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Merewether Public School

**Anti – Bullying Plan**

**18 May 2023**

**Our School Plan**

This plan outlines the process for preventing and responding to student bullying in our school and reflects the **Anti-*Bullying Plan***aligns with the ***Bullying of Students: Prevention and Response Policy***and the***Behaviour Code for students***of the New South Wales Department of Education (NSW DoE). 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. The NSW DoE rejects all forms of bullying. No student, employee, parent, caregiver or community member should experience bullying within the learning or working environment of the Department.

# Statement of Purpose

All students, staff and parents at Merewether Public School have the right to be treated fairly and with dignity in an environment free from disruption, intimidation, harassment, discrimination and victimisation. Respect and acceptance of others is valued at our school. Positive relationships are fostered through programs such as; the school positive wellbeing system, buddy programs and peer and adult recognition of achievements and success. High expectations of exemplary behaviour are maintained at all times.

Underpinning all our school policies and programs are our core values:

***RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY and QUALITY***

**Protection**

**Bullying** is defined as 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. It is a repeated and deliberate oppression of a less powerful individual by a more powerful group or individual.

**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.

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

# Important Points

* Not all hurtful behaviours are bullying, but schools address inappropriate behaviour whether or not it meets the definition of bullying
* No method of addressing bullying has been reported as 100% effective
* No one intervention is appropriate in all circumstances of bullying and more than one intervention will usually need to be implemented

# Types of Bullying

Bullying takes many forms. Merewether Public School considers the following behaviours as examples of bullying.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Physical | Hitting, punching, kicking |
| Pushing, shoving, tripping |
| Throwing objects |
| Taking other’s belongings/stealing from others |
| Damaging other’s property |
| Spitting at others |
| Intimidation |
|  | |
| Verbal | Threatening |
| Name calling, teasing, put-downs, insults |
| Swearing at others |
| Ridicule (making fun) of another person because of their actions, appearance, physical differences, religious beliefs or cultural background, family background or allergy/anaphylaxis |
|  | |
| Indirect/Social | Spreading rumours |
| Excluding others |
| Writing notes |
| Ostracising/alienating |
| Making inappropriate gestures |
|  | |
| Cyber Bullying | Harassing and threatening messages |
| Denigrations – sending nasty SMS, pictures or prank phone calls, “SLAM Books” (websites or negative lists) |
| Impersonation – using a person’s screen name or password. Eg. Message to hate group with personal details of another person |
| Outing or trickery – sharing private personal information, messages, pictures with others. Posting “set up” images/videos |
| Ostracism – intentionally excluding others from online group. Eg. Taken off buddy/friends list/blocked |
| Sexting – sharing explicit material via mobile phone |
| Inappropriate use of camera phones |

# Responsibilities

At Merewether Public Public School we are committed to maintaining a positive climate of respectful relationships where bullying is less likely to occur. To achieve this, the whole school community has a responsibility to take positive and consistent actions to deal effectively with bullying.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Staff Responsibilities** | |
| ***Staff have a responsibility to:*** | * model appropriate behaviour at all times |
| * respond in a timely manner to incidents of bullying according to the school’s Anti-Bullying Plan |
| * implement school programs which promote positive relationships that incorporate strategies to deal with bullying |
| * have knowledge of school and departmental policies relating to bullying behaviour and student welfare |
| * communicate bullying incidents with parents when needed |
| * implement teaching of anti-bullying messages through explicit and incidental learning experiences |
| * provide curriculum and pedagogy that supports students to develop an understanding of bullying and its impact on individuals and the broader community |
| * document incidents of bullying |
| **Student Responsibilities** | |
| ***Students have a responsibility to:*** | * behave appropriately, respecting individual differences and diversity |
| * behave as responsible “digital” citizens |
| * behave as responsible bystanders |
| * report incidents of bullying according to the school’s Anti-bullying Plan |
| * follow the school’s Anti-Bullying Plan |
| **Parent and Caregiver Responsibilities** | |
| ***Parents and caregivers have a responsibility to:*** | * support their children to become citizens and to develop responsible on-line behaviour |
| * be aware of the schools 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 |
| **School Community Responsibilities** | |
| ***The School Community has a responsibility to:*** | * model and promote positive relationships that respect and accept individual differences and diversity within the school community |
| * positively support the school’s Anti-bullying Plan through words and actions |
| * work collaboratively with the school to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur |
| * report incidents of school-related bullying behaviour to the school, consistent with the school Anti-Bullying Plan |

# Prevention

The strategies implemented at Merewether Public School to assist in the prevention of bullying include:

