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Student Discipline in Government Schools

Anti-bullying Plan for Schools



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1 Abstract

This Plan sets out the requirements for dealing with bullying behaviour in NSW government schools. It includes operational guidelines and a framework for schools to use to develop and implement an Anti-bullying Plan with specific strategies for identifying, reporting and dealing with bullying behaviours. The Anti-bullying Plan is a key part of every school's planning for student wellbeing and effective learning. It complements each school's Student Welfare and Discipline Policies.

2 Applicability

All government schools.

3 Superseded Documents

Anti-bullying Plan for Schools (2005), PD/2004/0050/V001.

4 Context

- 4.0.1 Public schools are inclusive environments, where diversity is affirmed and individual differences are respected.
- 4.0.2 Quality education is provided for students to meet their learning needs in a secure, ordered and supportive environment.
- 4.0.3 The focus of quality education is for students to learn and grow with confidence. Students develop best in schools where teaching and learning occur in a context of student welfare.
- 4.0.4 The wellbeing, safety and health of students inform school policies, programs and practices.
- 4.0.5 Partnership with parents, caregivers, students and the wider community is central to the success of this process.

5 Plan Statement

- 5.0.1 Schools exist in a society where intimidation, harassment and victimisation occur. Bullying must be taken seriously and is not acceptable in any form.
- 5.0.2 Students have the right to expect that they will spend the school day free from the fear of bullying, harassment, intimidation and victimisation.

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5.0.3 Bullying:

- ❖ devalues, isolates and frightens
- ❖ affects an individual's ability to achieve
- ❖ has long-term effects on those engaging in bullying behaviour, those who are the subjects of bullying behaviour and the onlookers or bystanders.

5.0.4 Teachers, students, parents, caregivers and members of the wider community have a responsibility to work together to address bullying.

5.0.5 Every school must develop and implement an Anti-bullying Plan that:

- ❖ includes a plan statement that is consistent with the School Discipline Code or School Rules and articulates clearly that bullying is not acceptable
- ❖ includes a definition that captures all forms of bullying, including verbal, physical, social and psychological
- ❖ includes a statement of purpose that outlines individual and shared responsibilities of students, parents, caregivers and teachers when dealing with bullying behaviour
- ❖ provides information for students, parents, caregivers and teachers to identify bullying behaviours
- ❖ includes strategies that will be utilised by the school to effectively deal with bullying behaviour
- ❖ provides students, parents, caregivers and teachers with clear procedures to report bullying
- ❖ includes strategies for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the Plan.

5.0.6 Schools have the responsibility to develop collaboratively and promote widely the school Anti-bullying Plan, so that shared expectations are communicated effectively.

5.1 Bullying Behaviour

5.1.1 Bullying can be defined as intentional, repeated behaviour by an individual or group of individuals that causes distress, hurt or undue pressure.

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5.1.2 Bullying involves the abuse of power in relationships. Bullying can involve all forms of harassment (including sex, race, disability, homosexuality or transgender), humiliation, domination, intimidation and victimisation of others.

5.1.3 **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.

5.2 A Statement of Purpose

5.2.1 Students attend school to participate in quality education that will help them to become self directed, lifelong learners who can create a positive future for themselves and the wider community.

5.2.2 Any inappropriate behaviour that gets in the way of teaching and learning at the school and interferes with the wellbeing of students cannot be accepted.

5.2.3 Students, teachers, parents, caregivers and members of the wider school community have a shared responsibility to create a safe and happy environment, free from all forms of bullying.

5.2.4 Students, teachers, parents, caregivers and members of the wider school community can expect:

- ❖ that students will be safe at school, free from fear of bullying, harassment, intimidation and victimisation
- ❖ to be involved in the collaborative development of the school Anti-bullying Plan
- ❖ to know what is expected of them and others in relation to the Anti-bullying Plan
- ❖ that all students will be provided with appropriate support when bullying occurs.

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5.2.5 Students, teachers, parents, caregivers and members of the wider school community have a responsibility to:

- ❖ promote positive relationships that respect and accept individual differences and diversity within the whole school community
- ❖ contribute to the development of the Anti-bullying Plan and support it through words and actions
- ❖ actively work together to resolve incidents of bullying behaviour when they occur.

5.2.6 Each group within the school community has a specific role in preventing and dealing with bullying.

5.2.7 Students can expect to:

- ❖ know that their concerns will be responded to by school staff
- ❖ be provided with appropriate support (for both the subjects of and those responsible for the behaviour)
- ❖ participate in learning experiences that address key understandings and skills relating to positive relationships, safety, gender equity, discrimination, bullying and harassment. These experiences will be guided by the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education syllabuses and other Key Learning Areas.

