



Education &
Communities

Anti-bullying Plan Heathcote 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.

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.

This plan has been compiled in consultation with our community including parents, teachers, staff and children. Surveys were distributed to parents, staff and children. Focus groups with members of these groups will revise these procedures periodically.

Opportunities for parents to provide feedback are welcomed through communication with relevant staff.

Statement of purpose

The Heathcote Public School community values respect, the opportunity to participate actively in the life of the school and an individual's right to belong safely to our school community, in order to achieve their best. It is expected that all school members uphold these values.

All members of the Heathcote Public School community are expected to share responsibility for promoting a school environment in which everyone feels safe, valued, respected and included. It is expected that all members of the community contribute to the prevention of bullying by modelling and promoting appropriate behaviour and respectful relationships.

At Heathcote Public School we believe that students should be provided with opportunities to learn about acceptance and inclusion. We support the development of skills to be able to self-regulate behaviour. We acknowledge that incidents of bullying can have lasting effects on individuals and hinder their social and emotional development, as well as hindering their academic achievement. In recognition of this, bullying will not be tolerated at Heathcote Public School.

Protection

Protection refers to those factors that increase the likelihood of positive experiences and buffer against the effects of negative experiences.

In schools, a positive school culture that fosters student connection with both the school and the wider community will support the development of protective factors that include relationships, knowledge and skills.

Strategies include:

- developing a shared understanding of bullying behaviour that captures all forms of bullying including cyberbullying
- developing a statement of purpose that outlines individual and shared responsibilities of students, parents, caregivers and teachers for preventing and responding to bullying behaviour
- maintaining a positive climate of respectful relationships where bullying is less likely to occur.
- Rock and Water training: presenting scenarios as a basis for discussions and activities that build trust and resilience.

Our school will endeavour to maintain a positive climate of respectful relationships where bullying is less likely to occur. We know that it is possible for bullying to occur in any context. Bullying behaviours sometimes exist as children grow and change. Our goal is to empower both the victim and the perpetrator to develop lifelong skills in resilience and appropriate social engagement.

Bullying behaviour can be:

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

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

The role of the bystander is recognised as being part of the bullying behaviour unless they intervene, walk away or tell a teacher.

Cyber Bullying can look like:

- Harassing and threatening messages
- Denigration – sending nasty SMS, pictures or prank phone calls
- Impersonation - using a person's screen name or password
- Outing or trickery – sharing personal information, messages, pictures with others
- Posting 'set up' images/video
- Ostracism – intentionally excluding others from an online group
- Sexting – sharing explicit material by mobile phone.

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
- provide learning activities that support students to develop an understanding of bullying and its impact on individuals and the broader community. This includes developing an awareness of the Rock and Water strategies to teach students strategies to help them to deal with bullying.

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 to a teacher
- use the strategies taught in Rock and Water sessions, specifically the non-conflict vocabulary.

Students can expect to:

- know that their concerns will be responded to by school staff
- be provided with appropriate support
- participate in learning experiences that promote positive relationships, safety, equity, and address discrimination, bullying and harassment.

Parents and caregivers have a responsibility to:

- support their children to become responsible citizens and to develop responsible online behaviour
- assist their children to understand bullying behaviour as outlined in the school's Anti-bullying Plan
- support their children in developing positive responses to bullying consistent with the Anti-bullying plan
- report incidents of school related bullying to the school
- working collaboratively with the school to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur
- not approach students under any circumstances.

Prevention

Prevention builds on the protective factors and refers to strategies specifically designed to prevent bullying behaviour such as developing and implementing programs for bullying prevention and embedding anti-bullying messages into learning activities each year.

Our school is committed to positive programs to teach students skills to protect themselves and others. The following strategies are in place at Heathcote Public School to effectively teach the skills and understandings that will minimise bullying behaviours.

These include:

- PBL (Positive Behaviour for Learning) implemented from 2018
- whole school expectations of Safe, Respectful and Learner
- values education and social skills underpinning everything that is done at Heathcote Public School. These are taught through the Rock and Water Program and a whole school focus on being safe, respectful learners

- Child Protection lessons which are undertaken every year by all classes. These include the key messages of “No, Go, Tell” when dealing with unsafe situations
- Personal Development and Health lessons to develop protective behaviours, develop skills in dispute resolution and enhance self esteem
- learning activities around the themes of tolerance, respect and the acceptance of diversity as part of Harmony Day.

In the **playground** there are:

- proactive duty teachers with a consistent approach to support student interactions.
- clear rules and expected playground behaviours are explicitly taught throughout the year through the Positive Behaviour for Learning program
- expected playground behaviours displayed on signs around the school
- quality playground spaces to play in and engage in a variety of activities
- opportunities for students to borrow sports equipment at playtimes
- SRC and teachers organised games and activities from time to time
- buddies that mentor younger students
- a buddy bench that students can go to to find someone to play with.

School strategies that contribute to our supportive culture include:

- clear school expectations through PBL
- a strong, positive school team with high expectations and skills in student welfare
- the Learning Support Team
- rewarding and recognising good behaviour and achievement
- time at each staff meeting for discussing student welfare issues
- an updated Reward System from 2018
- leadership training for Year 6 students
- Buddy Program
- Peer Support
- student voice through the student leaders and SRC
- Rock and Water lessons
- PBL lessons.

Early Intervention

Early Intervention refers to providing support before an issue emerges or escalates such as:

- developing and implementing early intervention support for students who are identified by the school as being at risk of developing long-term difficulties with social relationships.
- developing and implementing early intervention support for those students who are identified at or after enrolment as having experienced bullying or engaged in bullying behaviour.