* Teaching skills and understandings that will lead to reducing and eliminating bullying behaviours
* Explicit teaching of the School’s Core Values and the behaviour expectations associated with these
* Social Skills program taught K-6 as PDHPE units of work
* Anti-bullying units taught annually in all classrooms k-6 with on-going follow up
* Regular messages on procedures for students at school assemblies
* Peer support groups, peer mentoring and kinder buddy Programs
* Regular reminders the whole school and community population of procedures
* Information dissemination through the school Newsletter and the school website

# School Practices Promoting Respectful Relationships and Working to Prevent Bullying

* Teaching, revisiting and reinforcing the school’s Core Values of Respect, Responsibility and Quality and interpretations of these Core Values demonstrated as behaviours through on-going explicit Core Values lessons
* Specific weekly Social Lessons
* Peer Support lessons
* Buddies Program in Kindergarten
* Incentives for positive and pro-social behaviours through the school’s positive Student Wellbeing System
* Discipline procedures for those who fail to follow school and classroom behaviour expectations and the THPS Core Values
* Teaching units eg. Child Protection, Personal Development
* Transition to High School Programs

# Early Intervention for At-Risk Students

At Merewether Public School 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 previously having experienced bullying or engaged in bullying behaviour will be involved in one or more of the following:

Referral to the Learning Support Team

* Counsellor support
* Individual behaviour management plan and program
* Regular reviews with parents/caregivers
* Playground behaviour monitoring plan (if appropriate)
* In-class social skills program
* Positive systems to recognise appropriate social behaviours
* Specific teaching of pro-social skills
* Annual workshop with police/school liason officer eg. cyber bullying and the legal ramifications for parents and students

# Response

The whole school community is empowered to recognize and respond appropriately to bullying, harassment and victimisation and behave as responsible bystanders. Merewether Public School is committed to:

* Providing information for parents and students to train them in the recognition and reporting of school based bullying
* Publicising clear procedures for reporting incidents of bullying to the school
* Responding to incidents of bullying that have been reported to the school, quickly and effectively
* Matching a planned combination of interventions to the particular incident of bullying
* Educating bystanders in how to take positive steps to intervene, condemn and report bullying
* Providing regular updates, within the bounds of privacy legislation, to parents and caregivers about the management of incidents
* Providing support to any student who has been affected by, engaged in or witnessed bullying behaviour

# Procedures for Reporting Instances of Bullying

## Students

* Talking directly to their class teacher or another teacher who may refer to the Assistant Principals
* Talking to their parents or caregivers to get assistance with reporting the incident to school staff

## Parents

* Direct approach to the class teacher who may refer to the Assistant Principals or Principal
* Information for parents wishing to report matters of bullying will be advertised in the school newsletter and the school Anti-bullying brochure

## Staff

* Teachers will be informed of the procedures and their responsibilities at staff meetings and Staff Development Days

# Reporting and Referral to External Agencies and NSW Police

In cases of serious violence, the school will seek advice from the NSW DEC Safety and Security Directorate to ascertain if matters should be reported to the police.

If in the opinion of the staff or school executive involved, it is prudent that a referral should be made to the NSW DoE Child Wellbeing Unit, the matter will be referred immediately to the Principal.

# Providing Updates to Parents and Caregivers on the Management of Bullying Incidents Reported to the School

Within the bounds of privacy legislation, information on the management of reported incidents of bullying will be made available to the persons implicated in the incident, reporting the incident and members of the school community.

# Procedures and Timeframes

Teachers or school staff will immediately report instances of bullying to the member to the school executive responsible for those students, with an accompanying behaviour incident report (SENTRAL) and any other written information or victim/witness statements.

Initial action will be taken within one day in most cases, with subsequent follow up as required. All reports and follow up actions are recorded in the school data system (SENTRAL).

# Interventions to Address Particular Incidents of Bullying

A graded set of intervention options will be matched to each particular incident of bullying determined by; the severity, duration of the behaviour, frequency and type of behaviours and the age of those involved.

Where possible, consultation with the affected student/s about how they wish the situation to be managed will occur. However, the school has the responsibility to manage the situation and work towards resolution.

