Anti-bullying Plan
Murwillumbah South Infants 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:
- protect 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.

Murwillumbah South Infants School encourages an inclusive environment, where diversity is affirmed and individual differences are respected. Quality education is provided for students to meet their learning needs in a secure, ordered and supportive school environment. Partnerships with students, parents, staff and the wider community are considered central to the success of addressing bullying when it occurs in our school community.

- Parents and staff surveyed on their understandings of bullying.
- Student focus groups held discussing bullying.
- Surveys results were analysed resulting in a plan being implemented.
- This anti-bullying plan will be reviewed at least every three years in consultation with the school community.

Statement of purpose

NSW public schools are inclusive environments, where diversity is affirmed and individual differences are respected. Schools exist in a society where intimidation and harassment occur. Bullying must be taken seriously and is not accepted in any form. Students have the right to expect that they will spend their school day free from fear of bullying, harassment and intimidation.

Protection

The school community understands that bullying can be verbal, physical, social or psychological and can occur face to face, in written form or through the use of technology in the form of cyber bullying.

Bullying:
- devalues, frightens and isolates
- affects an individual’s ability to achieve at their full potential.
- has long term serious effects on those engaging in bullying behavior, those who are the subject of bullying behavior and the bystanders.

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

The school and its community do not accept or condone bullying behaviour in any form. When the school does become aware of such behaviours, action will be taken in-line with the DEC and school Anti-Bullying Policy.

Strategies for dealing with bullying are linked to the School Discipline Policy and encompass the range of options available to deal with unacceptable behaviours, including suspension and expulsion. In dealing with bullying behaviour, we recognise the repeated and recurring nature of bullying and have mechanisms in place to identify patterns of repeated offending.

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

Prevention

Identifying bullying

By students:
- Understand the definition of bullying as *intentional, repeated behavior* by an individual or group of individuals that causes distress, hurt or undue pressure. Bullying is not an isolated issue.
- Be assertive in saying, ‘Stop what you are doing, I don’t like it, go away’ to anyone who clearly demonstrates behaviours that are hurtful, offensive or insulting.
- Learn about bullying through participation in learning experiences in class and in the playground.
- Feel comfortable to report bullying to school staff and feel assured that their concerns will be taken seriously.

By teachers:
- Be aware of all forms of bullying as per the policy definition.
- Be alert and observant for acts of bullying in the class and playground.
- Teach students key understandings and skills relating to positive relationships, safety, gender equity, discrimination, bullying and harassment. These learning experiences will be guided by the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education syllabuses in conjunction with other Key Learning Areas.
By parents and caregivers:
- Assist their child/ren in understanding bullying behaviors.
- Be aware of all forms of bullying by reading information in this policy, along with showing support of the policy.
- Support their children in all aspects of their learning.

By Principal:
- To inform students, staff, parents and caregivers about strategies to be assertive in preventing bullying and to identify and report bullying. The school staff will review the school Anti-Bullying Policy annually and make recommendations for changes to the parent community via the P & C Association.

The Principal will ensure that the most current policy is uploaded to the school website.

Prevention strategies include:
- Passive play operating each recess and lunchtime for students.
- Students are educated in ways they can protect themselves and others from bullying.
- Developing positive student leadership roles.
- Life Education program every two years.
- Child protection program.
- Creative positive environments.
- Social skills program for identified students.
- Regular daily positive reinforcement in classroom, playground and assemblies. These are encouraging words, actions or emotions that follow a particular behaviour of a child. This will, in turn, encourage the child to want to repeat the behaviour being reinforced. Positive behaviours are consistently acknowledged.
- Prompt investigation of issues or complaints.

Early Intervention
Early identification of bullying behavior is vital if schools are to be highly effective in managing bullying. It is important that schools respond in a timely fashion when issues are identified as it is understood that those who are engaged in bullying and are bullied can experience long term effects.

