



Education &
Communities

Anti-bullying Plan

Wollongong West Public School





Bullying:

Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying in Schools Policy (2011)

The NSW Department of Education and Communities rejects all forms of bullying. No student, employee, parent, caregiver or community member should experience bullying within the learning or working environments of the Department.

Bullying

Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. Cyber bullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies.

Bullying can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and all forms of harassment including that based on sex, race, disability, homosexuality or transgender. Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long term effects on those involved including bystanders.

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

Bullying behaviour can be:

- **verbal** eg name calling, teasing, abuse, putdowns, sarcasm, insults, threats
- **physical** eg hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting
- **social** eg ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating, making inappropriate gestures
- **psychological** eg spreading rumours, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions, malicious SMS and email messages, inappropriate use of camera phones.

The term “bullying” has a specific meaning. The school’s Anti-bullying Plan sets out **the processes for preventing and responding to student bullying**. The school has a range of policies and practices, including welfare and discipline policies that apply to student behaviour generally.

Schools exist in a society where incidents of bullying behaviour may occur. Preventing and responding to bullying behaviour in learning and working environments is a shared responsibility of all departmental staff, students, parents, caregivers and members of the wider school community.

School staff have a responsibility to:

- respect and support students
- model and promote appropriate behaviour
- have knowledge of school and departmental policies relating to bullying behaviour
- respond in a timely manner to incidents of bullying according to the school’s Anti-bullying Plan.

In addition, teachers have a responsibility to:

- provide curriculum and pedagogy that supports students to develop an understanding of bullying and its impact on individuals and the broader community.

Students have a responsibility to:

- behave appropriately, respecting individual differences and diversity
- behave as responsible digital citizens
- follow the school Anti-bullying Plan
- behave as responsible bystanders
- report incidents of bullying according to their school Anti-bullying Plan.

Parents and caregivers have a responsibility to:

- support their children to become responsible citizens and to develop responsible online behaviour
- be aware of the school Anti-bullying Plan and assist their children in understanding bullying behaviour
- support their children in developing positive responses to incidents of bullying consistent with the school Anti-bullying Plan
- report incidents of school related bullying behaviour to the school
- work collaboratively with the school to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur.

All members of the school community have a responsibility to:

- model and promote positive relationships that respect and accept individual differences and diversity within the school community
- support the school’s Anti-bullying Plan through words and actions
- work collaboratively with the school to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur.

Wollongong West Public School Anti-Bullying Plan

Our School Anti-Bullying Plan

The Anti-bullying Plan for Wollongong West Public School outlines the processes for preventing and responding to student bullying in our school, reflective of Department of Education policy and procedures.

This policy was designed in consultation with executive staff members, teachers, caregiver representatives and student leaders.

Wollongong West Public School will continue to engage our school community in implementing, evaluating and reviewing our Anti-bullying Plan.

Statement of purpose

At Wollongong West Public School, we will learn, teach and lead for excellence. We will empower students to be successful learners, confident and creative individuals and active and informed citizens of today and for tomorrow. Our children will be actively connected to their learning, have positive and respectful relationships and experience a sense of belonging to their school and community. They will be respected, valued, encouraged, supported and empowered to succeed. Our students will grow, flourish and prosper.

Our school pledge is central to all we do.

Today is a new day.

I will act in a safe healthy way.

I will respect the rights of others.

I will treat all property with respect.

I will take responsibility for my learning and behaviour.

Today, I will be the best me I can be.

The Wollongong West Public School community is committed to fostering respectful relationships and addressing bullying in a positive, consistent and supportive manner. This will be achieved through educating all community members and employing a range of strategies and interventions to prevent, intervene and respond to bullying behaviours.

Protection

Bullying can be defined as repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful. It involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. Cyber-bullying refers to bullying through information and communication technology.

Bullying can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation and victimisation of others, and all forms of harassment, including that based on gender, race, disability, homosexuality or transgender.

Bullying behaviour can be:

- verbal e.g. repeated and unwanted name calling, teasing, abuse, putdowns, sarcasm, insults, threats, defamatory comments, inappropriate language.
- physical e.g. pushing, hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting, throwing objects, threatening either overt or covert.
- social e.g. ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating, making inappropriate gestures, sending inappropriate notes.

