



Education &
Communities

Anti-bullying Plan

Arndell 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.

This plan was developed by Arndell School in 2017. Consultation drafts were provided to community stakeholders including parents, carers and the Coral Tree Family Service. Feedback was incorporated into the final plan.

Statement of purpose

“Bullying in schools is an ongoing issue with significant long-term consequences for the students involved” (Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, 2017). A systematic whole-school approach to preventing and responding to bullying can be successful in reducing bullying behaviours and their impact.

Protection

Bullying involves repeated actions that are intended to cause distress or harm.

Bullying is defined in the National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF) as, *“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. (Australian Government Department of Education and Training 2016)*

School Anti-bullying Plan – NSW Department of Education and Communities

A literature review conducted by the NSW Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation showed four key strategies as important components of a whole-school approach:

1. establishing school-wide anti-bullying policies;
2. focusing on preventing bullying in key environments including the classroom and playground;
3. promoting a culture of reporting bullying; and
4. partnering with parents and carers. (CESE, 2017).

All members of the school community including staff, students, parents and carers have a shared responsibility for maintaining a positive climate of respectful relationships where bullying is less likely to occur.

Strategies that the school implements to maintain this climate include:

- a school discipline policy that promotes safety, respect and responsibility;
- explicit teaching of social skills including conflict resolution; and
- individual student support plans developed in partnership with parents and carers.

Prevention

Anti-bullying messages are embedded into the culture and curriculum of Arndell School. Our school rules, “Be Safe, Be Respectful, Be Responsible” are taught explicitly in class and underpin our approach to behaviour management. Social skills are taught daily in class using programs such as “Bucket Filling” and “You Can Do It”. Relationships are further supported through carefully structured play activities and the allocation of school learning support officers in the playground. Students who enrol in Arndell School through the Coral Tree Clinical School Program receive the additional support of clinicians who support them in the playground, classroom and individual and group therapy sessions. Each year, the school holds an ‘anti-bullying week’ during which explicit anti-bullying lessons are conducted daily across the school.

Early Intervention

Our high staff-student ratio, focus on developing positive relationships with every child, and regular de-briefing sessions enable early identification of students who experience difficulty with their relationships. Teachers and school learning support officers coach students 'in the moment', assisting them to notice how their behaviour impacts peers, become aware of other people's feelings, resolve conflict, and engage positively with others. When necessary, more intensive social skills support is provided and individual plans are developed.

At Arndell School, we believe that partnership with families provides students the greatest chance for success. Therefore, even at the earliest stages, parents are advised of emerging issues, and are invited to work with us to plan for improvement.

Response

To empower the whole school community to recognise and respond appropriately to bullying, harassment and victimisation and behave as responsible bystanders we provide a systematic response to incidents of bullying.

Procedure for reporting incidents of bullying:

Students:

- Students who believe they are victims of bullying, or become aware of bullying-type behaviours are encouraged to report these to a trusted school adult.
- If a student makes a report of bullying to a school adult, that adult will notify the student's class teacher. If the reported behaviours fit the definition of bullying (repeated, targeted, occurring over time), the teacher will notify the school principal and a response plan will be developed. If the reported behaviours do not fit the definition of bullying, the behaviours will be managed in accordance with the school discipline policy and students' individual behaviour support plans.
- A record of the report and the outcome will be kept in the school incident log.

Parents/Carers

- Parents are encouraged to report concerns about bullying to either the class teacher or the school principal, either in person, by email or by phone.
- If a report comes to a teacher, they alert the school principal who will manage the response.
- The parent will be contacted by the principal or a school executive for further information and will be advised of the school's response procedures and timeframe.

Staff

- School staff bring their concerns about bullying to the teachers of the students affected. Those teachers will work with the principal to manage the response.

Responding to reports of bullying

After receiving a report of bullying the principal will oversee a response plan:

- The report is investigated. All parties involved in a report of bullying are entitled to procedural fairness. The process for investigation varies according to incident, but typically involves speaking with witnesses, as well as those at the centre of the allegation. This may take place over a number of days. Parents or caregivers who have made a report will be provided updates about the timeline and status of the investigation.
- If bullying is found to have occurred, support plans for children affected either as perpetrators, victims or witnesses will be developed by the learning support team in consultation with childrens' parents or carers and their clinical team. This will ensure that interventions are appropriate and matched to the needs of the individuals involved. Disciplinary action may also be taken if appropriate.
- The principal or school executive will advise parents and caregivers of affected students of the outcome of the

investigation and of the way in which issues have been managed, within the bounds of privacy legislation.

