



NORTH AINSLIE BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

2014

School Context

North Ainslie Primary School is an ACT government school which works within the parameters of the ACT ETD policy framework. North Ainslie is a culturally and linguistically diverse school, which provides education for approximately five hundred and fifty students. North Ainslie is particularly unique because it is home, not only to a mainstream primary school (P-6), but also to an Introductory English Centre for migrant and refugee children (IEC), and to a learning support unit for students with autism (LSU). The school also provides mainstream integration for a number of children with learning disabilities. Our school community is one which covers a broad socio-economic base.

Purpose:

To build a safe, calm and supportive learning community in which “the risk from harm is minimized, diversity is valued and all members of the school community feel respected and included and can be confident that they will receive support in the face of any threat to their safety or well-being” (Source: *National Safe Schools Framework*, 2010).

To create an environment which treats bullying and harassment as serious threats to the safety and well-being of students and adults in the school community, striving to:

- minimise their occurrence
- encourage positive bystander behaviours
- support victims, and
- provide all members of the school community with options to respond appropriately.

Rationale:

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.

Conflict or fights between equals and single incidents are not defined as bullying, even though they require prompt responses.

Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders, and must therefore be treated seriously.

Australian research¹ indicates the following.

- Whilst most young people do not engage in bullying behaviour, up to one in four students have experienced some type of bullying or harassment.
- Bullying behaviour appears to peak in the middle primary school years and the first year of high school.

¹ *Bullying No Way*, 2014

- Younger children are more likely to bully others physically or verbally, whereas older children are more likely to engage in socially harmful behaviours, including exclusion and manipulation, through both offline and online bullying².
- Most students who bully others online, also bully others offline, and most who are bullied online are also bullied offline.
- The most common form of bullying is hurtful teasing, followed by having hurtful lies told about the victim.
- Bystander presence is significant with peers being present as onlookers in most bullying interactions. Bystanders play a central role in the bullying process, and can stop or diminish it and help the victim to recover.

It has been demonstrated that a whole school approach to student well-being results in less bullying. The explicit teaching and modelling of positive values, social and emotional curriculum and pastoral care are essential elements. Effective approaches to bullying in schools include restorative and relational practices, conflict management and social skills development, with no single approach working by itself. All members of the school community (staff, students, parents and carers) must be involved. When bullying or harassment do occur, effective responses focus on relationships and solutions, operating at all levels (home, school, class and student).

North Ainslie Primary is therefore committed to promoting the International Baccalaureate attitudes and values and working within a Restorative Practices framework to develop caring and principled young people. The school is committed to providing a holistic curriculum which builds a positive, safe school environment and minimises incidences of bullying and harassment, enlisting bystanders in positive action and involving all members of our school community.

Implementation Guidelines

The School

The school will ensure the following.

Curriculum

- The International Baccalaureate Learner Profile, attitudes and values are modelled and promoted within the curriculum to develop open-minded, respectful and caring young people.
- Restorative and relational practices are used to build an inclusive school culture and respectful relationships, to develop social and emotional literacy and to manage conflict.
- Social and emotional literacy programs and practices are incorporated in the curriculum, including weekly Circle Time³ and "Bounce Back" lessons, and Help Increase the Peace (HIPP).
- Enrichment, peer mediator and buddy programs take place to build strong cross-age relationships and support younger students, both at times of conflict or bullying and generally⁴.

² Cyberbullying

³ At least once every five school days at preschool i.e. once per fortnight

- Students are taught that bullying and harassment are not acceptable and that there are more appropriate ways to solve problems and conflicts.
- Teachers are trained regularly to deliver school programs and use restorative practices.
- Playtime activities are resourced which will develop social capacity and stimulate students e.g. social skills clubs, peer mediator and sports leader led activities, Enrichment, gardening in the Healthy Eating Hub.
- An alternative safe place is always provided for students at playtimes.

Communication

- The bullying policy and procedures are disseminated to all members of school community and knowledge of the policy is regularly refreshed.
- Annual reviews of the policy and procedures take place and are reported to the School Board.
- Information about restorative practices, bullying and effective anti-bullying strategies is regularly communicated to students and parents through newsletters, assemblies, workshops and other forums.
- At least one bullying/harassment parent workshop is conducted annually.

Bullying and harassment

- Incidences of bullying and harassment are regularly monitored using school data which includes: class bully audits each term; self-assessment against the Safe Schools Framework⁵; satisfaction surveys; "school climate" surveys; and behaviour referrals.
- Adults and children are taught options to deal with bullying and harassment effectively and safely (victims, bystanders and support people).
- Adults and children are taught what to do if they witness bullying happening.
- Adults and children are taught that bystander behaviour can encourage or discourage bullying. The key considerations for all parties should always be responsibility and safety.