- psychological e.g. spreading rumours, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions, malicious SMS and email messages, inappropriate use of camera phones and/or social networking sites.

Conflict or fights between equals or single incidents are not defined as bullying. Further, bullying is not:

- children not getting along well.
- a situation of mutual conflict.
- single or random episodes of nastiness.

The responsibility of preventing and responding to bullying behaviour is shared amongst students, caregivers and school staff. All members of the school community are responsible for following the school's Anti-bullying Plan.

Students have a responsibility to:

- behave appropriately, respecting individual differences and diversity.
- behave as responsible digital citizens.
- recognise bullying as a variety of repeated harmful behaviours.
- respond assertively as targets or upstanders of bullying in a manner consistent with the Anti-Bullying Plan.
- report incidents of bullying to staff.

Staff have a responsibility to:

- respect and support students.

- model and promote appropriate behaviours, dignity and respect at all times.
- know and follow school and departmental policies relating to bullying behaviour.
- respond in an appropriate and timely manner to bullying incidents according to the Anti-bullying Plan.
- provide curriculum and pedagogy that supports students to develop an understanding of bullying and its impact on individuals and the broader committee.

Caregivers have a responsibility to:

- support their children to become responsible citizens and to develop responsible online behaviour.
- be aware of the Anti-bullying Plan and assist their children in understanding what bullying behaviour is.
- support their children in developing positive responses to the incidents of bullying consistent with the school Anti-bullying Plan.
- report incidents of school related bullying behaviour to the school for investigation and management.
- 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 differences and diversity within the school community.

- support the school's Anti-bullying Plan through words and actions and
- work collaboratively with the school to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur.

Prevention

The strategies and programs the school has implemented for bullying prevention and those wellbeing programs into which anti-bullying messages are embedded include:

- Anti-bullying lessons taught explicitly K-6 each year.
- social skills programs explicitly taught K-6 each year. Eg. RRRR, Rock and Water, self regulation program.
- student leadership initiatives, including Student Representative Council and Positive Peer Mediators.
- a buddy program for Kindergarten transition.
- Child Protection K-6 unit of work taught explicitly K-6 each year.
- Drug Education K-6 units of work taught explicitly K-6 each year.
- values education K-6 taught explicitly K-6; through a school wide commitment to Positive Behaviour for Learning pedagogy.
- Life Education K-6
- Cyber-safety Education K-6

- recognition and celebration of annual events, including cultural events such as Harmony Day, Refugee Week, Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC Week, National Day of Action Against Bullying

Additional preventative strategies include:

- education and promotion of our school's Anti-bullying Plan and Wellbeing Framework.
- productive and respectful relationships established between all members of the school community.
- fostering a positive physical environment, including signage promoting positive relationships and a problem solver letterbox for student use.
- classroom and playground expectations, routines and processes negotiated and applied consistently.
- adequate supervision of students, both in the playground and classrooms.
- active intervention when bullying occurs.

Early Intervention

Early intervention strategies and programs are 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.

Students requiring intervention may be identified through the following strategies:

- Kindergarten Transition to School Program and the buddy program.
- referrals to the Learning Support Team.
- Caregiver / teacher meetings as required.
- review of behaviour records.

Some students are identified as being at risk of bullying or developing long-term difficulties with social relationships. Some students are also identified as using bullying behaviour. In these situations, our school may respond by:

- referring the student to the Learning Support Team.
- implementing an individualised or small group social skills program.
- using social stories and role play situations.
- developing a plan of action on how to cope with specific situations.
- celebrating student successes.
- promoting leadership opportunities for students.

Procedures for reporting bullying:

- Students are to immediately report all incidents of bullying to a teacher or through the problem solver letter box.

- Caregivers with concerns about bullying should contact their child's teacher immediately.
- All bullying incidents are to be reported, taken seriously, investigated thoroughly and dealt with immediately or as soon as possible by teachers.
- Teachers will contact the caregivers of the student being bullied and the student committing the bullying. Other staff members will be informed so they can monitor students in the playground.
- In the case of cyber-bullying, it may be necessary to report the incident to the police.
- Students will be supported by the Learning Support Team with counsellor intervention, if necessary.
- The Anti-bullying Plan will be available on the school's website with information also presented in the school's newsletter.
- Significant assaults, threats, intimidation and/or harassment will be reported to the police by the Principal. The School Safety and Response Unit will also be contacted if necessary. The Department's critical incidents procedures will be followed in this case.
- If there is a need to contact support agencies, then the Principal will contact the Child Protection Helpline or Child Wellbeing Unit.
- The Department of Education provides a policy and guidelines for handling complaints. While most complaints should be resolved informally with the relevant employee, there are provisions for the

use of formal procedures depending on the nature and seriousness of the complaint.

