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.

The Anti-Bullying Plan – NSW Department of Education and Communities

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.
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 and Communities.

This plan encompasses the work of students, staff and parents of Cooerwull Public School who are committed to ensuring that all students and staff are able to learn and work in a bully-free environment. All key stakeholders are committed to having this document annually reviewed to ensure it meets the needs of the school community.

Statement of purpose

At Cooerwull Public School bullying is considered not acceptable in any form. Our school promotes quality education in a caring, safe environment with the emphasis on mutual respect, co-operation and fair treatment of all. Parents, teachers and students are encouraged to form positive partnerships to work for the benefit of all stakeholders to achieve maximum potential and growth.

Protection

The students, parents, and staff do not accept bullying in any of its forms. This includes:
- Verbal – name calling, teasing, abuse, putdowns, sarcasm, insults, threats
- Physical – hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting
- Social – ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating, making inappropriate gestures
- Psychological – spreading rumours, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions, malicious SMS and email messages, inappropriate use of camera phones
- Cyber - using information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior, by an individual or group, that is intended to harm others

The school community can expect of Cooerwull Public School:
- is a place where students will be safe at school, free from fear of bullying, harassment and intimidation;
- to be involved in the collaborative development of the school Anti-bullying Plan;
- to know what is expected of them and others in relation to the Anti-bullying plan; and
- that all students will be provided with appropriate support when bullying occurs.

Cooerwull Public School encourages and supports a learning environment free from bullying. The school rewards students with positive awards called the Cooerwull Public School Merit Award System. The focus is on being Respectful, Caring and Fair.
Values of Public Education

The 9 Values of Public Education are the underpinning values reinforced in this student based rewards program.

- Care
- Integrity
- Democracy
- Excellence
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Cooperation
- Participation
- Fairness

Prevention

Students will be taught the skills to develop strategies to protect themselves to deal with bullying. These strategies include:

- conflict resolution;
- empathy training;
- problem solving;
- assertiveness training; and
- negotiation and mediation skills

- know that their concerns will be responded to by school staff
- be provided with appropriate support (for both the subjects of and those responsible for the behaviour)
- participate in learning experiences that address key understandings and skills relating to positive relationships, safety, gender equity, discrimination, bullying and harassment. These experiences will be guided by the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education syllabuses and other Key Learning Areas.

Early Intervention

Early intervention strategies and programs at Cooerwull Public School will be 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 having engaged in bullying behaviour.

- this will promote students and staff to report incidents of bullying;
- all staff will remind the students to report incidents of bullying;
- parents will be encouraged to contact the school if they become aware of a problem that could be developing for their child or that of another student; and
- recognition and awards will be provided for students to reward positive behaviour and positive resolutions.

Response

Cooerwull Public School will implement these strategies to empower the whole school community to recognise and respond appropriately to bullying, harassment and victimisation and behave as responsible bystanders.
Bullying cannot be reduced unless it is reported to the school staff:

- all students are responsible to report incidents of bullying that occur to them or another student;
- all teachers are responsible to listen to a student’s report of bullying and take appropriate measures to support the student; and
- all parents or caregivers are responsible to make contact with the school to discuss the concerns they may have about possible bullying that could be occurring to their child.

The following procedures for reporting incidents of bullying at Cooerwull Public School will be followed:

- a student may make a verbal notification that they are being bullied;
- a student may make a written notification that they are being bullied; or
- another student, teacher or parent may disclose that they have noticed other students being bullied.

The classroom teacher will:

- determine whether the report is bullying, poor social skills or school rule breaking. This may be a one off situation or an ongoing one;
- the teacher will deal with the incident using restorative question practices, apply logical consequences and if needed develop an individual students management plan in conjunction with the Assistant Principal and the student’s parents;
- record details in the school SENTRAL reporting system outlining victim, incident and others involved; and
- communicate this event with the student’s classroom teacher, Assistant Principal and Principal.

These procedures will be publicised to the school community through the school newsletter and in the school information booklet.

Cooerwull Public School will implement the above strategies as promptly as possible when an incident of bullying is reported to the school. In most cases this will be the same day as it occurred, but investigations may take some time depending on the availability of those involved.

Students who have been affected by, engaged in, or witnessed bullying behaviour will be supported to ensure that behaviour change has been noted. In each case counselling and teacher support will be offered.

