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’s Anti-bullying Plan
- behave as responsible bystanders
- report incidents of bullying according to their school’s 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’s 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’s Anti-bullying Plan
- report incidents of school-related bullying behaviour to the school
- work collaboratively with the school to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur.

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

This plan outlines the processes for preventing and responding to student bullying in our school and reflects the Bullying: Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying in Schools Policy of the New South Wales Department of Education.

This plan has been prepared in consultation with students, staff and the school community. Members of the community will be provided with the opportunity to collaboratively develop, implement and review the plan to ensure that Nicholson Street Public School continues to be a safe school in which all members of the community feel safe and respected at all times.

Statement of purpose

At Nicholson Street Public School every person has the right to feel safe and respected. The purpose of this policy is to outline the key principles about bullying behaviour and shape a school culture that provides a caring and inclusive environment free from all types of bullying.

Protection

Bullying can be defined as intentional, repeated behaviour by an individual or a group of individuals that causes distress, hurt or places undue pressure on another individual. Bullying involves the abuse of power in relationships and can comprise one or more of the following forms of behaviour:

- Harassment
- Humiliation
- Domination and,
- Intimidation.

The following behaviours will be construed to be bullying if they are ongoing:

**Physical**

- Hitting, kicking, punching
- Pushing, shoving, spitting
- Making rude gestures
- Taking or damaging something that belongs to someone else
- Forcing others to hand over food, money or something that belongs to them
- Forcibly making someone do something they do not want to do

**Verbal**

- Name calling
- Teasing
- Threatening
- Making fun of someone because of their appearance, physical characteristics, disability or cultural background
- Making fun of someone’s actions

**Social Psychological**

- Excluding others from activities, games and groups
- Spreading malicious information about another individual

An argument, disagreement or fight between two people does not necessarily constitute bullying. Disagreements, arguments or fights between students are unpleasant but are often not bullying and as such will usually be dealt with using school behaviour management guidelines.
Every member of the Nicholson Street Public School community has an individual and shared responsibility in preventing and responding to bullying behaviour.

**Students**

Students who feel they are being bullied or those who have witnessed bullying should:

- Feel empowered to recognise bullying and feel safe to report bullying behaviour
- Support the person who they believe is being bullied and request help from an adult
- Be encouraged to deal with the situation in a supported way
- Choose a buddy or support person to help them to report any allegations of bullying

**Teachers**

If a student reports bullying or a teacher witnesses incidents of bullying they should:

- Listen to and support the person making the report acknowledging the nature and seriousness of bullying behaviour
- Find out the background and attempt to resolve the incident using the behaviour management framework
- Record the incident in the tracking spreadsheet and communicate the incident to the classroom teacher, Assistant Principal or Principal as relevant.

**Assistant Principal and Principal**

If a student or teacher reports bullying to an Assistant Principal or Principal they should:

- Provide support to the targets of the bullying behaviour
- Record and monitor incidents of bullying behaviour
- Implement anti-bullying procedures as per this policy and the school behaviour management framework
- Inform the student, parents and classroom teachers of any outcomes

**Parents and Caregivers**

Parents and caregivers in playing a proactive role to prevent bullying or those who become aware of bullying behaviour should:

- Discuss anti-bullying strategies with their children
- Encourage their children to discuss the effects and consequences of bullying
- Encourage their children to report any incidents of bullying
- Contact the school if they become aware of bullying
- Work with the school to implement this policy.

**Prevention**

Proactive prevention strategies are fundamental in minimising bullying behaviour. The following proactive prevention strategies support an anti-bullying culture at Nicholson Street Public School:

- Regular communication with all members of the community regarding anti-bullying processes and procedures
- The embedding of both child protection and social skills programs in the PDHPE curriculum delivered to students
- Reporting procedures that recognise the signs of bullying behaviour and encourage open talk about bullying at all levels of the school – What is it? How does it affect us? What can be done to make things right?

**Early Intervention**

Children who enter Nicholson Street Public School are supported by a buddy to help show them the ropes. Children who are identified as being at risk of developing long-term friendships are referred to the learning support team. Children who have experienced
bullying in the past are supported at all levels of the school to form positive relationships with other students to foster a sense of belonging and connection.

Response

Instances of bullying can be reported to any teacher or member of staff by any member of the school community. All reports of bullying will be taken seriously and will be recorded, monitored and the following graded procedures followed:

- As soon as practical, talk with the children involved about the incidents reported and remind them that such behaviour is not acceptable. Comfort the target of the behaviour and discuss with the perpetrator the consequences of repeated incidences of bullying behaviour.

