



Education &  
Communities

# Anti-bullying Plan

Nowra Hill 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.

# 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.

To inform the development of this plan, our school community was provided with opportunities to contribute over a two year period, via the *Tell Them From Me* surveys for staff, parents and students, KidsMatter surveys for parents, feedback at P&C meetings, professional dialogue at staff meetings, focus questions in class groups and SRC meetings, and ongoing discussions with parents.

Regular review of the plan will be undertaken by the School's Wellbeing Team, Learning and Support Team and the Executive Team. These teams regularly analyse data to inform prevention, intervention and response strategies. In addition, the plan will be reviewed by the community every three years, or as needed.

## Statement of purpose

Nowra Hill Public School is committed to the wellbeing of every member of our school community. No student, employee, parent, caregiver or community member should experience bullying within the learning or working environments of our school.

Whole-school approaches to preventing bullying focus on a supportive, caring, respectful teaching and learning community.

At Nowra Hill Public School, we:

- Affirm the rights of all members of the school community to feel safe and be safe at school.
- Acknowledge that being safe and supported at school is essential for student wellbeing and effective learning.
- Accept responsibility for developing and sustaining safe and supportive learning and teaching communities.
- Encourage the active participation of all school community members in developing and maintaining a safe school community where diversity is valued.
- Actively support young people to develop understanding and skills to keep themselves and others safe.
- Commit to developing a safe school community through a whole-school and evidence-based approach.

## Definition of Bullying

The **national definition of bullying for Australian schools** says:

Bullying is an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more persons. Bullying can happen in person or online, and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert).

Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.

Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.

The **NSW Department of Education defines bullying** as:

**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.**

Cyberbullying 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.

## Types of Bullying Behaviour

- **Verbal:** e.g. name calling, teasing, taunting, abuse, swearing, insults, using put-downs, sarcasm/ridiculing (making fun of) and threats.
- **Physical:** e.g. hitting/punching, kicking, pushing/shoving, scratching, tripping, spitting, throwing objects, intimidation (making someone do something they don't want to do), and taking, hiding or damaging something that belongs to someone else.
- **Social:** e.g. ignoring, excluding others, alienating, put-downs and using inappropriate/threatening looks and gestures.
- **Psychological:** e.g. spreading rumours, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions and stalking.
- **Cyberbullying:** e.g. verbal, social and psychological bullying through the use of technology (such as emails, blogs, websites), sending malicious SMS and email messages, and inappropriate use of camera phones.

## Protection

Nowra Hill Public School uses the four components of the KidsMatter Primary framework to address many of the risk factors related to bullying and build many of the protective factors that prevent and reduce bullying.

### KidsMatter Framework

#### *Component 1: Positive school community*

Helps schools to focus on building a school culture that provides safety, security and support for children, and emphasises the importance of positive relationships and promoting a sense of belonging. An environment characterised by positive relationships where everyone feels valued and supported is an excellent way to prevent bullying.

#### *Component 2: Social and emotional learning*

Encourages schools to embed the teaching of social and emotional skills in the school curriculum as it can help to reduce bullying. Teaching students skills to help them relate to others and understand and manage their emotions can improve relationships at the school and greatly reduce bullying behaviour.

#### *Component 3: Working with parents/carers*

Helps schools to build strong, positive relationships with families. Good relationships between families and schools create more opportunities for families to be involved at the school. This in turn means issues like bullying may be prevented or can be addressed more quickly and effectively.

#### *Component 4: Helping children with mental health difficulties*

Helps schools develop processes to recognise and respond to children's mental health needs. This means that support can be provided sooner to children who bully others and children who experience or witness bullying.

## Nowra Hill Public School Anti-bullying Plan – NSW Department of Education

**Preventing and responding to bullying is a shared responsibility of all members of the NHPS 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 an appropriate and timely manner to incidents of bullying according to the school's Anti-bullying Plan
- authentically implement whole school social and emotional learning programs which teach students skills and strategies to understand and deal with bullying
- authentically implement whole school programs for rewarding and praising positive behaviour.

### **Students have a responsibility to:**

- behave appropriately at all times and uphold our NHPS Student Expectations and Promise to Each Other
- show respect for individual differences and diversity
- behave as responsible digital citizens
- follow the NHPS Anti-bullying Plan, including reporting incidents of bullying
- be an 'upstander' instead of a bystander
- use the 'High 5 strategies':
  - Ignore
  - Talk Friendly
  - Walk Away
  - Talk Firmly
  - Report.