Where a specific instance of bullying and harassment is reported

- The report is treated seriously and is responded to promptly.
- The underlying causes of bullying are identified where possible.
- Bullying or harassment that appears to involve criminal behaviour such as violence, threats, intimidation, inciting violence is reported to the police and a risk management plan is implemented.
- Restorative processes are used to repair the harm.
- Bullying workshops are run for repeat bullying offenders to be facilitated by the counsellor and/or executive staff.

⁴ Currently includes the following programs: Preschool and Kindergarten Buddies (terms 1-4); peer mediators (terms 1-4); sports leaders (terms 2-4); kindergarten and preschool orientation (term 4).

⁵ Each school semester

The school will implement appropriate consequences for bullying, after considering the specific circumstances of each case. Suspension may apply where the bullying has been severe or a restorative conference agreement has been broken. Suspension will apply in the following circumstances:

- where electronic images or text have been transmitted which impact on the wellbeing of another child attending the school, a member of staff of the school, or anyone else involved in the school's operation, and
- where internet electronic images and files have been posted which impact on the wellbeing of another child attending the school, a member of staff of the school, or anyone else involved in the school's operation.

Students

Students are expected to show respect for all members of the school community and to refrain from engaging in bullying behaviour or encouraging bullying by others.

If a student feels that s/he has been bullied or harassed, s/he will:

- if safe to do so, tell the person that they are being a bully and to stop the behaviour
- report the behaviour to a teacher
- tell their parents or carers
- talk to a buddy or peer mediator, and
- ask for adult help.

If a student has witnessed bullying behaviour or harassment⁶, s/he will:

- if safe to do so, tell the person that they are being a bully and to stop the behaviour
- support the person being bullied and ask an adult for help
- report the behaviour to a teacher, and
- talk to a buddy or peer mediator.

Teachers:

Teachers are expected to show respect for all members of the school community and to refrain from engaging in bullying behaviour or encouraging bullying by others.

They are also expected to model and promote the attributes of the IB Learner Profile and implement all well-being programs and strategies recognised by the school as best practice.

If a student or colleague reports a bullying incident or a teacher witnesses incidents of bullying, s/he should:

- listen and provide support to the target of the bullying by acknowledging the nature and seriousness of bullying behaviour
- encourage the victim to complete a bully audit slip
- investigate and attempt to resolve the incident, using restorative practices
- report the incident to executive and any other relevant staff
- offer all parties⁷ the option of support from peer mediation or counselling by an appropriate party (executive teacher, classroom teacher, student welfare officer, school psychologist)

⁶ Bystander

⁷ Victim, bully and bystander

Executive Teachers:

Executive staff are expected to show respect for all members of the school community and to refrain from engaging in bullying behaviour or encouraging bullying by others.

If a student or colleague reports a bullying incident or harassment, s/he should:

- provide counselling support to the targets of bullying
- record and monitor incidences of bullying behaviour
- ensure classroom bully audits are conducted each term
- put in place anti-bullying procedures as appropriate e.g. ask the offender to acknowledge the behaviour and agree to stop it (See bullying reflection form); arrange an informal/formal restorative justice conference
- contact the parents/carers of the offender and the victim
- encourage the victim to report similar behaviour if repeated
- involve the students' class teachers
- raise the profile of anti bullying at assemblies and morning "Lines".

Parents and carers:

Parents are expected to show respect for all members of the school community and to refrain from engaging on bullying behaviour or encouraging bullying by others.

Parents and carers are essential parties in the success of this policy and should do the following.

- Teach children that bullying and harassment are inappropriate behaviours that threaten the safety of others and can have long term effects.
- Encourage children to discuss the effects and consequences of bullying.
- Encourage children to report any incidents of bullying.
- Contact the school if they believe any child is being bullied.
- Be familiar with the bullying and harassment policy.
- Attend workshops that are provided by the school.
- Contribute to policies related to student well-being.

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References:

Bullying No Way (Safe and Supportive School Communities (SSSC) Working Group, 2014) accessed at <http://bullyingnoway.gov.au/>

National Safe Schools Framework (Education Services Australia, 2013)

Safe Schools Hub (Australian Government Department of Education, 2014) accessed at <http://www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/safe-schools-toolkit/overview>

Appendices

The Definition of Bullying: For use with younger students

Bullying is when someone keeps picking on another child again and again and tries to make them feel bad. They say or do many mean and hurtful things, make fun of them a lot, try to stop them from joining in or make others not like them.