5.2.8 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 their school Anti-bullying Plan.

5.2.9 Parents and caregivers have a responsibility to:

- ❖ support their children in all aspects of their learning
- ❖ 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
- ❖ support all students of the school to deal effectively with bullying through the strategies of the Anti-bullying Plan.

5.2.10 Schools have a responsibility to:

- ❖ develop an Anti-bullying Plan through consultation with parents, caregivers, students and the community, which clearly identifies both the behaviours that are unacceptable and the strategies for dealing with bullying in the classroom and playground
- ❖ inform students, parents, caregivers and the community about the School Discipline Code or School Rules and Anti-bullying Plan
- ❖ provide students with strategies to respond positively to incidents of bullying behaviour, including responsibilities as bystanders or observers
- ❖ provide parents, caregivers and students with clear information on strategies that promote appropriate behaviour, and the consequences for inappropriate behaviour
- ❖ communicate to parents and caregivers that they have an important role to play in resolving incidents of bullying behaviour involving their children
- ❖ follow up complaints of bullying, harassment, intimidation and victimisation

5.2.11 Teachers have a responsibility to:

- ❖ respect and support students in all aspects of their learning
- ❖ model appropriate behaviour
- ❖ respond in an appropriate and timely manner to incidents of bullying according to the school Anti-bullying Plan.

6 Procedures and Standards

All schools must have strategies in place to prevent and deal with bullying.

6.1 Strategies to Prevent Bullying

6.1.1 Strategies must be in place in all schools to effectively teach the skills and understandings that will lead to eliminating bullying behaviours.

6.1.2 These strategies must:

- ❖ be taught across key learning areas
- ❖ be reinforced consistently through school practices that promote respectful relationships.

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6.1.3 These strategies will:

- ❖ empower the whole school community to recognise and respond appropriately to bullying, harassment and victimisation
- ❖ contribute to the general health and wellbeing of all students.

6.2 Strategies to Deal with Bullying

6.2.1 Schools must deal with bullying quickly and effectively.

6.2.2 Strategies for dealing with bullying must be described clearly in the Anti-bullying Plan and implemented consistently by school staff.

6.2.3 Strategies for dealing with bullying must be linked to the School Discipline Policy and encompass the range of options available to deal with unacceptable behaviours, including suspension and expulsion.

6.2.4 In dealing with bullying behaviour, schools need to recognise the repeated and recurring nature of bullying and have mechanisms in place to identify patterns of repeated offending.

6.2.5 Students, their parents and caregivers must be encouraged to be proactive in dealing with bullying, so that appropriate support can be provided to those students involved in any incident.

6.2.6 The Anti-bullying Plan must include specific strategies for:

- ❖ reporting (by students, parents, caregivers and teachers)
- ❖ intervening (by students, parents, caregivers, teachers and other school staff)
- ❖ accessing help and support (by students, parents and caregivers)
- ❖ communicating Departmental appeal procedures (for students, parents and caregivers)
- ❖ professional learning (for teachers and other school staff).

7 Responsibilities and Delegations

Principals are responsible for leading the development, implementation and evaluation of the Anti-bullying Plan and for ensuring that the Plan is readily accessible to all members of the school community.

8 Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Requirements

- 8.0.1 The Anti-bullying Plan must be reviewed on a regular basis, so that all members of the school community are aware of and remain committed to it. The Plan should reflect the current teaching and learning practices at the school. The review will provide opportunities for reflection and renewal.
- 8.0.2 Strategies to review the school Anti-bullying Plan include:
- ❖ gathering and analysing all relevant information on the nature and extent of bullying, harassment and victimisation, including data that highlights patterns and trends, such as suspension data
 - ❖ evaluating the extent to which the school's Anti-bullying Plan has been effective in addressing bullying, harassment and victimisation and promoting a safe and secure environment.
- 8.0.3 Schools should develop and implement a revised Plan, if necessary, following a review.
- 8.0.4 Schools should continue to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Plan on an ongoing basis.

