



# 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.

# Coolamon Central School Anti-Bullying Plan

This plan outlines the processes for preventing and responding to student bullying in our school and reflects the *Bullying: Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying in Schools Policy* of the New South Wales Department of Education and Communities.

## Statement of purpose

We aspire for a safe and caring environment at Coolamon Central School. Every person has the right to experience positive and respectful relationships. They have the right to learn and teach in a happy and safe environment. Bullying behaviour is not acceptable at Coolamon Central School and is contrary to the school's discipline code.

This policy applies to all student bullying behaviour including cyber bullying that occurs at Coolamon Central School and outside of school hours where there is a clear and close relationship between the school and the conduct of the student.

## What is Bullying Behaviour?

- Bullying is a pattern of behaviour by one person or a group towards another, or others, which is intended to hurt, injure, embarrass, upset or cause discomfort. The behaviour is intentional, repeated, selective and uninvited.
- Bullying involves the abuse of power in relationships.

### Types of Bullying Behaviour:

- **Verbal** - including name calling, teasing, abuse, putdowns, sarcasm, insults, threats, racist, sexual and gender remarks
- **Physical** - including hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting, pushing and hair pulling.
- **Social** - including ignoring, excluding, ostracizing, alienating and making inappropriate gestures.
- **Psychological** - including spreading rumours, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions. All acts that instill a sense of fear and anxiety.
- **Cyberbullying**- bullying through information and communication technologies including malicious SMS and email messages, inappropriate use of camera phones and other IT devices, inappropriate messages, comments or photographs on social media sites (eg Facebook)

## Protection

- At Coolamon Central School we aim to create an environment where bullying is not tolerated through using a twofold approach. Preventative programs establish a climate that stops bullying behaviour and reactive programs deal with any incidences that may arise.

- All members of the school community contribute to the prevention of bullying by modelling and promoting appropriate behaviour and respectful relationships.

## Prevention and Early Intervention

Features of Coolamon Central School that deter bullying:

- School welfare and discipline policy outlining firm action and appropriate consequences;
- A school ethos that emphasizes respect for others and ourselves.
- Weekly Welfare Team meetings at which bullying prevention is a permanent agenda item;
- Liaison with feeder primary schools to identify high risk students;
- Liaison with other schools through the enrolment process to identify high risk students;
- Active supervision of students during lessons, excursions, sporting activities and breaks by staff;
- Designated Year 7 playground area for first semester of high school;
- Communication of policy and incidents (when appropriate) with staff, students, parents, other agencies;
- Cross Curriculum Anti-Bullying philosophy - information about bullying being presented in the classroom within the subject contexts; Team meetings to establish these
- Expectation of respectful interactions between staff and students.

Programs with specific Anti-bullying components include:

- Year 7/11 camp incorporating 'anti-bullying' and peer support sessions;
- Year 7 Social Development Program co-ordinated by the Welfare Team;
- Weekly Year 7 meetings;;
- Year 10 Peer Support training;
- Cyber-bullying workshops presented by Police School Liaison Officer;
- Staff professional development workshops such as H2L

## Procedures for Handling Bullying Complaints

Coolamon Central School's procedures for handling bullying complaints are based on the *Restorative Justice Approach* described by the Australian Institute of Criminology. That is the handling of bullying complaints makes it clear to the offender that their behaviour is not condoned within the school community and at the same time provides respectful support for the individuals involved. There are five principles that underpin this approach:

1. Students who bully can change their behaviour
2. Bullying behaviour is the problem, not the person
3. Harm caused must be acknowledged
4. Reparation is essential
5. Bullies and the bullied require support and care

***All students are encouraged to report any incident of bullying.***

The procedures for handling a reported incident of bullying are to be implemented on the day of the report or the next school day.

Any incidents that involve assaults, threats, weapons, illegal drugs and criminal activity **will** be reported to the School Safety and Response Hotline on **1300 363 778** and the police by the Principal or his/her delegate. Incidents must be reported as soon as possible, but within 24 hours.

Staff must report any concerns about risk of harm to a student, to the Principal or his/her delegate who will then use the appropriate tools to inform decision making, such as the online Mandatory Reporter Guide, professional judgment or specialist advice.