School strategies that contribute to early intervention may include:

- clear school expectations
- social skills programs from the PDHPE syllabus
- minor incidents or potential conflict is mediated in the playground as early as possible by staff.
- time at each staff meeting for student welfare issues.
- Positive Behaviour for Learning team analyses data and drafts ideas for whole staff discussion
- Learning Support Team referrals, discussion, consultation and at times, further meetings with the school counsellor
- teachers, executive and Learning Support may write Individual Behaviour Plans
- plans of action and follow up discussed with students, staff and parents where appropriate
- counselling and social skills teaching with staff and executive staff reinforcing lessons taught on an individual or small group basis
- school executive discussions with parents, teachers and individuals, small groups and large groups of students .
- proactive programs put in place for some students to address specific needs e.g. resilience, anger management or social skills.
- referrals to outside agencies and programs e.g. Confident Kids.

Response

Below is a suggested set of steps to be followed when a bullying incident occurs.

1. If a student is being bullied, they should try to tell the person to 'Stop!' using a firm voice and assertive body language. If it is difficult to stand up to the bully, the student should just walk away and tell a teacher.
2. The student needs to report the incident to the teacher, either in the classroom or on playground duty. If the incident has occurred on the playground, students are to report it to their classroom teacher as well when classes resume. They are expected to report it on the day it happens.
3. The teacher / AP / principal will investigate the report as soon as possible by interviewing the victim and any witnesses. The alleged bully will also be interviewed to obtain their version of events. Written notes should be kept as a record of the interviews and students should be asked to confirm the content of their statements. These notes must remain confidential.
4. The teacher / AP / principal will make a decision on whether bullying has occurred or not and then decide on an appropriate consequence. The possible consequences include:
 - being asked to give an apology
 - loss of play time
 - loss of privileges e.g. PSSA, excursion, jobs
 - restriction of play areas
 - monitoring with behaviour card
 - being spoken to by the teacher / AP / principal
 - informing parents / parent interview
 - verbal warning
 - official warning of suspension letter
 - suspension
5. Restorative justice practices will be a key element of any discussions with the bully and victim, with the intention that the perpetrator understands the impact of their actions and builds empathy for the victim.

6. A positive resolution where the perpetrator can admit that they made a bad choice with their actions and apologises, and the victim can accept the apology and forgive the perpetrator will always be sought, although it might not always occur.

7. Following the intervention of the teacher / AP / principal, it is hoped that the issue will be resolved and the students involved can get along without bothering each other, even though they are not expected to be close friends.

8. The victim will be informed that they should report any further incidents directly to a teacher. The perpetrator will be informed that a repeat of any bullying behaviour will have a more severe consequence.

9. The incident will be recorded on the school's welfare system (Sentral) for both the bully and victim.

* If cyber-bullying has taken place, students should inform their parents/carers, a teacher or another trusted adult. The Assistant Principal or Principal is to then be informed.

* If a student sees or hears someone being bullied they have a responsibility to try to support the victim and inform the class teacher, the teacher on playground duty or the principal. Bystander behaviour is unacceptable.

* Incidents of racism should be reported to the school's Anti-Racism Contact Officer (ARCO).

* School counsellor support for the victim or bully may also be sought following an incident.

Workplace Bullying

If bullying is occurring in the workplace between a colleague, student or parent/caregiver, the staff member must arrange a time to speak with the Principal, a member of the School Leadership Team, the School Counsellor or the NSW Teachers Federation Representative. Department of Education employees can access the Employee Assistance Program for free, confidential professional help on 1300 366 789.

Parents / Carers

When a parent/carer becomes aware of an incident of bullying, they should:

1. Discuss the issue with their child, asking questions to gain as much information as they can
2. Arrange a time to meet with their child's classroom teacher as soon as possible. This can be done by speaking with the teacher directly or by contacting the office to arrange a suitable time. The teacher will document the conversation and make copies as necessary. Written notes will be made for phone conversations.
3. Work with the school to resolve any issues and not approach any students under any circumstances. For the safety of all students, any parent/carer who approaches a student regarding an incident may be banned from the school under the Inclosed Lands Act. Parents are also requested to not approach other parents about any bullying incidents, but rather let the school deal with the issues.
4. Incidents of racism should be reported to the school's Anti-Racism Contact Officer (ARCO). Each year nominations for this role take place, please contact the school office for the contact officer's name.

Raising Awareness

The school's Anti-Bullying Plan is available on the school's website. Copies are available from the office. Regular communication in the newsletter will take place to inform the community of specific programs that focus on the prevention of bullying. Teachers refer to the 'Bullying. No Way!' program supported by the Australian Government at bullyingnoway.gov.au.

The school will also engage with the Cronulla Sharks to deliver the anti-bullying and anti-racism message.

Additional Information

For more information and support:

- Sutherland Police Youth Liaison Officer: 9542 0899
- Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800
- School Counsellor: 9520 8759

Websites

These websites include practical advice about bullying at school for parents and families:

www.racismnoway.com.au
www.esafety.gov.au/esafety-information
www.bullyingnoway.com.au

Principal's comment

This plan has been updated in 2023 and replaces the previous anti-bullying document. At Heathcote Public School we are committed to providing a safe and happy environment for all members of our community. This plan will be used to work with the community to ensure all members are aware of their responsibilities and can actively contribute to making our school a bullying free environment.

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