

Anti-bullying Plan

Balgownie Public 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, Balgownie Public, and reflects the *Bullying: Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying in Schools Policy* of the New South Wales Department of Education and Communities. Developed in November 2012, this plan will be reviewed on a regular basis in alignment with our school values, the Positive Behaviour for Success program and our Fair Discipline Policy.

Staff have been consulted and are committed to teaching antibullying skills as part of our ongoing commitment to positive welfare practices. Parent workshops have been held and the revised policy has been discussed with our new Kindergarten parents. P and C have been consulted about the policy at meetings and a parent representative has reviewed, evaluated and provided advice about this document. The Student Representative Council have been consulted about the policy.

Review strategies will include:

- Gathering and analysing relevant data on the nature and extent of bullying and harassment, including data that highlights patterns.
- Evaluating the extent to which the school's Anti-bullying Plan has been effective in addressing bullying and harassment and promoting a safe and secure environment.
- Communicating the effectiveness of the approach with the community and revising the policy using the data available.
- This will be done at least every three years and more often if required.

Statement of purpose

Students attend school to engage in quality education that will help them become self-directed, lifelong learners who can create a positive future for themselves and the wider community. Our school community is committed to providing all students with a caring, supportive and safe

learning environment, helping to promote personal growth and excellence by developing confidence and self esteem.

Any inappropriate behaviour that interferes with the teaching and learning at the school or with the well being of students cannot be accepted. Bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated at our school. Every student has the right to expect that he or she will be free from bullying and harassment, both inside the classroom and in the playground.

It is understood that there are a range of strategies used to prevent bullying occurring and to help students if incidents occur. Our school supports a prevention and early intervention approach in relation to student bullying.

We recognise that the best outcomes are achieved when school communities work together to help prevent bullying from occurring, act early to stop any bullying from getting worse and respond in a timely and appropriate way to bullying incidents if they occur. Students, teachers, parents, caregivers and members of the wider school community have a shared responsibility to create a safe and happy learning environment, free from all forms of bullying.

Bullying is complex and our school uses levels of interventions from whole school culture (protection) to prevention programs to more individualised strategies for some students and responding to incidents.



Protection

Protection refers to those factors that increase the likelihood of positive well being outcomes and buffer against the effects of negative experiences. In schools, a positive school culture that fosters student connection with both the school and the wider community will support the development of protective factors that include relationships, knowledge and skills. Strategies include:

- developing a shared understanding of bullying behaviour that captures all forms of bullying including cyberbullying.
- developing a statement of purpose that outlines individual and shared responsibilities of students, parents, caregivers and teachers for preventing and responding to bullying behaviour.
- maintaining a positive climate of respectful relationships where bullying is less likely to occur.

What is 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. Bullying can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and all forms of harassment including that based on sex, race, disability, homosexuality, or transgender. Cyberbullying refers to bullying through the use of the information and communication technologies to support the repeated and deliberate hostile behaviour intended to harm others. It is sometimes used as an extension to other forms of 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.

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Cyber Bullying can look like:

- **Flaming** – heated exchange
- **Harassing and threatening messages** eg ‘text wars’, ‘griefers’
- **Denigration** – sending nasty SMS, pictures or prank phone calls ‘Slambooks’ (websites or negative lists)
- **Impersonation** - Using person’s screen name or password
- **Outing or trickery** – sharing personal information, messages, pictures with others
- Posting ‘set up’ images/video eg ‘happy slapping’
- **Ostracism** – Intentionally excluding others from an online group
- **Sexting** – sharing explicit material by mobile phone.

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

Parents and caregivers can support young people by:

- assisting them to understand and identify bullying behaviour as outlined in the school’s Anti-bullying Plan
- responding to incidents of bullying in a manner consistent with the school’s Anti-bullying Plan
- work collaboratively with the school to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur.

Students can expect to:

- Know that their concerns will be responded to by school staff
- Be provided with appropriate support
- Participate in learning experiences that promote positive relationships, safety, equity, and address discrimination, bullying and harassment.

Students have a responsibility to:

- Behave appropriately, respecting individual differences and diversity.
- Follow the school Anti-Bullying Plan.
- Respond to incidents of bullying according to our school Anti-bullying Plan.
- Behave as responsible bystanders.

