



PRIMARY SCHOOL POLICY TO DEAL WITH BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

2011

School Context

North Ainslie Primary School is an ACT government school which works within the parameters of the ACTDET policy framework. It is situated in an inner northern suburb of Canberra. It is a culturally and linguistically diverse school, which provides education for approximately three hundred and fifty students. North Ainslie is particularly unique because it is home not only to a mainstream primary school 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:

The aim of this policy is to ensure that North Ainslie Primary School is a safe environment, free from bullying, for all members of the school community.

The objectives are:

- To reduce the incidence of bullying
- To reduce the incidence of “bystander” behaviours
- To treat all incidences of bullying seriously
- To create a safe and supportive environment
- To provide all members of the school community with options to respond to bullying

Definition:

Bullying/harassment is the repeated physical, verbal or psychological intimidation of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or groups of persons. Bullying/ harassment is always relational, and is always about changing the balance of power.

Bullying/ Harassment may:

- Be physical (hitting, kicking, pinching)
- Be verbal (name-calling, teasing)
- Be psychological (stand over tactics, gestures)
- Be social (social exclusion, rumours, putdowns)
- Be sexual (physical, verbal or non-verbal sexual conduct)
- Be electronic with use of mobile phone, internet, email messages, You Tube, Chat Rooms
- Be motivated by jealousy, distrust, fear, misunderstanding or lack of knowledge
- Make people feel threatened, embarrassed, offended, humiliated, ridiculed, angry or afraid
- Continue over time
- Be hidden from adults
- Have a serious long-term effect on the health and well being of young people
- Continue if adults and peers take no action. (Bullying. No way! National website)

Cyber-Bullying

Suspension will apply in the following circumstances:

- Transmitting electronic images 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.
- Posting to the internet electronic images and files 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.

Rationale:

Australian research shows that between one in five and one in seven children are “seriously” bullied or harassed at school at least once a week. This research also shows that incidences of bullying and harassment are far more frequent in primary schools than in secondary schools, and that bullying is both an Australian school issue and a family issue.

Within the restorative justice framework of our school, we believe that we must aim to nurture socially responsible children so that bullying not only occurs less frequently but is also stopped more often by bystanders. We also believe that all members of our school community should be involved as a resource to attack the problem, both emotionally and physically.

Implementation**Guidelines****Responsibilities and Procedures:****Students:**

If a student feels that s/he has been bullied or has witnessed bullying behaviour s/he should:

- Tell the person that they are being a bully and to stop the behaviour (if safe to do so)
- Support the person being bullied and ask an adult for help
- Report the behaviour to a teacher
- Refrain from bullying others
- Talk to a bully buddy or peer mediator

Teachers:

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
- Investigate and attempt to resolve the incident, using restorative practices
- Report the incident to executive staff and any other relevant staff
- Offer the student the option of support from peer mediation and/or bully buddies

Executive Teachers:

- Provide counselling support to targets of bullying
- Record and monitor incidences of bullying behaviour.
- 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 of the victim as appropriate
- Encourage the victim to report similar behaviour if repeated
- Involve the students' class teachers
- Raise the profile of anti bullying at assemblies and lines

The School:

- Advocate a proactive approach to anti bullying procedures and strategies
- Include the policy in the curriculum
- Regularly refresh students knowledge of the policy
- Disseminate policy and procedures to all members of school community
- Run parent/student/teacher workshops to increase knowledge of bullying and how to implement effective antibullying strategies
- Train peer mediators and bully buddies to play active roles in working with bully victims, both at times of conflict and generally

- Conduct bully audits and safe school surveys at regular intervals
- Run bullying workshops for repeat offenders to be facilitated by the counsellor, the Restorative Justice leading teacher and/or executive staff
- Run small friendship clubs using the counsellor (4 children at a time in a carefully chosen group including a bully, a victim and two positive role models. They meet for an hour once a week for four weeks only
- Promote the resourcing of playtime activities which will develop social capacity and stimulate students eg. Active Lunchbox
- Implement restorative practices and programs such as the *Help Increase The Peace* program and *Circle Time*.

Parents:

- Encourage children to discuss the effects and consequences of bullying
- Encourage children to report any incidents of bullying
- Contact the school if you believe any child is being bullied

Facts about bullying:

- Almost 50% of young children believe that it is the teacher's role to stop bullying.
- Almost 50% of parents believe that the teacher provides the most practical advice on bullying.
- Few parents believe that parents can offer the most practical advice.
- High school students show an alarming increase in the belief that it "is none of my business" and adopt the role of bystander/outsider when confronted by an incident of bullying/harassment.
- Young children often do not understand the concept of harassment.
- Children who bully or are bullied at home are generally more likely to bully or be bullied at school. This tendency is not directly relational. For example, a child who is bullied at home may become either a bully or a victim at school.
- Bullies generally have poor conflict resolution skills. Victims generally have average skills but lack the ability to use them in relevant situations, where they are highly stressed.
- Victims utilise conflict resolution skills more effectively when working with a buddy.
- Parents of bully victims and of bullies often feel angry or inadequate and would like to actively participate in the restorative process.
- Boys generally report incidences of bullying more often than girls.
- Within the primary school setting boys aged 8 years and girls aged 7-8 years are most at risk. It is suggested that children of these ages are moving through a transition stage in development, and that they lack adequate social skills with which to manage this particular stage.
- Research indicates that the resourcing of playtime activities greatly reduces conflict on the playground (P. Slee, Canberra, 2004)

This document should be read in conjunction with the letter to parents re the NAPS policy on cyber-bullying and mobile phones.

Other attachments:

- "I am being bullied. What Can I do?" help sheet
- Bully Reflection Form
- Restorative Justice Conference script
- Restorative Justice "Corridor" conference questions

Updated February 15, 2010