9 Associated Documents and Forms

- ❖ [*The Student Welfare Policy*](#)
(NSW Department of Education and Training, 1996).
- ❖ [*Occupational Health and Safety Policy*](#)
(NSW Department of Education and Training, 2004).
- ❖ [*Protecting and Supporting Children and Young People: Revised Procedures*](#)
(NSW Department of Education and Training, 2000).
- ❖ [*Complaints Handling Policy*](#)
(NSW Department of Education and Training, 2006).
- ❖ [*Code of Conduct*](#)
(NSW Department of Education and Training, 2004).

10 For Further Information

Contact the Coordinator, In School Programs and Suspension Centres on telephone number (02) 9266 8416 or Coordinator, Behaviour Initiatives, on telephone number (02) 9244 5192.

Support Material

1 Anti-bullying Plan Framework - A Check List for Schools

Keynotes	A framework for the school Anti-bullying Plan	Resources
Policy statement against bullying	<p>An encapsulating statement that reflects equity, diversity and acceptance in the school community.</p> <p>This statement must be consistent with the School Discipline Code and articulate clearly that bullying is not acceptable in NSW government schools.</p>	<p><i>Student Welfare Policy</i></p> <p><i>Values in NSW Public Schools</i></p>
Defining bullying behaviour	<p>A definition that captures all forms of bullying, including verbal, physical, social and psychological.</p> <p>Schools need to consider all forms of communication and interaction currently occurring within their school community.</p>	<p><i>www.bullyingnoway.com.au</i></p> <p><i>www.det.nsw.edu.au/antibullying</i></p>
A statement of purpose	<p>Individual and shared responsibilities of students, parents, caregivers and teachers when dealing with bullying behaviour must be outlined in the school statement of purpose.</p> <p>A shared responsibility between all school community members in managing bullying must be clearly articulated.</p> <p>Underpinning this statement of purpose is the need for schools to promote respectful relationships within the whole school community.</p>	<p><i>Revised Resources for Teaching Against Violence</i></p> <p><i>Anti-bullying: Best Practice in Schools</i></p> <p><i>Social Responsibility Years K-6; Years 7-12</i></p> <p><i>The Playground: Best Practice in Primary Schools</i></p> <p><i>Countering Discrimination</i></p>

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<p>Managing bullying</p>	<p>The school Anti-bullying Plan will provide information for students, parents, caregivers and teachers to identify bullying behaviours.</p> <p>Strategies that will be utilised by the school to effectively deal with bullying behaviour will be clearly articulated, including the professional learning of teachers and other school staff.</p> <p>Students, parents, caregivers and teachers will be provided with clear procedures to report bullying behaviour.</p> <p>Schools have the responsibility to collaboratively develop and widely communicate information on the school Anti-bullying Plan.</p>	<p><i>A Partnership Encouraging Effective Learning (APEEL)</i></p> <p><u>Child Protection Curriculum</u></p> <p><i>A Fair Go for All (K-2)</i></p> <p><u>MindMatters</u></p> <p><i>Strategies for Safer Schools</i></p> <p><u>Complaints Handling Policy</u></p>
<p>Monitoring and evaluating</p>	<p>Schools need to collect and analyse appropriate data on the nature and extent of bullying in their school.</p> <p>Schools will identify indicators to assess the effectiveness of the strategies, programs, and procedures they have in place to address bullying.</p> <p>Schools will have ongoing monitoring procedures in place.</p>	<p><u>Quality of School Life Survey</u></p>

2 Resources to Support the Anti-bullying Plan

❖ *A Fair Go for All*

(NSW Department of Education and Training, 1996).

A set of resources for Kindergarten, Year 1 and Year 2 designed to assist schools in effective teaching about positive relationships and personal safety.

❖ *Anti-bullying: Best practice in schools*

(NSW Department of Education and Training, 1999).

Outlines successful programs in primary and secondary schools that have been effective in minimising and dealing with bullying behaviour.

❖ Australian Government Attorney General's Department

The following resources provided by the Australian Government are directed towards addressing bullying among younger children and are intended to help teachers and parents. Two booklets are provided:

- [*Bullying Among Young Children - A Guide for Parents*](#)
- [*Bullying Among Young Children - A Guide for Teachers and Carers*](#)

The booklets provide useful advice to parents, teachers and other carers on recognising changes in moods and behaviours that are associated with bullying. They also provide strategies to help young people who are perpetrators of, or victims of, bullying behaviour.

❖ *A Partnership Encouraging Effective Learning (APEEL)*.