Signs that a child may be being bullied that teachers and parents/carers can identify may include:

- dislike and avoidance of school.
- change in attitude towards school.
- decline in academic performance and social interaction.
- behaves inappropriately more often.
- seeking changes to regular routine.
- possessions are damaged or go missing.
- appearing withdrawn, depressed or anxious
- loss of appetite or overeating.
- physical signs such as skin irritations or hair loss.
- experiencing extreme mood swings.
- crying for no apparent reason.
- unable to explain bruises or scratches.
- complains of feeling unwell, although no specific illness is apparent.
- asks for, or steals, extra money.

- increased social exclusion and peer rejection.
- self isolating behaviours.
- disturbed sleep patterns or experiencing bad dreams.
- becoming easily angry with siblings or friends.
- uses 'put down' language when speaking about/to others.
- increased negative self-perception.

Signs that a child may be bullying others include:

- aggressive behaviour - both inside and outside the home (eg teasing, threatening, harming others).
- increasingly difficult to manage.
- appearing oversensitive - feels that everyone is out to get him/her.
- constant unhappiness.
- loses temper often and easily and showing signs of anger such as clenched fists.
- unusually quiet or signs of depression.
- decline in academic performance.
- concerning stories about the child from other children, their friends or other adults in contact with your child.

- other children, their friends or other adults are avoiding your child or you, or hint at things of which you are not aware.

Response

Even with solid prevention programs, instances of bullying will still occur and schools need to have planned responses for them. Response refers both to the actions of the school when an incident occurs and to the informed development of future protection, prevention, early intervention and response strategies.

When bullying is reported, the student who is affected wants the bullying to stop and to feel safe at school. Interventions need to be matched to the particular incident of bullying and there is no 'one size fits all' which will 'bully-proof' our school. It is important to note, that not all hurtful behaviours are bullying, but our school will address inappropriate behaviour whether or not it meets the definition of bullying.

School staff will decide on the appropriate combination of interventions for the individual circumstances of bullying behaviour. No method of addressing bullying has been reported as 100% effective and no one intervention is appropriate in all circumstances of bullying. Often, more than one intervention will be implemented.

It is useful to consult with the affected students about how they wish the situation to be managed. However, the school has the responsibility to manage the situation and to ensure that it is resolved. Regular updates, within the bounds of privacy legislation, will be given to parents or carers about the management of the incidents.

Students may tell any staff member if they feel threatened or unhappy and know they will be listened to, and incidents will be investigated fairly, effectively and promptly. Support will be provided to students who have

been affected by, engaged in or witnessed bullying behaviour. Parents, carers, or other students can also tell any staff member about incidents of bullying.

The type of bullying and needs of individuals involved will determine the interventions and consequences. Some interventions that may be implemented include:

- upstander training
- buddy systems
- restorative practices
- mediation
- assertiveness training / strengthening the target
- traditional disciplinary approach

Upstander training involves empowering the whole school community to recognise and respond appropriately to bullying, harassment and victimisation and behave as responsible upstanders. This intervention is a proactive strategy that trains bystander students to behave in a supportive way to students who are being bullied, to intervene where feasible or to report the incident to a teacher. We recognise the role of the upstander as being involved and supportive of the bullying unless they walk away at the start or tell the bully to stop. Thus they are part of the bullying behaviour unless they intervene or walk away and tell a teacher. This is explicitly told to our students as part of our Anti-Bullying strategy to teach our students to be effective upstanders. All children will pledge to practise the Wollongong West Public School Upstander's Code.

Understand why bullies bully

Practise being kind and including others in games

Support any targets of bullies

Tell a teacher or parent if you know someone is getting bullied

Ask yourself, 'Would I want people to treat me like that?'