- Record the incident in the behaviour management register and check if there are any other reported incidents involving either the target or the perpetrator. If so report to both the Assistant Principal and Principal (note: extreme first cases may warrant stronger intervention as per the school behaviour management procedures)

- Monitor the behaviour of students involved for a minimum of 2 weeks and report any incidences of continued negative behaviour to Assistant Principal and Principal

- If behaviour continues an appointment is made to discuss the school wide behaviour expectations for every student. Particular reference is made to this policy.

- A joint home/school approach to eliminating bullying type behaviours based on this policy is worked towards with the parents of the perpetrator.

- Continued bullying behaviour by the perpetrator will result in a short suspension as per the Nicholson Street Public School behaviour management procedures and the Department of Education Suspension and Expulsion of Students – Procedures (2011)

Students who experience bullying will be supported when dealing with cases of bullying. Proactive prevention strategies will ensure that students will know that they can control what happens. They will not retaliate by using bullying and will try not to show fear, as the bully is no longer rewarded and the bullying may stop.

Students will be proactive and need to decide what action to take.

Step 1: Ignore it. Show that it does not upset you. The bully is then not rewarded and the bullying may stop.

Step 2: Talk to the person bullying you. Tell her or him to stop.

Step 3: Talk it over openly with trusted adults (i.e. class teacher or parent). They can help you decide what to do.

Step 4: Talk to the Principal. Allow him/her to take the action they see as necessary.

Students who are not being bullied but are aware of others who are, will be encouraged to report it, to protect those that are being bullied and so that the bully can be helped too.

Consequences

Students are aware that if they bully someone, one or more of the following will occur:

· They will talk to teachers or the Principal about their behaviour
· Their parents will be informed
· They may be removed from the classroom/playground
· They may lose privileges, such as participating in special activities, representing the school, leadership positions etc.
· They will need to offer apologies
· They may lose their own time (detention)
· They may be suspended
· They will need to show that they are able to treat others properly before their privileges are restored.

Bullies and victims will be offered support and counselling.
Bullying, harassment, assault, threats and intimidation are unlawful and are not acceptable at Nicholson Street Public School. Extreme cases may be referred to police.

All members of staff have a responsibility to identify and respond to concerns about students' safety, welfare or wellbeing. This is set out in the Protecting and Supporting Children and Young People Policy and Procedures. Where necessary (as identified in the mandatory reporter guide) or if in doubt the Principal may contact the Child Wellbeing Unit to discuss incidents of bullying where a child has been at risk or there is a fear that the child may be at risk in the future. The Child Wellbeing Unit can assist principals, workplace managers and counsellors with this responsibility.

Complaints and Appeals
Complaints or appeals regarding the handling of allegations of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the Complaints Handling Policy. In managing a complaint the following steps will be followed:

- The complaint handling process will be explained to the complainant or information provided to them to inform them where to get information about it
- If the matter is to be referred, an explanation of why and to whom the matter will be referred to will be given
- The complainant will be asked to confirm that their complaint has been fully understood and what outcome they are seeking from their complaint
- Possible outcomes will be outlined, including whether or not the outcome they are seeking is reasonable
- Realistic timeframes for dealing with the matter will be communicated and any promises made will be followed through.

Monitoring and Evaluation
This policy will be monitored and evaluated annually and any changes designed to improve the effectiveness of the policy in supporting an anti-bullying school will be communicated to the community. This plan will be updated every three years as a minimum.
Additional Information

Nicholson Street Public School also has an anti-racism contact officer (ARCO) working within the community to promote and facilitate anti-racism programs across the school.

Children and their families are also made aware of other support services such as Kids Helpline and other government initiatives such as Bullying no Way.

Principal’s comment

Every child, teacher and member of the Nicholson Street Public School community deserves to feel safe from conduct that impact on his or her wellbeing and sense of self-worth. Bullying in any guise has no place in our school and as a community we must work collaboratively to combat these issues in a proactive and timely fashion. I would like to acknowledge the following members of our school community for their input in creating this plan and working to ensure that a strategic and coordinated approach to bullying is in place at Nicholson Street Public School.

Ms Lucy Norrish – Assistant Principal
Mrs Martha Garven – Relieving Assistant Principal
Mrs Oonagh O’Neill – Classroom Teacher/ARCO
Mrs Dianne Russell – School Counsellor
Mrs Cindy Murray – School Learning Support Officer

School contact information

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