### **Parents and caregivers have a responsibility to:**

- support their children to become responsible citizens and to develop responsible online behaviour
- support the NHPS 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 NHPS Anti-bullying Plan
- report incidences of school related bullying behaviour to our school
- work collaboratively with the school to resolve incidents of bullying if they occur
- not approach other children or parents/carers directly to express their concerns .

### **All members of the school community have a responsibility to:**

- uphold and model our school values of Learning, Respect, Responsibility and Safety and act in line with our NHPS Promise to Each Other
- model and promote positive relationships that respect and accept individual differences and diversity within the school community
- work collaboratively with the school to resolve incidents of bullying if they occur.

## **Prevention**

Nowra Hill Public School implements a range of research and evidence based preventative anti-bullying strategies. Further evidence of the effectiveness of each of the below strategies can be found in the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation's Literature Review *Anti-bullying interventions in schools-what works?*.

- Whole school approach and school-wide anti-bullying policies, that include:
  - clear procedures that enable staff, parents, carers and students to report any incidents of bullying
  - clearly communicated procedures for staff to follow when responding to reports of bullying
  - agreements for the responsible use of technology by staff and students
  - regular risk assessments of the school environment
  - effective strategies for record keeping and communication between staff about safety and wellbeing
  - a wellbeing team
  - protocols for the introduction of casual staff, new staff and students and families into the school's wellbeing policies and procedures.
- Focus on preventing bullying in classrooms through:
  - The use of the NHPS Student Expectations and Promise
  - The *In the Zone* behaviour management system
  - Positive relationships between students and teachers.

- Focus on preventing bullying in the playground through:
  - active supervision
  - the introduction of organised games at lunch time with one of the teachers on duty
  - creative activities such as the lego tables and lunch time dance clubs
  - *In the Zone* playground behaviour management system.
- Promoting a culture of reporting bullying, through:
  - promoting “Report” as the 5<sup>th</sup> step in the High 5 strategy
  - updating the eBS data management system to include bullying data also linked to victim data
  - updating the eBS data management system to include record of responsive approaches used for each incident.
- Partnering with parents and carers, through:
  - NHPS Anti-bullying Plan available on school website and NHPS App, as well as issued at time of enrolment
  - regular communication through the Wellbeing Matters section of newsletter and NHPS App, particularly through the use of KidsMatter, Friendly Schools Plus and Bullying. No Way! factsheets
  - meetings with parents and carers to resolve bullying incidents.
- Teaching anti-bullying content, through the PDHPE curriculum:
  - updating the NHPS PDHPE scope and sequence to include the teaching of inquiry-based units of work from the NSW Department of Education’s Anti-bullying website each year
  - using the lesson plans and resources available on the Bullying. No Way! website
- participation by all students in Harmony Day activities and Anti-bullying Day activities.
- Explicitly teaching social and emotional learning through:
  - Friendly School Plus program.
- Promoting upstander behaviour, through:
  - teaching about Bystander Actions in the Friendly Schools Plus program
  - regularly promoting positive bystander or upstander actions to the whole school community.
- Teacher support and professional development, through:
  - consultation with staff on the development of the NHPS Anti-bullying Plan
  - all staff are being trained in the KidsMatter framework
  - professional reading through the Friendly Schools Plus program.

## Early Intervention

When students are identified as at risk of experiencing bullying behaviour, NHPS implements the following strategies as appropriate:

- referral to the Learning and Support Team and Wellbeing Team
- implementation of specific social skills program to promote positive self-image and self-worth
- buddy system for student
- social stories
- referral to the School Counsellor
- external support services for family as needed
- continue all the prevention strategies across the whole school.

When students are identified as at risk of engaging in bullying behaviour, NHPS implements the following strategies as appropriate:

- referral to the Learning and Support Team and Wellbeing Team
- implementation of specific social skills program to develop improved social skills
- development of an Individual Education Plan to develop specific strategies to support the student
- social stories
- referral to School Counsellor
- external support services for family as needed
- continue all prevention strategies across the whole school.

## Response

Students are explicitly taught to use the High 5 strategy to respond to bullying:

- Ignore
- Talk Friendly
- Walk Away
- Talk Firmly
- Report.