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.
- Provide a curriculum and pedagogy that supports students to develop an understanding of bullying and its impact on individuals and the broader community.

At Balgownie Public School we recognise the role of the bystander as being involved and supportive of the bullying unless they walk away at the start or tell the bully to stop. Thus they are part of the bullying behaviour unless they intervene, walk away or tell a teacher.

Prevention

Prevention builds on the protective factors and refers to strategies specifically designed to prevent bullying behaviour such as; developing and implementing programs for bullying prevention and embedding anti-bullying messages into each curriculum area and in every year. Our school is committed to positive programs to teach students skills to protect themselves and others. The following strategies are in place at Balgownie Public School to effectively teach the skills and understandings that will minimise bullying behaviours.

These include:

- **Values Education** and social skills underpinning everything that is done at Balgownie Public. Taught through the Positive Behaviour for Success program, Our core values are 'Respect, Responsibility and Real Learning.' All staff are trained in this approach, where social skills are practised and students engage in co-operative learning activities. Staff use consistent language when talking with students in the classroom and the playground.
- **Child Protection** lessons which are undertaken every year by all classes. These include the key messages of "No, Go, Tell." when dealing with safe and unsafe situations.

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- **Personal Development and Health** lessons which are part of our weekly lesson schedule. The lessons develop protective behaviours, develop skills in dispute resolution and enhance self esteem.
- **In the Playground there are:**
 - Proactive duty teachers with a consistent approach to support student interactions.
 - Clear rules and expected playground behaviours are explicitly taught throughout the year through the Positive Behaviour for Success program.
 - Expected playground behaviours are displayed on signs around the school.
 - Large quality playground with space to play and a variety of activities to engage in.
 - Students able to borrow sports equipment at playtimes.
 - SRC and teachers organise games and activities.
 - K-6 students use the same playground together.
 - Peace keeper leaders and buddies mentor younger students.
- **School strategies that contribute to our supportive culture include –**
 - Clear school rules and expectations
 - Strong, positive school team with high expectations and skills in student welfare
 - Learning Support Team.
 - Positive Behaviour for Success Team.
 - Rewarding and recognising good behaviour and achievement.
 - Time at each staff meeting for student welfare issues.
 - Innovative welfare programs eg Reward Days.
 - leadership training for Year 6 students.
 - Peace Keepers and Buddies
- **Anti bullying lessons** where all students are involved in an annual six week program presented by the class teacher to develop effective strategies for dealing with bullying. This is reinforced throughout the

year at assemblies and in class by teachers. The following is an outline of the six week lesson structure.

Lesson 1: Bullies and Victims Students define bullying, bullies and those who can be bullied. They are taught strategies for dealing with bullying including how to STAND up for themselves. *Important: If physical bullying occurs students must tell a teacher immediately.*

S	Stay Calm
T	Try to Ignore
A	Ask them to stop!
N	Never Fight
D	Duty Teacher

Lesson 2: Standing Up for Yourself. Students are shown three methods in which they can respond to a situation where they are being provoked. This includes 'Cool/Soft/Aggro' methods. Students learn that acting assertively will be the most productive way to handle provocation.

- The **COOL** way involves making a firm request for the provocation to stop OR ignoring it and walking away.
- The **SOFT** way involves giving in and letting it continue to happen to you and showing lack of confidence.
- The **AGGRO** way involves reacting with any or all of the following behaviours:
 - Hitting, punching tripping etc.
 - Using insults and put-downs;
 - Shouting and yelling;
 - Damaging property.

Lesson 3: Telling someone to STOP annoying you.

- Stay Cool -Stand tall.
- Say their name (if you know it).
- Say firmly, and in a slightly louder voice, something like “cut it out” or “no more.” If they do it again, tell them more firmly to cut it out.

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- If they keep doing it you can ignore them, walk away or ask an adult for support.

Lesson 4: Ignoring someone who is giving you a hard time

- Stop looking at them.
- Try to keep all the expression off your face – look normal.
- Do something else or talk to others
- If the other person keeps annoying you, **STAY COOL AND WALK AWAY.**
- If they follow you and keep giving you a hard time you may ask an adult for support.

Lesson 5: Saying ‘No’- ES1 and Stage 1.