APEEL is a program to help build a positive partnership between home and school. APEEL focuses on the acquisition of interpersonal skills by students in their early years of schooling. It consists of three modules:

1. APEEL: Teacher Training Module – a workshop to inform teachers about the program.
2. APEEL: Student Lesson Module – lesson plans for Stage 1 students to develop social skills, with assessment proforma and parent observation records.
3. APEEL: Parent Module – a series of four workshops for parents of students in the early years, and three workshops for parents of primary students.

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- ❖ *Child Protection Education: Curriculum materials to support teaching and learning in Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (1997-1998).*

A NSW Department of Education and Training set of five print resources for Stages 1 to 5. These resource materials aim to assist students to develop skills in:

- recognising and responding to unsafe situations
- seeking assistance effectively
- establishing and maintaining non-coercive relationships and strengthening attitudes and values related to equality, respect and responsibility.

- ❖ [Code of Conduct](#)
(NSW Department of Education and Training, 1997).

The Code of Conduct clarifies the standards of behaviour that are expected of DET staff in the performance of their duties. It gives guidance in areas where staff need to make personal and ethical decisions.

- ❖ *Countering Discrimination: Support materials for schools*
(NSW Department of Education and Training, 2000).

Focuses on ways schools can improve the personal safety and well-being of students and staff. It provides clarification of the term discrimination, and strategies and resource materials for school communities to counter discrimination.

- ❖ [Complaints Handling Policy](#)
(NSW Department of Education and Training, 2006).

Responding to Suggestions, Complaints and Allegations Procedures sets out a framework for a professional response to suggestions, complaints and allegations leading to improvements and creating confidence in the outcome. It applies to complaints about discrimination and racism. It does not apply to appeals against suspension and expulsion.

- ❖ [MindMatters: A mental health promotion resource for secondary schools](#)

A nationally developed program which uses a whole school approach to mental health promotion. Every secondary school received a kit in 2002. The kit contains a number of booklets including A Whole School Approach for Dealing with Bullying and Harassment.

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❖ *Quality of School Life Survey*

The ACER School Life Survey (primary school version) consists of 40 statements about school to which students are asked to indicate their level of agreement on a four-point likert scale from agree to disagree. The items encompass a number of different aspects of school life and form seven clusters or scales.

The clusters or scales are:

- general satisfaction that is sometimes called positive affect and reflects favourable feelings about school as whole
- negative affect refers to negative feelings about school
- achievement reflects a sense of confidence in ones ability to be successful in school
- opportunity represents a belief in the relevance of schooling for the future
- teachers refers to a feeling about the adequacy of the interaction between teachers and students
- social integration reflects a sense of learning about getting along with other people
- adventure represents a sense of self-motivation in learning and that learning is enjoyable for its own sake.

❖ *Revised Resources for Teaching Against Violence*
(NSW Department of Education and Training, 1995).

Provides schools with information on current social manifestations of violence. The resource focuses on bullying, domestic violence, homophobia and sex-based harassment and assists schools to develop strategies to deal with these issues.

❖ *Strategies for Safer Schools*
(NSW Department of Education and Training, 1995-1996).

Extends the knowledge, skills and strategies of teachers and school community members in the management of student behaviour. It consists of three phases:

- phase one – provides a framework for gaining commitment from the whole school community to a behaviour management strategy
- phase two – organised into 13 units, with three workshops per unit. One unit focuses on bullying, providing support to schools in developing whole school policies and practices to minimise bullying
- phase three – includes five additional units, with the focus on managing problem behaviours.

❖ *The Playground: Best practice in primary schools*
(NSW Department of Education and Training, 1999).

Provides information on a range of policies and programs used in primary schools which have been successful in making playgrounds safe and happy places.

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❖ [The Student Welfare Policy](#)

(NSW Department of Education and Training, 1996).

A framework for school communities to review student welfare, determine key issues for action and develop and implement student welfare actions and initiatives. It contains sections on effective learning and teaching, positive climate and good discipline, community participation and responsibilities of school personnel, regional office and state office staff.

❖ www.bullyingnoway.com.au

The Bullying. No Way! website has been developed in collaboration with other government and non-government authorities from the Commonwealth, States and Territories. It showcases strategies that have proven to be successful in increasing safety and reducing bullying and harassment in schools throughout Australia. NSW schools are featured on this site.

❖ www.det.nsw.edu.au/antibullying

The NSW Department of Education and Training provides information and examples of what schools are already doing to address bullying behaviour on its website. The content is located under Public Schools NSW – Supporting Students – Student Wellbeing – Anti-bullying.

❖ www.kidscape.org.uk/

Kidscape provides practical skills and resources to prevent bullying for children and young people under the age of 16.