ANTI-BULLYING PROCEDURES

Contents

Bullying

Berowra Public School rejects all forms of bullying behaviours, including online (or cyber) bullying by maintaining a commitment to providing a safe, inclusive and respectful learning community that promotes student wellbeing.

Bullying behaviour can happen in all social contexts within our community. It is best to address bullying in the social environment where it happens. In a child or young person's life, this is often their school.

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.

Understanding Bullying

Bullying has three key features. It:

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

Bullying can be physical, verbal, or social. 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 cyber bullying.

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; because they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or intersex (**LGBTI**); their size or body shape or any other ways they may be perceived as different.

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

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

Signs that someone may be being bullied include:

- becoming aggressive and unreasonable
- refusing to talk about what is wrong
- showing a decline in academic work
- being alone often or excluded
- a change in willingness to speak in class
- being a frequent target for teasing, mimicking or ridicule
- withdrawing from friends and activities
- appearing insecure or frightened
- not wanting to go to school or participate in school activities
- changes to, or is frightened of, their method or route to school
- changes in sleep and/or eating patterns
- having unexplained injuries
- losing or having damaged belongings

What is Online Bullying?

Online bullying is using technology such as the Internet or mobile devices to bully someone. It can include:

- sending abusive text messages and emails
- posting hurtful or threatening material on social media like Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, TikTok and Snapchat, or on gaming networks
- imitating or excluding others online
- tagging inappropriate or unflattering images
- threatening another person to do something such as sending revealing images.

Online bullying is generally covert in nature and kept out of sight from adults. This means that it is identified less often than overt forms of bullying. Signs that someone may be being bullied online include:

- an increased preoccupation with social media or technology
- visible tiredness
- being visibly upset after using the computer or mobile phone
- avoiding the use of technology
- being more vigilant and checking technology constantly
- nervousness while using technology
- being more withdrawn
- a change in engagement or school attendance patterns.

What Bullying is Not

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

Practices and Procedures to Prevent Bullying

Preventing bullying involves the whole school community. Each person in the school community has an important role.

- **School leaders and teachers** – play a key role in fostering a safe and supportive climate across the whole school. They explicitly model and teach students the skills needed to maintain positive behaviour and relationships and to identify and appropriately respond to incidents of bullying.
- **Students** – are central in the school's efforts to counter bullying and to create positive learning environments for everyone. Our expectations are that students will abide by the NSW Public Schools Behaviour Code and the school expectations of respect.
- **Parents** – contribute to anti-bullying efforts both by their support of their own children and participating in school activities and strategies. If parents have concerns, we would appreciate it if they made these known to the class teacher, stage supervisor or principal.
- **The wider community** – can play an important role in strengthening the school's anti-bullying messages. We aim to have the school expectations, NSW Public Schools Behaviour Code and Behaviour Management Procedures available to and understood by all school community members.

Our school has the following practices and procedures in place to actively prevent bullying.

- We value inclusion. All members of the school community are active participants in building a welcoming school culture that values diversity, and fosters positive, respectful relationships.
- Our positive school culture consistently reinforces the message that bullying is never acceptable.
- Teachers create a safe, respectful, welcoming and supportive classroom environment.
- Our whole school PBL Behaviour Matrix has clear expectations for student behaviour in both the classroom and playground and behaviours are explicitly taught.
- Positive behaviours are recognised, rewarded and encouraged, in accordance to our Behaviour Management Procedures.
- We model and promote appropriate relationships and behaviours.
- Students are explicitly taught about bullying and safe and effective ways to respond if and when it occurs.
- Students are explicitly taught to be supportive bystanders (upstanders).
- Students are explicitly taught social and emotional skills.
- Students are provided ongoing opportunities to share student voice via Student Parliament.
- We develop positive partnerships. Families and communities collaborate as partners with the school to support student learning, safety and wellbeing.
- We develop and maintain positive links with outside agencies to support the prevention of bullying including strong links with the Police Youth Liaison Officer.
- Staff are provided ongoing professional learning to support the prevention of bullying, using evidence based strategies.
- We collect and analyse data, in accordance to the Behaviour Management Procedures.