Interventions may involve the following actions:

* Discussion with the student to resolve the problem
* Reminder of the school Core Values
* Buddies Program in Kindergarten
* Buddy Systems
* Mediation
* Strengthening the victim or assertiveness training
* Periods of withdrawal from play
* Walking with the teacher on playground duty
* Withdrawal from the playground by the school executive
* Further consequences and daily follow-up
* Sanctions imposed through individual Behaviour Management Plan
* On-going monitoring
* Restorative practices
* Meetings with parents/caregivers to plan collaborative approaches
* By-stander training
* Referral to the ARCO staff member
* Referral to Community Services/Police if appropriate
* Referral to School Counsellor
* In-School Suspension
* Suspension

# Strategies to Support Students who have been affected by, engaged in or witnessed Bullying Behaviour

* Victims may need support strategies to avoid further instances of discrimination/violence
* Victims may seek peer mediation as a means of solving their problems and reaching a resolution
* Provocative victims need assistance and strategies to come to an understanding about their own behaviour in relation to others

Strategies will be coordinated by:

* Teachers
* The Learning Support Team
* School Executive
* School Counsellor

and may involve a range of actions suited to the individual.

# Identifying Patterns of Bullying Behaviour

All behaviour incident reports will be completed by teachers on SENTRAL. This information will detail the student/s engaged in bullying behaviours and the details of the victim/s and witnesses will also be included. Follow-up responses and interventions for both the bully and victim will be recorded with the incident by the school executive. Examination of this data will inform the effectiveness of the plan and indicate any further actions.

# Process for Appeals and the Handling of Complaints

A complaint can be about

* Any aspect of the service provided or not provided in any Department of Education and Community site
* The behaviour or decisions of staff
* Practices, Policies and Procedures

Whilst most complaints will be resolved at the informal stage, parents can at any time during the process lodge an appeal if they feel the policy has not been followed fairly and properly. The NSW Department of Education and Communities *Complaints Handling Policy Guidelines* outlines the appropriate procedures for lodging a complaint.

# Publicising the school’s Anti-Bullying Plan

The plan will be widely available to the school and community through information being provided to the Merewether Public Parents and Citizens Association and will be included on the school website. At enrolment, all parents will be provided with the school Anti-Bullying pamphlet which will draw attention to the school’s Anti-Bullying Plan.

The Anti-Bullying Plan will be available from the school Principal on request.

# Monitoring, Evaluating and Reporting to the School Community on the Effectiveness of the Anti-bullying Plan

The plan will be reviewed annually at staff meetings by the school teaching and executive staff.

The Merewether Public School community will be advised of the monitoring process and provided with the opportunity to have input.

Data from the Merewether Public School SENTRAL system will be examined to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan and procedures.

# Principal’s Comment

Merewether Public School endeavours to provide an environment which is safe and secure. The school is committed to ensuring that students are provided with the opportunity to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes for effective participation in society and that they are able to conduct themselves with respect and show consideration and compassion for others.

The school does not tolerate bullying in any form. Every member of the school community has the right to learn and teach in a happy and safe environment. The school therefore promotes positive and respectful relationships between all members of the school community.

# Additional Information

Contacts

* **Anti-bullying New South Wales** <https://caldera-s.schools.nsw.gov.au/anti-bully>
* **DET Safety Response Unit** – **1300 363 778**
  + Contact for **Police School Liaison Officer** is **02 49266 524**
  + **Kids Helpline:** 1800 551 800 [**www.**kids**help.com.au/**](http://www.kidshelp.com.au/)
  + **School Safety and Response Unit Hotline:** 1300 363 778

## DET Intranet policies and procedures:

* [***Bullying: Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying in Schools Policy***](https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/student_serv/discipline/bullying/PD20100415_i.shtml?level=Schools&amp;query=Bullying)
* ***Bullying: Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying in Schools Guidelines***

***\*Bullying Interventions: Information for School Executive, Learning Support Teams or Student Welfare teams***

* [***Bullying: Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying in Schools Planning Document***](https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/student_serv/discipline/bullying/implementation_2_PD20100415_i.shtml?level=Schools&amp;query=Bullying)

***\*Anti-bullying Plan Template***

* + **Prevention of Bullying in the Workplace**
  + **Cyber-bullying: Information for staff in schools**
  + ***Bullying. No way!* website**
  + <http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au/ideasbox/things-work/infomanage-2-1.shtml>

## National Safe Schools Framework-2011: includes implementation and resource pack

* + [http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school\_education/publications\_resources/profiles/nation](http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school_education/publications_resources/profiles/national_safe_schools_framework.htm)  [al\_safe\_schools\_framework.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school_education/publications_resources/profiles/national_safe_schools_framework.htm)
  + ***Principals: Reporting Incidents Involving Assaults, Threats, Intimidation or Harassment***
  + <https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/inprincipal/sydney/2010-07-30/dn1000225.htm>

**School Contact Information**

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