For students who engage in bullying behaviour the following strategies or consequences will be considered for their suitability and may involve:

- exclusion from the playground;
- withdrawal of privileges;
- notes to parents;
- meetings with parents;
- behaviour monitoring;
- Referral to Learning Support Team
- development of behaviour management plans;
- itinerant Support Teacher (Behaviour) referral; and/or
- suspension from school for short or long periods of time.

Cooerwull Public School will provide regular updates, within the bounds of privacy legislation, to parents and caregivers about the management of bullying incidents that have been reported to the school. Parents will be contacted to ensure they are aware of any incident requiring further interventions.
Serious Incident Response
Cooerwull Public School has procedures for reporting serious incidents involving assaults, threats, intimidation or harassment. These incidents must be reported to staff immediately and these incidents will be reported to the School Safety and Response Hotline within 24 hours.

An incident is broadly defined in the Department’s Incident Reporting Policy as an event which:

- causes disruption to an organisation;
- creates danger or risk that could significantly affect individuals within the organisation;
- impacts on the effective operation of the workplace;
- attracts negative media attention or a negative public profile for the workplace or the Department of Education; and
- Workcover describes as a “serious incident” which must be reported by law.

Where one of the factors is at a significant level or more than one of the factors applies to the incident, the principal should seriously consider making a report. Principals are encouraged to seek further advice from the School Safety and Response Unit if they are still uncertain about whether to report the incident to police.

- Did the assault or incident result in a visible injury such as bruised face, split lip, or swelling?
- Did the incident result in a participant complaining of pain or discomfort?
- Was the incident premeditated or planned?
- Was the incident recorded on a mobile phone or camera and then posted on a social networking site or broadcast to others?
- Was external assistance eg an ambulance required to attend to one of the participants?
- Did the incident occur in the context of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, stalking or intimidation?
- Will the incident have a sustained impact on the school or its community eg school will need to access outside support services such as EAPS to recover from the incident?
- Did the incident significantly affect school routines or operations for a period?
- Is there a history of aggression by one or more of the participants, or is there a history of this conflict in the community?
- Has a staff member, parent or carer requested that you notify police regardless of your intention?
- Were weapons involved? (If so, there is no discretion and the incident must be reported).

The NSW Department of Education (DoE) seeks to resolve difficulties, grievances and complaints in a prompt, impartial and just manner. The school has specific procedures to deal with these issues. Anyone can make a complaint.
A complaint can be about:
- any aspect of the service provided, or not provided, in any Department of Education site;
- the behaviour or decisions of staff; or practices, policies or procedures.

Complaints by parents:
- it is best to discuss your concerns with your child’s teacher first. Make an appropriate time to meet with them or phone the school and ask for an appointment with the teacher.
- if you are not happy with the result, or if you do not feel it is appropriate to talk to them, phone and make an appointment to discuss your concerns with the assistant principal and then the principal.
- you may bring a friend or relative to be your support. If you need an interpreter, we can arrange that - just ask beforehand.
- if your complaint is about the principal you will need to contact the Director Public Schools NSW in your area. Ask the school office staff at your school for their name and number.
- if your complaint cannot be resolved in an informal way, we may ask you to put it in writing. It is important that you include specific details of the situation and tell us what you would like to happen as a result of your complaint. We can help you to put your complaint in writing, if you require it.

alternatively a complaint form may also be used. Complete the form and send it to the principal, or the school education director in your area.

Cooerwull Public School will use the following strategies to identify patterns of bullying behavior:
- students will be provided with debriefs if incidents occur.
- daily monitoring of incidents regarding student welfare
- students will be surveyed to determine their opinions about the effectiveness of the Anti-bullying Plan

Cooerwull Public School will promote and publicise this Anti-bullying Plan by making it available to parents. It will be incorporated into the school information booklet and made available to the school community via the school website.

Cooerwull Public School will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of its Anti-bullying Plan through parent and staff surveys. The results will be communicated to the school community through the Annual School Report and P&C meetings on an annual basis.

Cooerwull Public School will review the Anti-bullying Plan:
- 2016 and then every 2 years;
- through staff meetings and P&C;
- to determine effectiveness of the plan in developing a safe and secure environment for students and staff; and
- using reflection, data of incidents, patterns and trends.
Additional Information


Principal’s comment

This Anti-bullying Plan provides a framework for all Cooerwull Public School staff, students, and parents and outlines their roles and responsibilities to prevent bullying behaviours, how to support students affected by bullies and how bullies will be dealt with under the school Student Discipline Policy.

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