Although it isn't nice if someone says or does something mean to someone else, we don't necessarily call that bullying. It also isn't bullying if children have a one-off argument.

The Definition of Bullying: For use with older students

Bullying is when one student (or a group) keeps picking on another student again and again to upset or hurt them. They might hurt them physically, try to socially isolate them or say and do many mean or humiliating things to them.

Although it's neither respectful nor acceptable if someone behaves in a mean or aggressive way on one occasion, it isn't bullying. A fight or disagreement between students of equal power or status isn't bullying.

FACT CARD 1

What is bullying?

You have a right to feel safe. Bullying is not fair. It feels awful.

Sometimes you might have a fight or argument with someone. If it only happens once, that's not really bullying even though it can be upsetting.

Bullying is when someone:

- keeps picking on you again and again and tries to make you feel bad
- says or does lots of mean things that upset you
- makes fun of you a lot
- tries to stop you from joining in or make others not like you
- keeps hurting you such as hitting or punching you.

Bullying can also happen through a mobile phone or on the internet. This is called cyberbullying.

If you don't feel safe, get help right now from your mum, dad, teacher, or an adult who will listen to you.

When people bully, it might be because:

- they think it's cool
- they get angry about something and they take it out on someone else
- they don't know how to get along with others
- they think it's funny to hurt people
- they think other people will laugh too.

BUT there is no excuse for bullying.

FACT CARD 2

WHAT CAN I DO IF I AM BEING BULLIED?

Tell someone

- Tell your Mum or Dad, a grandparent, friend or someone else who you think will listen to you. Ask them to help you work out what to do.
- Tell a teacher.
- If bullying is happening on your phone or the internet, keep messages and posts that hurt you or write down what happened and show an adult.

Stay positive - be confident. Think about positive things and hang out with people who make you feel good.

- Think about what you like doing at school and away from school.
- Think about what you are good at.
- Hang out with people who like you and care about you.

Try some things yourself

- Tell the other person 'I don't like that' in a big voice.
- Talk with the person who is bullying you if you think it's a safe thing to do. Ask a friend to come with you if you feel scared.
- If possible, ignore the person bullying you.
- Tell someone and ask for their help.
- Don't try to get back at the person who bullies you.
- Visit the Kid's page on the Bullying No Way website.

If it happens on the phone or internet

- Don't respond to the message.
- Tell someone who can help you work out what to do.
- Ask for help to put a block on your mobile device or computer.
- Visit the *Cyber Safety Help* page on the digital back pack to get help.
- Visit the Kids' page on the *Cybersmart website* for good ideas

FACT CARD 3

WHAT CAN I DO IF SOMEONE'S BEING BULLIED

A bystander is someone who sees or knows that bullying is happening.

Don't stand by and let bullying happen at your school! If someone you know is being bullied they need your help. Talk to your teachers about doing something. Others will respect you. If you don't do anything the bullying will only continue.

As long as you feel safe when you see the bullying happening, you can:

- walk away and tell a teacher right away
- tell the person who is bullying that you will get a teacher if they don't stop
- encourage your friends to walk away or tell the person to stop
- help the person who is being bullied to get away and go somewhere safe.

If you don't think it's safe for you to stop the bullying, there are other things you can do:

- help a friend or classmate who is being bullied
- tell them that bullying is not okay and they didn't do anything wrong
- ask them if they want help to get it stopped
- tell the teacher about it
- try to make sure your friend is not alone when they might get bullied
- ask the person who is being bullied to join your group or game
- walk away as people who bully like others to watch
- tell the person bullying you don't think what they do is cool or funny.

FACT CARD 4

MY CHILD IS BEING BULLIED. WHAT CAN I DO?

Let your child know that you will take the bullying seriously and that you can help them to report it to the school.

Stay calm and positive

Your attitude will be reflected in your child. A confident, positive and resilient appearance can stop bullying from continuing.

Talk with your child

Discuss strategies with your child and set a short period of time to see if they can resolve the situation if they want to try to deal with the bullying themselves.

Encourage your child:

- to walk away
- to try to act unimpressed or unaffected
- to use other strategies to diffuse the situation (e.g. agreeing in an offhand way with the bullying when they say offensive or negative things – known as “fogging”)
- to say 'No!' firmly
- to talk to the teacher or other staff, e.g. school guidance officer.

Talk to your child about the tips and advice offered on the [Bullying No Way](#) website.

Give them the [Kids Helpline](#) telephone number to use if they ask to talk to someone other than the school, or you don't feel able to support them.