- Look in their eyes – tell them you don’t want to do it.
- Briefly say why – if it’s mean or against the rules or dangerous.
- Keep your voice friendly and calm.
- Continue to calmly say no if they continue asking you.

Lesson 5: How can I be an Everyday hero? (Stages 2 and 3)

- Extend the skill of saying “No’ to defining a bystander, the roles they play and the importance of being an effective bystander.

Lesson 6: Cyber Bullying – Stage 2 and 3.

- Passwords, acceptable communication using the internet, ethical online behaviour.
- **Defining cyber bullying and awareness that personal actions may contribute to cyber bullying.**
- **To ask for help if victimised.**

Early Intervention

Early Intervention refers to providing support before an issue emerges or escalates such as:

- developing and implementing early intervention support for students who are identified by the school as being at risk of developing long-term difficulties with social relationships.

- developing and implementing early intervention support for those students who are identified at or after enrolment as having experienced bullying or engaged in bullying behaviour.

School strategies that contribute to early intervention may include:

- Clear school rules and expectations
- Systemic social skills programs from PDHPE syllabus.
- Minor incidents or potential conflict is mediated in the playground as early as possible by staff.
- Time at each staff meeting for student welfare issues.
- Positive Behaviour for Success Team analyses data and drafts ideas for whole staff discussion .
- Learning Support Team – referrals, discussion, consultation and at times, further meetings with the school counsellor.
- Teachers, executive and Learning Support may write Individual Behaviour Plans
- Plans of action and follow up discussed with students, staff and parents where appropriate
- Counseling with staff and executive staff and social skill teaching eg anger management, reinforcing lessons taught on an individual or small group basis
- School executive discussions with parents, teachers and individuals, small groups and large groups of students .
- Proactive programs are put in place for some students to address specific needs eg resilience, Bounce Back, anger management.
- referrals to outside agencies and programs eg Cool Kids.

Response

Even with solid prevention programs, instances of bullying will still occur and that schools need to have planned responses for them. **Response refers both to the actions** of the school when an incident occurs and to the informed development of future protection, prevention, early intervention and response strategies.

- When bullying is reported, the student who is affected wants the bullying to stop and to feel safe at school. Interventions need to be matched to the particular incident of bullying and there is no 'one size fits

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all' which will 'bullyproof' our school. It is important to note, that not all hurtful behaviours are bullying, but our school addresses inappropriate behaviour whether or not it meets the definition of bullying.

The school executive, teachers or Learning Support Team will decide on the appropriate combination of interventions for the individual circumstances of bullying behaviour. No method of addressing bullying has been reported as 100% effective and no one intervention is appropriate in all circumstances of bullying. Often, more than one intervention is needed to be implemented.

It is useful to consult with the affected students about how they wish the situation to be managed. However, the school has the responsibility to manage the situation and to ensure that it is resolved. Regular updates, within the bounds of privacy legislation, will be given to parents or caregivers about the management of the incidents.

Students may tell any staff member if they feel threatened or unhappy and know they will be listened to, and incidents will be investigated fairly, effectively and promptly. Support will be provided to students who have been affected by, engaged in or witnessed bullying behaviour. Parents, carers, or other students can also tell any staff member about incidents of bullying.

At Balgownie Public School we are proactive in working with students to ensure incidents are treated promptly and fairly.

- Students are provided with support and strategies for dealing with bullying.
- Staff are role models in words and actions. Staff are consistent in approach, listen to concerns, communicate clearly about bullying, and are proactive when on duty.
- Staff deal with situations as soon as possible and identify incidences of bullying. Teachers mediate to resolve minor incidents.
- Staff allow the process of natural justice to occur and listen to all sides of the story before implementing consequences.

- Teachers report bullying incidents to appropriate Executive member if serious or not resolved and interventions are planned.
- Students may be interviewed, the incident recorded and a plan of action taken following procedural fairness principles.
- Victims of bullying provided with support, counselling and strategies for dealing with bullying.

Interventions.

The type of bullying will determine the interventions and consequences. Some interventions that may be implemented include:

- Bystander training
- Buddy systems
- Restorative practices
- Mediation
- Assertiveness training / Strengthening the victim
- Traditional disciplinary approach

Bystander Training is empowering the whole school community to recognise and respond appropriately to bullying, harassment and victimisation and behave as responsible bystanders. This intervention is a proactive strategy that trains bystander students to behave in a supportive way to students who are being bullied, to intervene where feasible or to report the incident to a teacher.

