



Education &
Communities

Anti-bullying Plan



Connect
Respect
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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 and reflects the *Bullying: Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying in Schools Policy* of the New South Wales Department of Education and Communities.

This plan will be presented to staff and parents in draft form so that all views can be taken into account before issuing the final plan. An ongoing process of evaluation will continue to involve all parties.

<u>DEVELOPMENT</u> <i>Term 2 2017</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff to develop draft plan. • School Council and P & C to review draft plan. • Parents to be informed via Grapevine and invited to comment. • Developed plan to be ratified by staff, School Council and/or P & C.
<u>IMPLEMENTATION</u> <i>Term 3 2017</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation will be a whole school responsibility. • Embedded in classroom teaching and learning programs. • Introduce playground 'Anti- Bully Station • Build into school Student Leadership Programs • Plan acknowledged in annual School Enrolment Handbook and Casual Teacher Handbook. • Parents to be informed annually of the plan via the Grapevine. • Plan to be uploaded onto school website.
<u>EVALUATION</u> <i>Annual and ongoing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The VPS Anti-Bullying Plan will be evaluated and reviewed annually for DEC updates. • An annual survey associated with bullying will be distributed to staff, students and parents. • The results of this survey will be used to determine school best practice for the coming year. • Results and strategies will be communicated to the P & C, included in a school Grapevine and

	published in the ASR available to all parents via the school website.
<u>REVIEW</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The plan will be formally reviewed every three years as part of the annual evaluation process with findings published in the ASR and used to direct policy review and changes.

Statement of Purpose

Valentine Public School has an inclusive environment, where diversity is affirmed and individual differences are respected. Quality education is provided for students to meet their needs in a secure, reverential and supportive school environment. The welfare of our students is at the core of our Program Achieve 'pencil' initiative and is deeply embedded into school policies, programs and practices.

Unfortunately, schools exist in a society where intimidation and harassment occur. At Valentine Public School bullying is taken seriously and is not acceptable in any form. Our students have the right to expect that they will spend the school day in a safe, happy environment free from the fear of bullying, harassment and intimidation. As a school community we have a shared responsibility to uphold such an environment.

Protection

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.

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

Definition of Bullying

Bullying can be defined as intentional, repeated behaviour by an individual or group of individuals that causes distress, hurt or undue pressure. Bullying involves the abuse of power in relationships. Bullying can involve all forms of harassment (including sex, race, disability, homosexuality or transgender), humiliation, domination and intimidation of others.

Bullying behaviour can be:

- **verbal** e.g. name calling, teasing, abuse, putdowns, sarcasm, insults, threats;
- **physical** e.g. hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting;
- **social** e.g. ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating, making inappropriate gestures or
- **psychological** e.g. spreading rumours, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions, malicious SMS and email messages, inappropriate use of camera phones and phones in general.

Roles and Responsibilities

Students, teachers, parents, caregivers and members of the wider Valentine 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 and
- build resilience in students to deal with difficult or challenging situations.

Students can expect to:

- know that their concerns will be responded to by school staff;
- be provided with appropriate support (for both the victims of and those responsible for the behaviour) and

- take part 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 syllabus and the Program Achieve initiative.

Students have a responsibility to:

- behave appropriately, respecting individual differences and diversity;
- follow the school Anti-Bullying Plan and
- respond to incidents of bullying according to the school Anti-Bullying Plan.

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 and
- respond to incidents of bullying according to the school Anti-Bullying Plan.

Teachers have a responsibility to:

- respect and support students in all aspects of their learning;
- model appropriate behaviour at times;
- teach anti-bullying and bystander bullying lessons annually and
- respond in an appropriate and timely manner to incidents of bullying according to the school Anti-Bullying Plan.

The Principal and Executives have a responsibility to:

- lead the development, implementation and evaluation of the Anti-Bullying Plan and
- ensure the plan is readily accessible to all members of the school community.

Four Point Plan

Valentine Public School has developed a four-point plan to combat bullying, which includes:

1. Prevention
2. Early Intervention
3. Intervention / Response
4. Post Intervention

Prevention

Prevention begins with the maintenance of a positive school climate that acknowledges and promotes the fact that bullying is and will not be tolerated within our school community.