Encourage your child to talk about what happened. Tell your child that reporting the bullying is okay. Assure your child that it is NOT their fault.

FACT CARD 5

MY CHILD IS BULLYING OTHERS. WHAT CAN I DO?

You may see or hear from others that your child:

- repeatedly teases, imitates or makes fun of the same child
- appears to repeatedly dominate or control others
- shows no compassion for someone who's experiencing bullying
- repeatedly excludes or ignores the same child
- whispers about the same child behind their back on a frequent basis.

Discuss with your child why they might be behaving this way. Try to understand any problems your child may be experiencing.

Discuss the behaviours with the school. A consistent and co-operative approach by both the home and school is important. Ensure your child does not hear criticism from you about the school's management of the issue.

Consider what's going on at home.

- Does your child see good examples of how to deal with issues and resolve differences with others at home?
- Have any major events taken place recently to upset your child (parents separated, death or serious illness in the family, siblings bullying your child)?
- Increase supervision of your child when they are with other children.

For younger children, show them how to join in with other children in a friendly way.

Explain why bullying is unacceptable.

Help them understand what it is like for the person being bullied. Ask them how they would feel if they were being bullied.

Make clear rules and consequences for their behaviour. Acknowledge appropriate behaviour and be consistent when dealing with inappropriate behaviour.

Seek professional help and support if you feel that your child's bullying behaviour is part of a bigger behavioural or health problem. Consider enrolling your child in a group program. More information can be found in the parent's section of the **Bullying No Way** website.

FACT CARD 6

WHO SHOULD I TELL? WHAT CAN I EXPECT?

If you are concerned your child is being bullied, harassed or physically hurt, talk to the school about your concerns. The best outcomes for your child will be achieved by you and the school working together.

First talk to the classroom teacher and/or student welfare executive teacher. If you continue to be concerned contact the principal or deputy principal.

Read the school's student welfare policies.

Let the school know as soon as possible. The sooner the school receives information about a bullying issue, the quicker they can respond.

The school will consider your child's circumstances and will develop the most appropriate action plan to support them in consultation with you. Strategies may include:

- teaching and learning programs to develop students' communication, social, assertiveness and coping skills (individual, group or class)
- changes to the school environment to improve teacher supervision
- increasing supervision of students at particular times or places
- support from the student welfare officer or school psychologist
- mediation in the form of an informal/formal restorative conference
- changes to technology access at school
- timetable or class changes (temporary or permanent) to decrease the contact the students have with each other
- disciplinary action against students who bully others, which may include exclusion from the playground, suspension or removal of internet access.

Don't expect the school to tell you everything that has taken place. Schools **must** follow privacy laws and may not be able to tell you some details, especially about any other children involved. These laws keep you and your child's information private too.

FACT CARD 7

WHICH ATTITUDES AND VALUES SHOULD I PROMOTE AT HOME AND IN MY CLASSROOM TO PREVENT BULLYING?

It is important that children and adults are **open-minded, principled and caring**.

The following values and attitudes underpin these Learner Profile attributes.

Appreciation: Being grateful for the wonder of the world and people

Respect: Having consideration of ourselves, others and the world around us

Independence: Thinking and acting by oneself. Doing the right thing, based on our own judgments.

Commitment: Sticking to what we know we should do, and showing self-discipline and responsibility.

Empathy: Projecting ourselves into other peoples' situations, in order to understand their thoughts, reasons and emotions.

Tolerance: Feeling sensitivity towards differences and diversity in the world and being responsive to the needs of others.

Co-operation: Working together to make our world a safe place to be.

Integrity: Having a firm sense of fairness and honesty.

Confidence: Having the courage to ask for help or help others. Feeling confident about our own abilities so that we feel good about ourselves. People who don't feel good about themselves are more likely to bully.

FACT CARDS 8-11

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES QUESTIONS

The following scripts are useful to resolve conflict or bullying. When using them it is important that all parties are listened to and that there is no power in-balance.

THE WRONGDOER

What happened?

What were you thinking at the time?

What have you thought about since?

Who has been harmed /affected?
How?

What needs to happen now to make things right/repair the harm?

THE PERSON HARMED

What happened?

How were you harmed /affected?

What was the worst part for you?

What do you need to happen now to make things right?

THE BYSTANDER

What happened?

Who has been harmed /affected?
How?

What was the worst part for you?

What needs to happen now to make things right/repair the harm?

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What happened?

What was the hardest part?

What would you do differently next time?

Other attachments:

- Bully audit slips (Senior)
- Safety audit slips (Junior)
- Bully Reflection Form
- Restorative Justice Conference script (formal)

