://www.esafety.gov.au)

The cyberbullying team at eSafety can help with the removal of cyberbullying material. Even in cases where they are unable to remove material, they can offer advice, assistance and resources. Report to esafety when Step 2 has not resulted in a change.

4. Report to NSW Police

Cyber Bullying can reach a threshold for civil or criminal prosecution. The most likely case for charges is when someone is intimidating another person with the intention of causing mental harm, where the threshold is a likelihood to cause serious anger, outrage, humiliation, or disgust. Just as in assessing schoolyard bullying, it is assessing whether it is “Repeated behaviour” with “intent to harm” with a “power imbalance”. NSW Police will usually refer you to Steps 2, 3 or 5 if the bullying does not meet a criminal standard.

5. Report to the school

Teachers are not limited by physical or temporal boundaries in responding to duty of care issues for their students. This means incidents that happen offsite, online, and after hours may meet a threshold for school intervention. If bullying has occurred between students outside of school, and the actions are reasonably assessed to be related to school or likely to impact on school, then we are required to take steps to resolve the issue and discipline students. The following table provides some guidance on where the school and parental responsibility is divided.

School Duty of Care	Parental Duty of Care
To establish whether a history of incidents involving students at school have occurred.	Manage behaviour that takes place outside of school, including on social media.
To intervene where behaviour has a direct impact on learning or safety.	Report incidents of online bullying, harassment, intimidation, or threats.
Follow mandatory reporting guidelines for students at serious risk of harm.	Monitoring device use in the home and confiscate where appropriate, including not allowing your child to bring their device to school.
To provide wellbeing support, including advice on accessing both school and community support services.	Access support services for your child.
Implementing device bans for students who are using their device inappropriately at school.	Avoid direct confrontation with other parents or children. Always allow school leadership or NSW Police to present evidence and allegations, and deal with disciplinary outcomes.
	Notifying police of potentially criminal activity, including threats of violence, racial or sexual harassment, and bullying.

## Incidents Resulting in Physical and/or Psychological Harm or Significant Risk of Harm

High level incidents could lead to mandatory reporting. In dealing with critical incidents involving injury or psychological harm, reports will be made to the School Support Helpline.

In some cases NSW Police, Child Protection, or Child Wellbeing will be notified. The Forest High School works in good faith with New South Wales Police and Australian Federal Police.

Families are encouraged to report intimidation and threats to NSW Police. Where there is the potential for significant risk of harm, families are encouraged to consider applying for an Apprehended Personal Violence Order.

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child receives treatment and care for physical or psychological harm.

## Common Questions or Requests

Staff are trained to respond to certain questions or requests in certain ways. It is important that parents understand our expectations when conducting these investigations and how certain information is privileged. Here are a list of common scenarios and how staff are trained to respond in these situations.

### ***What would you say if a parent demands to know information about another student?***

Teaching staff must not breach the confidentiality of other students and their families.

### ***What would you say if a parent demands that another student is punished – especially when it seems clear that bullying has occurred?***

Teaching staff are employees of the Department of Education. Our responsibility is to follow school procedures and ensure that any disciplinary outcomes are fair and reasonable, and do not breach departmental policies. When we determine that a student is likely to have bullied someone else, the discipline outcome is dependent on the circumstances of each individual case. This is as true in courtrooms as it is in schools.

### ***What would you say if a parent wants to report a bullying incident but don't want to mention their child's name or have their child make a statement, but they do want the school to do something about it and they want the bully to be reprimanded?***

Reassure the parent that if they don't make a formal statement the school will still investigate the allegation and may be able to provide additional risk management advice to teachers. However, a discipline process can only occur if the actions are observed by a member of staff, or a victim is willing to make an allegation on the record. You cannot discipline someone based on an anonymous allegation alone.

### ***What would you say if a parent wants to report a bullying incident but don't want to mention their child's name or have their child make a statement because of potential retribution by the bully?***

Bullies rely on their victims not speaking out publicly. Silencing victims is part of their power. When students speak out against bullies it shifts power to the victim and sends a message they will not be intimidated. Threats of violence or retribution should always be reported to the school, as well as to NSW police.