Advice will be sought from the Child Wellbeing Unit where there is uncertainty about whether concerns amount to risk of significant harm.

Concerns about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of children or young people which constitute a risk of significant harm will be reported to Community Services by the Principal or his/her delegate.

The Principal will contact the Child Wellbeing Unit about the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people where:

1. there are concerns about risk of harm, that do not meet the threshold of significant harm but are not trivial
2. the Mandatory Reporter Guide indicates this should be done
3. a case has been reported to Community Services and did not meet the risk of significant harm threshold
4. there is an observable pattern of cumulative harm that does not meet the threshold of significant

## **What happens if bullying occurs?**

### **In the classroom.**

1. If a student is bullied in class, they should report it to class teacher. The teacher will implement strategies to address the student concern during the lesson and then refer the allegation to the Head Teacher.
2. The Head Teacher (of the subject) and/or the classroom teacher will discuss the bullying complaint with the student and complete a *Bullying Incident Report* (RISC letter No 36). Incident to be recorded on RISC.

3. The Head Teacher (of the subject) and/or the classroom teacher will discuss the bullying complaint with the alleged bully (separately) and they will be given the opportunity to give their side of the story. The *Interview Sheet: Bullying Behaviour* (RISC letter No. 37) will be used during this process. Interview to be recorded on RISC.
4. If the allegation is substantiated the alleged bully with the assistance of the Head Teacher will complete and sign a *Student Agreement to Cease Bullying Behavior Contract* (RISC letter No.34). Contract to be recorded on RISC.
5. The student engaged in bullying behaviour will be informed of the following.
  - Bullying is unacceptable and must stop immediately.
  - A record will be made on their personal file by the Head Teacher using RISC.
  - The Student Adviser and Deputy Principal will be informed.
  - A letter will be sent home to parents by the Head Teacher (RISC letter No. 35).
  - Further incidents of bullying behaviour will be handled by the Deputy Principal and will result in a formal warning of suspension for aggressive behaviour.
6. The Head Teacher will complete the *Procedure Checklist: Handling A Complaint of Bullying Behaviour* (RISC letter No. 33) to ensure that all steps are completed
7. All documentation is to be handed to the Year Advisor who will refer the incident to the School Counsellor and contact the parent of the student being bullied.
8. The Year Advisor will follow up with both students during the next week. Documentation to be filed in student files.
9. Any further concerns will be referred to the Deputy Principal who will interview the alleged bully. Parents will be contacted and formal written warning of suspension may be given.

### **In The Playground:**

1. If you are bullied in the playground, report it to the teacher on duty. The teacher will inform the Head Teacher on duty.



2. The Head Teacher (on duty) and/or the play ground duty teacher will discuss the bullying complaint with the student and complete a *Bullying Incident Report* (RISC letter No 36). Incident to be recorded on RISC.
3. The Head Teacher and/or the teacher will discuss the bullying complaint with the alleged bully (separately) and they will be given the opportunity to give their side of the story. The *Interview Sheet: Bullying Behaviour* (RISC letter No. 37) will be used during this process. Interview to be recorded on RISC.
4. If the allegation is substantiated the alleged bully with the assistance of the Head Teacher will complete and sign a *Student Agreement to Cease Bullying Behavior Contract* (RISC letter No.34). Contract to be recorded on RISC.
5. The student engaged in bullying behaviour will be informed of the following.
  - Bullying is unacceptable and must stop immediately.
  - A record will be made on their personal file by the Head Teacher using RISC.
  - The Student Adviser and Deputy Principal will be informed.
  - A letter will be sent home to parents by the Head Teacher (RISC letter No. 35).
  - Further incidents of bullying behaviour will be handled by the Deputy Principal and will result in a formal warning of suspension for aggressive behaviour.
6. The Head Teacher will complete the *Procedure Checklist: Handling A Complaint of Bullying Behaviour* (RISC letter No. 33) to ensure that all steps are completed
7. All documentation is to be handed to the Year Advisor who will refer the incident to the School Counsellor and contact the parent of the student being bullied.
8. The Year Advisor will follow up with both students during the next week. Documentation to be filed in student files.
9. Any further concerns will be referred to the Deputy Principal who will interview the alleged bully. Parents will be contacted and formal written warning of suspension may be given.

