

2021 Howard Springs PS Anti-Bullying Policy

All members of the Howard Springs Primary School community have the right to be in an environment free from fear, intimidation and harassment. All students have the right to feel safe and comfortable at school and to be treated with understanding and respect by others. Bullying in any of its forms will not be tolerated in our school community and will be treated seriously.

Definition

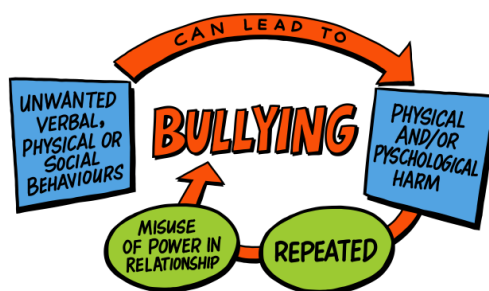
The national definition of bullying for Australian schools says:

Bullying is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening.

Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records)

Bullying of any form or for any reason can have immediate, medium and 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.

Bullying is a form of abuse. It is when someone repeatedly uses their power to hurt or intimidate others. Bullying can be verbal, physical, emotional, electronic or sexual. It may be planned, spontaneous or even unintentional.



Behaviours that DO NOT constitute bullying include:

- mutual arguments and disagreements (where there is no power imbalance)
- not liking someone or a single act of social rejection
- one-off acts of meanness or spite
- isolated incidents of aggression, intimidation or violence.

However, these conflicts still need to be addressed and resolved.

Bullying Behaviour

Examples of bullying behaviour include, but are not limited to, the following categories:

Verbal bullying

Name calling, “put-downs”, teasing comments about another’s appearance, or another’s social, cultural or religious beliefs. Threats, insults, swearing, spreading malicious rumours, belittling others’ abilities and achievements; negative references to family or ethnic background.

Physical bullying

Hitting, poking, pushing, punching, kicking, tripping, scratching, pinching, spitting; invading personal space and stand over tactics. Taking, hiding or damaging belongings, circulating offensive notes, offensive graffiti, non-verbal signs and gestures such as ‘dirty looks’, which are designed to intimidate.

Emotional bullying

Ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating, influencing others not to like or associate with them; controlling or dominating someone by withdrawing or threatening to withdraw friendship. Pressuring others to act against their will – such as giving up possessions, money or requesting homework for copying or stealing.

Cyber bullying

Posting defamatory messages on social networking sites, spreading rumours online, excluding a young person from an online group and sending or posting unwanted messages, either by text, instant messaging or email.

Policy

All members of the School community have a responsibility to respond to incidents of bullying.

The school undertakes to:

- Provide a supportive environment which encourages positive relationships between students, staff and parents.
- Provide curriculum material which will help develop appropriate social skills, positive relationships and resilience.
- Provide support to students in dealing with conflict resolution; to those on both the giving and receiving ends of bullying.

Discouraging Bullying

The methods used by the School to discourage bullying will vary from time-to-time with new initiatives being introduced when thought appropriate. These include, but are not limited to:

- Engaging students across all year levels in anti-bullying programs with specific emphasis on bystander and responsible reporting programs.
- Including anti-bullying messages in the Wellbeing & Health curriculum.
- Promoting a bully-free environment in assemblies, unit assemblies and house meetings.

- Peer Mediator program made up of students in years 3 and 4, providing support to the early childhood students during recess and lunchtimes.
- Posting anti-bullying policies on the School Website.
- Engage in regular confidential surveys to gain student voice on bullying.
- Students having access to the school's Chaplain who has skills in helping both students who are being bullied and the perpetrators of bullying.
- A whole school focus on students being active bystanders and encourage students to report any bullying they witness.
- Provide students with a tool to report bullying via email: bully.buster@ntschoools.net
- Anonymous "Bullying Box" for students to report bullying.
- Engaging student groups (Student Leadership Council, Peer Mediators and House Captains) to instigate anti-bullying initiatives.
- Using an appropriate range of interventions and sanctions applicable to the age group and the situation to deal with and discourage bullying behaviour.
- Educating parents and staff on the differences between anti-social or negative behaviours and bullying.
- Encouraging staff to adopt classroom management techniques that discourage opportunities for bullying behaviours.
- Training staff to detect bullying behaviours.
- Staff actively supervise whilst on duty so that there is a pervasive sense of staff presence.
- Emphasising anti-bullying guidelines during new staff inductions.
- Conducting exit interviews with students
- Reviewing the School's *Anti-bullying Policy* periodically, in order to ensure it remains effective and relevant. Review policy at the end of each year.