- Records of the response will be kept in the school incident log.

Procedures for reporting incidents involving assaults, threats, intimidation or harassment to the police.

The crimes Act 1900 (the Act) has specific offences with significant penalties for the assault, harassment, stalking and intimidation of students and staff on school premises or while entering or leaving school premises.

The following offences relate specifically to schools:

- Assaulting, stalking, harassing or intimidating any school student or member of staff while the student or member of staff is attending school - maximum penalty is 5 years imprisonment.
- Assaulting a school student or member of staff while the student or member of staff is attending school in circumstances where the assault causes actual bodily harm. "Actual bodily harm" is an injury that is more than merely transient and trifling, including a psychiatric injury, but not mere fear or panic - maximum penalty is 7 years imprisonment.
- Wounding a school student or member of staff while the student or member of staff is attending school. "Wounding" means breaking or cutting the skin of a person with malice, indifference to the outcome, recklessly, wantonly or with intent to injure the person - maximum penalty is 12 years imprisonment.
- Inflicting grievous bodily harm to a school student or member of staff while the student or member of staff is attending school. "Inflict grievous bodily harm" means cause an injury of a serious kind but not necessarily permanent which is also done maliciously - maximum penalty is 12 years imprisonment.

- Entering onto school premises with the intention to commit one of the above offences - maximum penalty is 5 years imprisonment.

"Serious indictable offences" for the purposes of the Act. Section 316 of the Act imposes an obligation to report such offences to the police or other appropriate authority.

In most cases, there will be no need to report to the police any incidents involving minor physical altercations, harassment or intimidation between students. These minor incidents can be dealt with in accordance with the Department of Education with the Department's Good Discipline Policy. It is also considered that staff reporting such incidents to the principal or other relevant senior officer for the purpose of instigating possible school discipline procedures would amount to reporting the matter to an "appropriate authority" under the Act.

Matters involving students under the age of 10 as perpetrators should not generally be reported to the police as children below this age are not considered by the law to be capable of committing criminal offences.

If the principal considers that the incident cannot be dealt with sufficiently under the school discipline policy, or caused a significant threat to safety and wellbeing of others, the principal will report it to the School Safety and Response Hotline, and may also report the matter to the police.

If the school receives information that suggests a child is at risk of harm, the principal will use the Mandatory Reporter Guide to determine whether or not to report to Child Wellbeing Unit or Community Services.

Complaints

If a community member is dissatisfied about any aspect of the way in which an incident of bullying has been responded to, they should start by talking to the teacher. If the issue cannot be resolved, it should be referred to the principal. For further information about the Complaints Handling Policy, visit <http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/about-us/how-we-operate/how-we-handle-complaints>

Patterns of bullying

Regular student review meetings, and a review of the school incident log each term, help the school to identify patterns of bullying. If a pattern of bullying is identified the school will analyse the pattern to understand issues such as:

- Does it affect the whole school, or a particular cohort?
- Does it take place in particular locations, times of days or activities?

Once these patterns are identified and understood the school will take appropriate action to break the pattern of bullying. This may involve a combination of disciplinary actions and support strategies, as well as adjustments to supervision rosters, timetables, activities and curriculum.

Evaluation

This Anti-bullying Plan will be emailed to all members of the school community, and made available to the wider community via the school website. Parents and carers who report bullying to the school will be asked to provide feedback about their satisfaction the school's response. This feedback, along with feedback from staff and analyses of data about school bullying incidents will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the Anti-bullying Plan. This evaluation will be reported to the school community each year in the school's annual report.

The plan will be formally reviewed with the school community every three years. The next review is due in 2020.

Additional Information

Police Youth Liaison Officer (YLO): Senior Constable Deborah Chrystal (

Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800

NSW Anti-Bullying Website: <https://antibullying.nsw.gov.au/>

Principal's comment

This plan has been developed by staff of Arndell School and is aligned with the NSW Department of Education Student Discipline in Government Schools Policy.

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