### **What will happen if the bullying does not stop?**

1. Report the repeated bullying to the same Teacher, Head Teacher or Year Adviser that handled the first report or report the bullying to the Deputy Principal.
2. The Head Teacher, Year Adviser or Deputy Principal will ask the student to fill in a *Bullying Incident Report*.
3. The Deputy Principal will interview the alleged bully will complete an *Interview Sheet Bullying Behaviour*.

4. Head Teacher Welfare will phone parent/guardian of the student being bullied and the School Counsellor will be notified .
5. If continued bullying is substantiated, the bully will receive an official warning of suspension for aggressive behaviour.
6. The student engaged in bullying behaviour will complete the *Addressing Bullying Behaviour Booklet* and make a Plan to change their behaviour. Parents or carers are to sign the *Addressing Bullying Behaviour Booklet* and the booklet is to be returned to the Deputy Principal.
7. A copy of all documentation will go to the relevant Year Adviser to be filed in the student files.
8. A note will be made on the personal file of the student engaged in bullying behaviour by the Deputy Principal (RISC notification).
9. A conflict resolution mediation meeting with both students may be organised by and with the support of the Deputy Principal, Year Advisor or School Counsellor.
10. The Deputy Principal will follow up the student engaged in bullying behaviour and check progress on their plan in one week.
11. The *Procedural Checklist Handling a Complaint of Bullying Behaviour* is to be completed by the Deputy Principal.
12. Further substantiated bullying will result in suspension.

### **What should students do who witness bullying?**

1. Support the student being bullied with an “I” statement. (eg. “I do not like the way you are treating Mary.”)
2. Students are encouraged to be firm and to not yell or argue.
3. Report the incident to a teacher.
4. The teacher will get the witness to fill out a *Bullying Incident Report* and will follow the relevant procedures outlined above.

### **Appeals /Complaints**

All appeals and complaints about the management of a reported incident of bullying will be referred to the Principal who will use the *Complaints Handling Policy* as required in all learning and working environments of the Department of Education and Communities.

## Evaluation

- The Principal will seek feedback through the Welfare Team and the P&C re bullying issues and implementation of the school Anti-Bullying Plan.
- The Deputy Principals will monitor and review frequency and seriousness of bullying notifications through accessing RISC data at the end of each term.
- The SRC Coordinator and Year Advisers will consult with various student groups to monitor and evaluate bullying issues.
- The school Anti-Bullying Plan development team will be responsible for annually reviewing the Anti-Bullying plan and making recommendations to amend it with the aim of reducing instances of bullying. Feedback from P&C, SRC and the Welfare Team will be used in this process.

## Additional Resources and Contacts

**Nathan VERINDER** - School/Youth Liaison, Tweed/Byron LAC, 07 55360955 [veri1nat@police.nsw.gov.au](mailto:veri1nat@police.nsw.gov.au)

**Cybersmart** - Cybersmart provides activities, resources and practical advice to help young kids, kids, teens and parents safely enjoy the online world. <http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/>

**Kids Help Line** - Kids Help Line is Australia's only free, confidential and anonymous, 24 hour telephone and online counselling service specifically for young people aged between 5 and 18. The 24 hour, toll free telephone number is 1800 55 1800. [www.kidshelp.com.au](http://www.kidshelp.com.au)

**Mindmatters** - Mindmatters is a program to support Australian secondary schools in promoting and protecting the social and emotional wellbeing of members of school communities. <http://online.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters/index.htm>

**Racism. No Way!** - *Racism. No Way!* is designed to assist school communities develop an understanding of the nature of racism. It provides practical information and strategies to help address racism in the learning environment. [www.racismnoway.com.au](http://www.racismnoway.com.au)

**Reach Out!** - Reach Out! is a web-based service that assists young people to help themselves through tough times. The aim of the service is to create opportunities for young people to help themselves and to help others. [www.reachout.com.au](http://www.reachout.com.au)

## Principal's comment



This plan was reviewed and updated Term 1, 2012 by the following team:

- **Principal**
- **Deputy Principal**
- **Deputy Principal**
- **Head Teacher Welfare**
- **Year Advisor**
- **SRC Coordinator**
- **Parent**

## **School contact information**

Coolamon Central School