Notice any children who may need a friend like you

Do the 'right' thing and stop hurtful actions and teases

Encourage your friends to use 'put-ups' instead of 'put-downs'

Respect people's differences

Buddy systems can help to promote friendship and support between older and younger peers through regular collaboration between their classes, which fosters a sense of whole-school community.

Restorative practices help the student displaying bullying behaviour to take steps to restore damaged relationships. It is when students are guided to see the consequences of their actions and the impact it has had on others. It is a directed conversation to assist students think through ways to make things right with the situation and with the victim. The students affected by the bullying may or may not be present. The student is also led through ways to not repeat the behaviour. After the restorative action has been suggested, undertaken and accepted by the victim, the situation may continue to be monitored.

Mediation assists the students involved in incidents of bullying to resolve their differences and help them find a peaceful win-win solution or compromise. Mediation is a suitable intervention when the imbalance of power between the students involved is not great and when each party has something to gain and to concede. It should always be voluntary and should never be used in cases of major disputes, serious bullying or assault.

Strengthening the victim or assertiveness training involves helping and coaching students to confront a student displaying bullying behaviour assertively; to stand firm and discourage the bullying behaviour through calm and controlled language to redress the balance of perceived power. This intervention should never be the only response to bullying incidents. The behaviour of the student displaying bullying must also be addressed and support should be provided. Self esteem of the victim rises if they feel more able to address some low level bullying by themselves.

Traditional disciplinary approach involves establishing clear behaviour standards and implementing consequences through our Wellbeing Framework to prevent and deter the student from repeating the bullying behaviour. Consequences could include loss of privileges, restoration of damage caused, in-school withdrawal and suspension. Research has shown that the traditional disciplinary approach is the least effective approach, and using punishment as the only intervention is not effective in preventing bullying.

A variety of strategies will be utilised to identify patterns of bullying behaviour.

Incidents will be recorded electronically and notes kept on file by teachers. Patterns of bullying behaviour will be investigated and planned responses to these patterns will occur.

Community awareness and involvement of parents and carers in the school's anti-bullying policy is a vital component to the school's goal of eliminating bullying and harassment. Community involvement will include:

- regular surveys and forums seeking to gather data related to incidents of bullying, including face-to-face, online and paper methods.
- public information sessions to inform parents about ways to support their child in bullying situations.

The Anti bullying Plan will be monitored for effectiveness and will be communicated to the school community through our newsletter, email, app and website.

The school will review the Anti-bullying Plan with the school community every three years, or as needed. Details of the school's Anti-Bullying Plan will be available on the school website or in our administration area.

Additional Information

- School Liaison Police (Wollongong) 4226 7721
- School Safety and Security Unit Hotline 1300 88 00 21
- Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800
- Child Wellbeing Unit 9269 9400
- Child Protection Helpline 132 111
- National Centre Against Bullying www.ncab.org.au
- Cybersmart School Gateway www.cybersmart.gov.au
- Bullying No Way! www.bullyingnoway.gov.au
- Racism No Way! www.racismnoway.com.au
- Reach Out! www.reachout.com.au
- Kids Helpline www.kidshelp.com.au
- NSW Department of Education
www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentsupport/behaviourpgrms/antibullying

Principal's comment

The Wollongong West Public School Anti-bullying Plan 2018 - 2020 is to be read in conjunction the Wollongong West Public School Wellbeing Framework. Our Anti-bullying Plan is the result of evaluation of the previous plan and has been designed to reflect current practices when preventing and dealing with bullying, including cyber-bullying.

The Wollongong West Public School Anti-bullying Plan 2018 - 2020 has been developed in consultation with the Wollongong West Public School community.

Michelle Barnes, Principal

The Wollongong West Public School Anti-bullying Plan 2018 included was revised in consultation with:

- Michelle Barnes (Principal)
- Melinda Bell (Parent Representative)
- Teneia Danecek (Parent Representative)
- Rebecca Dwyer (Parent Representative)
- Stephanie Hopper (Assistant Principal)
- Suzanna Krauss (Parent Representative)
- Vivienne Manzano (Parent Representative)

School contact information

Wollongong West Public School

Crown Street, West Wollongong

Ph: 4229 2096

Fax: 4226 5057

Email: wollongwst-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au

Web: wwps.nsw.edu.au