### ***What would you say if a parent suggests keeping the student home?***

Avoiding school delay's resolving the bullying, has the potential to increase their anxiety when they return, can lead to long term school refusal, and impacts on their learning. School is a safe place for students, and we can support them to feel empowered.

## Annual Review Process

The Anti-Bullying Plan will be made available to the school community via the school's website. Parents and students will also be informed of this Plan through the school's newsletter, at Parent and Citizen meetings, School Council meetings, year meetings and special meetings

Teachers will be made aware of this plan through staff meetings, staff meetings and staff development days.

The Anti-Bullying Plan will be monitored and evaluated by:

- Students, parents and the community will be surveyed to the effectiveness of this program and the Student Representative Council will undertake focus groups yearly to understand the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Plan and further strategies that could be incorporated.
- Sentral data will be analysed to ensure that the number of reported bullying incidents have declined
- The Forest High School will be a safe and happy environment for all students
- All data will be analysed at the Yearly Welfare Planning Day where adjustments will be made, if necessary
- A revised Anti-Bullying Plan will be presented at School Council meetings, Parent & Citizen meetings and staff meetings. It will then be placed on the school's website and updated as required.

## External Reporting

Serious incidents involving harassment, assaults, and threats should be reported to the police:

Dee Why Police - 02 9971 3399

If a child is considered at risk then the school will contact the Child Wellbeing Unit or Department of Communities and Justice where appropriate.

If a company is not responding to reports of online harassment or abuse, report to the Office of the E-Safety Commissioner:

[www.esafety.gov.au](http://www.esafety.gov.au)

## Additional Information

Kids Helpline Phone Counselling Service

Tel: 1800 55 1800

<https://kidshelpline.com.au/>

Kids Helpline is Australia's only free, private and confidential, phone counselling service specifically for young people aged between 5 and 25

- KYDS
- Reachout Australia
- Bullying No Way
- Headspace
- Black Dog Institute
- NSW Department of Education Anti-Bullying Plan for Schools

## **Anti-bullying Websites**

These websites provide resources and support for schools, parents and carers, and students in dealing with bullying.

### Anti-Bullying Resources

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/student-wellbeing/attendance-behaviour-and-engagement/anti-bullying>

### Anti-Racism Resources

<https://racismnoway.com.au/>

### Policy Library for Access and Equity

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policy-listing/access-and-equity>

### Policy Library for Health, Safety and Wellbeing

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policy-listing/health--safety-and-wellbeing>

### Policy Library for Technology, Devices, and the Internet

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policy-listing/technology--devices-and-the-internet>

## **School contact information**

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# NSW Department of Education

## Anti-Bullying Policy

This policy sets out the department's position on student bullying and the requirements for preventing and responding to student bullying, including online bullying, in NSW public schools and preschools.

*05/02/2021 Update*

### 1. Policy statement

1. The department rejects all forms of bullying behaviour including online (or cyber) bullying.
2. NSW public schools work to provide safe, inclusive, and respectful learning communities that promote student wellbeing.
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.
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.
5. School staff need to encourage high levels of parental and community involvement in the school to improve

student attendance, engagement, learning and behaviour.

6. Each school must complete and implement the Anti-bullying Plan.
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.
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.
9. Bullying can be illegal if it involves behaviours that include physical violence, threats of violence, damaging property or stalking.
10. The NSW anti-bullying website[External link](#) 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.
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.
12. Teachers and other school staff are provided with support and professional development to discourage, prevent, identify and respond to student bullying behaviour.

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.
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.
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.
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.

## 2. Audience and applicability

1. This policy applies to all NSW public schools and preschools.
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.

## 3. Context

1. Public schools must comply with the NSW Education Standards Authority requirement to provide a safe, inclusive and supportive environment for students.
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. This policy relates to student bullying in public schools. The Work, Health and Safety Policy applies to staff bullying in public schools. When bullying involves a student and staff member, both policies apply.

## 4. Responsibilities and delegations

### 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.

## 2. Non-teaching staff:

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

## 3. Principals (or their delegate):

- complete and implement the Anti-bullying Plan for their school
- maintain a positive school climate that 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. 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

## 5. Monitoring and review

1. The principal reviews the Anti-bullying Plan every year.
2. The Director, Student Engagement and Interagency Partnerships monitors the implementation of this policy and reviews its effectiveness, at least every three years.