Responding to Bullying Behaviour

Any incident of bullying behaviour will be addressed and responded to promptly and appropriately in accordance to the Behaviour Management Procedures and School Response Flow Chart outlined below.

School Response Flow Chart: Student Bullying (including online bullying)

1. **Listen carefully and calmly, and document what the student tells you.**

   Ensure a private place to talk. Do not dismiss their concerns or make them feel they are at fault. Listen to their account fully first and then ask them (and maybe others) questions to get more detail. Avoid the terms 'bully' or 'victim' and instead talk about the behaviour of everyone involved, including bystanders.

   Clarify if there are immediate safety risks and let the student know how you will address these. Write a record of the conversation.

2. **Collect additional information**

   Ask for any evidence from the student. Speak with all students involved, including bystanders. Be alert to your legal responsibilities regarding evidence if the incident may constitute a crime. Keep records. Ensure you have information that answers who, what, where, when, how and why. Students views on why bullying is happening can suggest ways the school can respond.

3. **Discuss a plan of action with the students**

   Once you are confident you have a comprehensive picture of the situation, discuss a plan of action with the student/s. Refer to the school's Behaviour Management Procedures in terms of expectations and implications. Invite suggestions from students as appropriate.

Inform all students involved of your intention to inform their parents/guardians. Involve the parents and other caregivers in developing the plan of action if appropriate. For online bullying this could include reporting the incident to the social media services it happened on.

4. **Inform the students what you intend to do**

Provide as much information as you can without violating the privacy of other students or parents. Also inform them about when you are planning to follow up with them after implementing the plan. Explain that you will look at immediate and short term responses as well as other long-term preventative measures or efforts to promote a positive school climate.

5. **Provide suggestions about what to do if the bullying occurs again**

Have information on hand to share with students or set up a meeting for them to talk about strategies with an appropriate staff member.

6. **Set a date for follow up review/s**

Bullying can require a sustained effort to prevent, particularly if situations are long standing. Reviews are critical to check in with students, and to ensure the school's efforts have not caused other problems or merely created a problem elsewhere.

7. **Record the incident on Sentral**

8. **Notify appropriate personnel**

Refer the matter to the Assistant Principal/Stage Supervisor as per the school's Behaviour Management Procedures. For incidents where emergency services are required the principal must also report the incident to the Director and the Incident Reporting and Support Hotline.

9. **Contact the parent/guardian about the incident and your course of action**

If parents/guardians have not yet been involved in the process of planning the course of action (Step 3), advise them of the incident and the resulting course of action, including referring to the school's Behaviour Management Procedures. Refer parents to the Assistant Principal/Stage Supervisor for further consultation if required.

10. **Follow up with students over the next several weeks and months**

It is essential to be alert to ongoing bullying, particularly the possibility that the bullying can 'reappear' in another form some time later.

Monitoring and Evaluating

Protocols are in place for the induction of new staff (including casual staff) and will include familiarisation with the Anti-Bullying and Behaviour Management Procedures. New families will also be provided access to these procedures to maintain our commitment to providing a safe, inclusive and respectful learning community that promotes student wellbeing.

The Anti-bullying Procedures will be reviewed and updated annually. The evidence that we will collect includes:

- data on Sentral about reported incidents of bullying behaviour
- evidence and feedback of the Behaviour Management Procedures
- feedback from staff, students and parents of the Anti-Bullying Procedures.

This evidence and feedback will be analysed and used to evaluate the success of the Anti-Bullying Procedures and to make necessary adjustments.

Resources

The following resources have information to support families help their children to regulate their emotions and behaviour and develop socially. Information is provided to assist if children have been involved in bullying behaviour (as the person engaging in bullying behaviour, as the person being bullied or as the person witnessing the bullying behaviour).

NSW Public Schools Behaviour Code

Anti-bullying Website

Bullying. NO WAY!