Intervention

An incident of bullying might be reported by a student, parent, visitor or member of staff.

Student reports bullying (including online bullying)

The steps to follow when a student reports bullying (including online bullying) are:

1. Listen carefully and calmly, and document what the student tells you. (*Clarify if there are immediate safety risks and let the student know how you will address these*).
2. Collect additional information.
3. Discuss a plan of action with the students.
4. Inform the student what you intend to do.
5. Provide suggestions on what to do if the bullying occurs again.
6. Set a date for follow up review/s.
7. Record the incident/student contact in the school's student data management system.
8. Notify appropriate school personnel.
9. Contact the parent/guardian informing them of the incident and your course of action.
10. Make sure to follow up with students over the next several weeks and months.

Parent reports student bullying to the school

A similar series of steps applies if a parent contacts the school to report bullying. Ensure printed information (particularly the relevant policy) is available at any meetings with parents if appropriate.

The steps to follow are:

1. If they have not already done so, ask the parents/carers to talk with the year/class teacher in the first instance.
 2. If they are still concerned after speaking with the year/class teacher, invite them to make an appointment with the relevant teaching staff and senior staff.
 3. At the meeting provide a calming, supportive response and appreciate that some parents may express anger and distress about their child's experience.
 4. Listen carefully and document the account.
 5. Refer to your school policy to discuss the definition of bullying, expectations of students and staff, responsibilities and implications.
 6. Inform the parents what you intend to do in regards to their concerns.
 7. Let the parent/guardian know the name and contact details of the responsible staff member for further contact.
 8. Provide suggestions and information about what parents/carers can do to support their child in the short term.
 9. Set a date for a follow up review and conclude the meeting.
 10. Record the incident/student contact in school's student data management system.
 11. Collect additional information from students and other personnel as appropriate.
 12. Notify appropriate school personnel.
 13. After you have developed a full action plan based on the additional information gathered, conduct the follow up review meeting with parents/caregivers.
 14. Agree on a contact person for parents/caregivers while the action plan is implemented.
 15. Follow up with parents/caregivers and students at a designated time in the following weeks or months.
- If a student/s is identified as being involved in a further incident involving the same target or displaying the same negative behaviour, the issue will be treated as bullying. The student/s will be interviewed by the Assistant Principal and/or Principal and their parent/caregiver will be notified. The Principal will arrange a meeting with student/s and their parent/caregiver.
 - At the discretion of the Principal, a number of different methods may be used by the School to resolve the bullying conflict depending on the situation. Six methods are identified as frequently used in Australian schools:
 - a disciplinary approach
 - strengthening the 'target'
 - mediation
 - support group method
 - restorative practices
 - Counselling may be recommended for the target and/or perpetrator of the bullying.
 - Students who continue to be involved in ongoing bullying will be interviewed by the Principal together with their parents. At the discretion of the Principal, an external facilitator may be engaged to apply a Restorative Practice approach to resolving the bullying.
 - Should the bullying continue after the Restorative Practice, appropriate action, which may include suspension or expulsion, will be taken at the discretion of the Principal.
 - In some instances, it may be most appropriate to report bullying to other authorities, in the case of behaviours which may constitute a crime, or serious online bullying.

When a staff member reports bullying (including online bullying)

The steps to follow when a staff member reports bullying (including online bullying) are:

1. Listen carefully and calmly, and document what the staff member tells you. (*Clarify if there are immediate safety risks and let the staff member know how you will address these*).
2. Collect additional information.
3. Discuss a plan of action with the staff member.
4. Refer to the Code of Conduct.
5. Inform the staff member what you intend to do.
6. Provide suggestions on what to do if the bullying occurs again.
7. Set a date for follow up review/s.
8. Record the incident for future reference.
9. Notify appropriate school personnel.
10. Make sure to follow up with the staff member over the next several weeks and months.
11. In some instances, it may be most appropriate to report bullying to other authorities, in the case of behaviours which may constitute a crime, or serious online bullying.

Related Policies

Student Code of Conduct