This will be achieved by:

- an understanding (by students, parents and staff) that bullying is intentional, repeated behaviour by an individual or group of individuals that causes distress, hurt or undue pressure. It is not an isolated incident;
- an assurance that students know and understand what behaviour is acceptable within our school (Student Wellbeing and Discipline Policy);
- highly visible posters that identify what bullying is, the different types of bullying and strategies for dealing with bullying when it occurs;
- K-6 lessons that focus on the forms of bullying and how to deal with issues when they arise; embedded in PBL Framework.
- teaching students the key understandings and skills relating to positive relationships, safety, gender equity, discrimination, bullying and harassment;

- a continued focus on promoting positive behaviour and values through the Positive Behaviour for Learning. Encouraging resilience, life skills, social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and communication skills;
- introduction of a Peer Support program (Term 2 six week focus on Bullying and Term 3 six week focus on Resilience);
- learning about Bystander Bullying behaviour and discussing implications of such behaviour;
- students feeling comfortable to report incidents of bullying to either the 'Anti- Bully Station' which is manned by Year 6 students or directly to staff members and also feeling assured that their concerns will be taken seriously;
- community awareness and input relating to anti-bullying, its characteristics and the school's programs and response (e.g. Grapevines, parent forums, information sessions – Cyberbullying)
- professional development for all staff in relation to bullying and the strategies to counteract it;
- staff commitment to being alert and observant for acts of bullying in the classroom or playground and dealing with incidents as they occur.

Early Intervention

The school will implement strategies for students who are identified as being at risk of developing long term difficulties with social relationships and those students who identified at or after enrolment as having previously experienced bullying or engaged in bullying behaviours.

Such strategies include:

- parent nomination at the time of enrolment. The Principal will enquire for information about prior accounts of bullying;
- the student's previous school will be contacted prior to enrolment and requested to identify any issues around bullying;
- the Learning Support Team will assist in the identification of students either at risk of being bullied or at risk engaging in bullying type behaviours;

- social skills groups and programs (LST referrals) may be accessed;
- Kinder Orientation Programs will inform parents of school policy and procedures and
- the School Counsellor service may be accessed for advice by staff or parent nomination.

Any student(s) of concern are discussed at Executive meetings and staff are made aware of situations at weekly whole staff Communication meetings. Subsequent plans to prevent and/or deal with particular instances of bullying are identified. Minutes are distributed to each staff member via email.

Intervention / Response

All stakeholders expect that complaints of bullying, harassment and intimidation are followed up quickly and efficiently.

Reporting

By students

Report acts of bullying (towards themselves or others to Anti-Bullying Station in playground, class teacher or duty teacher, Executive or Principal. All students must be assured that they are safe and that only by speaking up can the behaviours be stopped.

By parents and caregivers

Notify a teacher, Executive or Principal of acts of bullying that were reported or witnessed by themselves or their children.

By teachers

Notify the Executive or Principal of acts of bullying that were reported or witnessed.

Investigating

All reported incidents of bullying will be investigated by a member of the School Executive within 24 hours of notification. A formal record of the

investigation will be taken and a copy will be provided to the Principal to be kept on file.

Once bullying is identified the school will:

1. *Interview all parties involved (the bully, the victim and any witnesses) and fully document details.*
2. *Notify parents of incident within one day of the investigation. This may be in the form of an 'Initial/Second/Third Notification of Bullying Behaviour' letter or direct phone call (depending on the severity).*
3. *Consideration as to why the bullying occurred (e.g. 'the bigger picture' or contributing factors).*
4. *Both bully and victim to be offered assistance and support.*
5. *The Executive will follow the school's **Student Wellbeing and Discipline Policy** and DEC policy with regard to the consequences for bullying behaviours.*
6. *Possible suspension may occur.*
7. *If required develop behaviour modification programs, seeking the advice of the School Counsellor or other agency support.*
8. *A meeting of relevant persons to be convened following identification of on-going bullying behaviour. This meeting may involve some or all of the following: Principal, Deputy Principal, Grade Supervisor, Classroom Teacher, Learning Support Team members, School Counsellor, parents and students. All issues relevant to the behaviour of the student(s) will be considered.*

For serious bullying behaviours, the DEC School Safety and Response Unit will be called and the area School Education Director informed. Such instances are those in which physical injury necessitating medical treatment has been necessary or where student/staff safety may be compromised. In the most serious of cases, the school will call the Police immediately.