If a student does report an incident of bullying, Nowra Hill Public School uses a range of evidence based practices to respond to the reported bullying behaviour.

Direct sanctions refer to negative consequences imposed upon students who are responsible for bullying. Sanctions include:

- verbal reprimands
- withdrawal from class
- withdrawal from playground
- Letter of Concern sent to parents
- Letter of Formal Caution sent to parents
- Suspension in line with Department of Education's Suspension Policy

However, the evidence of the effectiveness of direct sanctions in reducing bullying is mixed and they have been given the lowest effectiveness rating of all the responsive approaches used by Australian schools.

At Nowra Hill Public School, we embrace a **restorative approach** to both general behaviour management and in response to bullying.

## Restorative Response



#### Step 1: Assess

- teacher assesses risk of harm using Co-LATE model.

#### Step 2: Mild Harm

- for an assessment of mild harm, the teacher implements the *In the Zone* behaviour management system ensuring that Reflection/Red Zone strategies are used and Referral via eBS, noting mild harm.

#### Step 3: Moderate Harm

- for an assessment of moderate harm, the teacher indicates moderate harm on the eBS referral to Executive
- Executive conducts triage assessment
  - If capacity for empathy – implement Shared Concern method
  - If capacity for empathy and occurring within social group – implement The Support Group method
  - Communicate with parents of both victim and bully.

#### Step 4: High Level Harm

- for an assessment of high level harm, the teacher indicates high level harm on the eBS referral to Executive
- Executive conducts triage assessment
  - If capacity for empathy – implement Shared Concern method
  - If capacity for empathy and occurring within social group – implement The Support Group method
  - If limited capacity to empathise or for repeated incidents of bullying – implement the motivational interviewing and critical thinking line
  - Letter of Concern
  - Letter of Formal Caution
  - Individual Behaviour Plan.

#### Step 5: Ongoing High Level Harm

- for ongoing high level bullying behaviour by one student, the Principal will implement direct sanctions such as:
  - Individual Behaviour Plan
  - risk assessment
  - withdrawal of privileges
  - restricted access to playground/classroom
  - suspension – in line with DoE policy
  - partial enrolment procedures
  - report the matter to police if required
  - expulsion – in line with DoE policy.

#### Serious incidents involving assaults, threats, intimidation or harassment

Serious incidents involving assaults, threats, intimidation or harassment will:

- result in disciplinary action
- be reported to the School Safety and Response Unit
- be reported to the police by the Principal or Assistant Principal if deemed appropriate.

#### Child Wellbeing

Where concerns about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of children are evident, these concerns must be reported to the Principal.

The Principal will:

- Use appropriate tools to inform decision making, such as the online Mandatory Reporter Guide, professional judgment or specialist advice, where there are concerns about risk of harm.

- Determine whether concerns about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of children or young people constitute risk of significant harm and, if they do, report these to Family and Community Services.
- Seek advice from the Child Wellbeing Unit where there is uncertainty about whether concerns amount to risk of significant harm.

### Complaints Handling

All complaints will be handled in line with the Department of Education's Complaints Handling Policy.

### Promoting and publicising the Anti-bullying Plan

This Anti-bullying Plan will be:

- available on the school website
- available on the NHPS App
- published in the School Handbook and provided at enrolment
- regular updates and associated information will be available in the school newsletter.

### Additional Information

School Liaison Police Officer Nowra:  
Kyriana Van den Belt  
T: 4421 9699

### Principal's comment

The learning, safety and wellbeing of the children in our school is our first priority. This Anti-bullying Plan is a positive step in developing a consistent community approach to dealing with instances of anti-social behaviour in a sensitive and reassuring way.

The methods and techniques employed in this plan are the result of vigorous research and have a strong evidence base, they are proven to have success in reducing the incidence of bullying and anti-social behavior.

Clear guidelines and a consistent approach by all members of our school community to educate our children about becoming responsible citizens, provides more opportunities for our students to engage in their learning and for our teachers to deliver curriculum and maintain a cohesive and harmonious school community.

The development of this plan was led by our Wellbeing Team with great input from the whole staff, students and parent community.

### Wellbeing Team

Mr Gordon Parrish, Principal

Mrs Rebecca White, Assistant Principal

Mrs Melinda Bolton, School Counsellor

Mrs Kristen Neradil, Learning and Support Teacher

### School contact information

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