We recognise the role of the bystander as being involved and supportive of the bullying unless they walk away at the start or tell the bully to stop.

Thus they are part of the bullying behaviour unless they intervene or walk away and tell a teacher. This is explicitly told to our students as part of our Anti-Bullying strategy to teach our students to be effective bystanders. (See school website for *Anti-Bullying – How to Encourage your Child to be an Effective Bystander.*)

Buddy systems can help to promote friendship and support between older and younger peers through regular collaboration between their classes, which fosters a sense of whole-school community. Peace Keepers are also part of this system.

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Restorative practices helps the student displaying bullying behaviour to take steps to restore damaged relationships. It is when students are guided to see the consequences of their actions and the impact it has had on others. It is a directed conversation to assist students think through ways to make things right with the situation and with the victim. The students affected by the bullying may or may not be present. The student is also led through ways to not repeat the behaviour. After the restorative action has been suggested, undertaken and accepted by the victim, the situation may continue to be monitored.

Mediation assists the students involved in incidents of bullying to resolve their differences and help them find a peaceful win-win solution or compromise. Mediation is a suitable intervention when the imbalance of power between the students involved is not great and when each party has something to gain and to concede. It should always be voluntary and should never be used in cases of major disputes, serious bullying or assault.

Strengthening the victim or assertiveness training Helping and coaching students to confront a student displaying bullying behaviour assertively; to stand firm and discourage the bullying behaviour through calm and controlled language to redress the balance of perceived power. This intervention should never be the only response to bullying incidents. The behaviour of the student displaying bullying must also be addressed and support should be provided. Self esteem of the victim rises if they feel more able to address some low level bullying by themselves.

Traditional disciplinary approach Clear behaviour standards and using punishment through our Fair Discipline Policy to prevent and deter the student from repeating their behaviour. Punishment could include detention, loss of privileges, restoration of damage caused and even suspension. Research has shown that using punishment as the only intervention is not effective in preventing bullying.

Strategies to identify patterns of bullying behaviour. Incidents will be recorded electronically and notes kept on file, or by teachers. Patterns of bullying behaviour will be investigated and planned responses to these patterns will occur.

Community Awareness

Involvement of parents and carers in the school's anti-bullying policy is a vital component to the school's goal of eliminating bullying and harassment. Community involvement will include:

- Surveys seeking to gather data related to incidence of bullying.
- Public meetings to launch the Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Public information sessions to address issues related to bullying and harassment including:
 - What they can do in the event that their child is being bullied.
 - Ways of responding.
 - Strategies to identify indicators of bullying.
 - Facts and research about bullying and harassment.
 - What they can do in the event that their child is involved in bullying.

The Anti bullying Plan will be monitored for effectiveness and will be communicated to the school community through newsletters and published P and C meetings. The school will review the Anti-bullying Plan with the school community at least every three years.

Details of the school's Anti-Bullying Plan will be available on the school website and Skoolbag app.

Anti bullying brochures are available at the front office and are given to parents who are enrolling students at our school.

School procedures for major incidents

In the event of an incident involving assaults, threats, intimidation or harassment students, parents or others report incident to a teacher or school executive. The principal or their representative decides on action to be taken which may include:

- reporting to the police and/or the School Safety and Response Unit hotline on 1300 363 778.
- Contacting the Child Well being Unit or Community Services where appropriate.

Complaints The Department of Education and Communities provides a policy and guidelines for handling complaints. While most complaints should be resolved informally with the relevant employee, there are

provisions for the use of formal procedures depending on the nature and seriousness of the complaint. For more information on this policy go to:

https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/general_man/complaints/resp_sugg/PD20020051.shtml

Further details

Police Youth Liaison Officer: Alison Burke, 4226 7899

Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800

School Counsellor: Please contact school.

Principal's comment

The information in this plan is the result of consultative discussion with staff and community, and reflects the whole school approach to making our school a safe and happy place for all students, staff and community.

Aloma Stewart Principal

Martin Loxton, Jill Hockey, Cheryl Phillis and Terry McGoldrick Assistant Principals

Hugh Archer, Grace Howie, Jasmine Balkwell and Brooke Wilson School Leaders

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