Where a student's wellbeing is a concern staff/parents/community member should raise their concerns with the Principal. The Principal will then apply the Mandatory Reporter Guide to the situation before calling the Child Wellbeing Unit.

The school will contact the SED and DEC Media Unit for any instances in which media involvement may be likely to occur. A Serious Incident Form will be communicated to the SED for serious instances of bullying. Immediate student suspension will occur for serious incidents of bullying.

Post Intervention

If a situation remains unresolved there are avenues for feedback or complaint. Complaints, suggestions and other feedback help staff to meet expectations, remedy problems and improve situations. The concerns of the school are also important.

Procedures to enable concerns to be dealt with quickly and fairly are part of sound management practice. They help to improve communication, trust, motivation and productivity.

If a student is suspended, parents are able to appeal the decision as per DEC *Suspension and Expulsion of School Students - Procedures* which is provided to parents with letter notifying of suspension.

Attempts will be made to resolve matters at the school level in the first instance. If agreement cannot be reached, parents would be made aware of procedures outlined in the policy "Responding to Suggestions, Complaints and Allegations" PD/2002/0051/V001 or on the DEC website: www.det.nsw.edu.au/complaints/.

Valentine school endeavours to promote behaviours and understandings that lead to a climate where students feel safe from the threat of bullying. To identify patterns of behaviour that may be of concern and need to be addressed, the school uses data recorded and collected in playground management folders (Ground Station Zero) and on SENTRAL (a student

welfare data base). Data is analysed by the executive and where necessary system changes are made or small groups are targeted for support.

Advice to be given to students who are being bullied

The student should be encouraged to:

STAND

Stay calm

Try to ignore

Ask them to stop

Never fight

Detail to a teacher

Advice to be given to students who know someone else is being bullied

Students are made aware that witnesses to bullying have a very powerful role to play. Early intervention can defuse conflict situations before bullying sets in or becomes out of hand.

The student should be encouraged to:

- if possible intervene as the bullying occurs by telling the bully to stop;
- refuse to join in with the bullying;
- support the student who is being bullied and
- tell an adult if you are concerned about the bullying – it is your right and responsibility to report.

Professional Learning

For teachers and other school staff:

- Staff will be made aware of current policies and procedures relating to Bullying. All Staff will receive an annual update on DEC Anti-Bullying Policies and Procedures. A mandatory training register will be kept by the Principal.
- Staff Meetings, Communication Meetings and Learning Support Team Meetings will be used for this purpose on a needs basis. New staff will be provided with access to school policies.
- New resources from DEC will be made available to staff.
- Online DEC resources will be accessed and linked on the school Staff Server.
- Peer Support Training will occur for all teaching staff.
- All staff will have the opportunity to participate in professional training each year.
- Each year staff will review annual survey data around bullying and determine appropriate strategies to recommend to the parent body for the coming year.

Additional Information

Police Youth Liaison Officer – Vanessa Ell- Belmont Police
 Department of Community Services – 133627
 Child Well Being Unit –
 Department of Education and Communities Area Office – 49043900
 Department of Education and Communities Regional Office - 49043900
 School Safety and Response Unit – 1300 363 778
 Local Police Station – Belmont

Principal's Comment

I hereby certify that this draft document has been developed in consultation with the staff and will be presented to the parents of Valentine Public

The Anti-Bullying Plan – NSW Department of Education and Communities – Valentine Public School

School. The success of Anti-bullying strategies will be gauged through annual surveys of staff, parents and students. The content will be reviewed every three years as part of the school strategic planning. The Valentine Public School community operates until a 'zero tolerance' for bullying.

Mrs Lee Saurins
 Principal

17th April 2017

In collaboration with:

Leigh Rich- Deputy Principal

Lisa Monaghan- Deputy Principal

Karen Faulkner –Assistant Principal

Tracey Adams- Jones – Assistant Principal

Trish Nicholls– Assistant Principal

Nic Lawson – Rel Assistant Principal

Amy Kurtz- Rel Assistant Principal

Linda Schrader – P&C President...and P&C members

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