Targeted early intervention strategies include:
- Students are encouraged to report bullying incidents involving themselves or others. Reporting is not dobbing;
- Teachers are vigilant at all times and use a class and playground management plan if an incident of bullying occurs;
- When appropriate, bullying incidents recorded in the school’s behavior monitoring system.
- Parents are encouraged to contact staff if they become aware of a problem;
- Kindergarten Orientation Program will inform parents of school policy and procedures.
- Students will participate in annual Bystander Bullying activities.

Reporting
By students:
Immediately report acts of bullying, towards themselves or others, to class teacher on duty or to Principal.

By parents and caregivers:
Notify teacher or Principal of acts of bullying that were reported or witnessed by themselves or their children.

By teachers:
Notify Principal of acts of bullying that were reported or witnessed.

Investigation:
All reported incidents of bullying will be investigated by Principal within 24 hours of notification. A formal record of the investigation will be taken and placed into the school files.

The Principal will follow school and NSW DEC policy with regard to the consequences for bullying behaviours. The Principal is responsible for informing parents of all students involved within one day of the investigation.
Serious bullying behaviours will result in the NSW DEC School Safety and Response Unit being called, in addition to the School Education Director (SED) be notified. Such instances are those in which physical injury requiring medical treatment has been necessary or where student/staff safety is compromised. In the most serious of cases, the Principal will call the Police immediately.

The Principal will contact the SED and the NSW DEC Media Unit for all instances where media involvement is likely to occur. A Serious Incident Form will be communicated to the SED for all serious instances of bullying. Immediate student suspension will occur for serious bullying as outlined above.

**Strategies for explicit teaching of dealing with bullying behavior**

**Victims:**
- Stand up for yourself in a confident manner. Say ‘Stop what you are doing, I don’t like it, go away’.
- Confidently talk to the person concerned.
- Ignore the situation and keep working or playing.
- Talk to a friend and get some ideas to assist in making a decision.
- Walk away and ignore the bully and places where the bullying occurs.
- Seek help or support from a teacher or family member.

**Bystanders:**
It is vital that students are made aware that witnesses to bullying have a very powerful role to play. Early intervention can quickly defuse conflict situations before bullying sets in or gets out of hand. The bystander must:
- Confidently let the person or group bullying know that they are exhibiting bullying behaviours and that it is wrong.
- Refuse to join in with their bullying and walk away.
- Provide support for the student who is being bullied.
- Ask a teacher or support person for help.
- Support his/her friends and protect them from bullying by being a supportive friend.

**Parents and caregivers:**
**Parents and caregivers have an important role to play when dealing with bullying.**
There are things you can do if you think your child is bullying others or being bullied.
- Talk to your child and encourage them to be honest and open.
- Talk to your child’s teacher or Principal.
- Access NSW DEC resources on the public website about dealing with bullying issues.

**Verbal or physical attacks by a parent towards another child breach the NSW DEC Parent Code of Conduct.**

If a student is suspended, parents are able to appeal the decision as per the NSW DEC Suspension and Expulsion of School Students – Procedures which is provided to parents with letter notifying of suspension. Parents can report suggestions, allegations and complaints to the Principal. These will be dealt with according to the NSW DEC Policy: Responding to Suggestions, Complaints and Allegations PD/2002/0051/V001. Local NSW DEC contact numbers are provided at the end of this document.

In consultation with the school community, Murwillumbah South Infants School will review this plan at least every three years. This will be communicated to the school community through the P & C Association, the school newsletter and the school website. Focus groups and surveys will be carried out to determine the effectiveness of this plan and analyzed results will be noted in the Annual School Report and school newsletter.

**Professional learning**

For teachers and other school staff:
- Staff will be made aware of current policies and procedures relating to bullying and provided with a copy of the school Anti-Bullying Plan. A mandatory training register will be kept by the Principal.
- New resources from the NSW DEC will be made available to staff.
- Teaching staff will be provided with the opportunity to participate in professional training, where available.
- Staff will be involved in reviewing survey data pertaining to bullying and determine appropriate strategies to recommend to the school community.
Additional information

Police Youth Liaison Officer – 07 55360999
Murwillumbah Police Station – 02 667294999
Department of Education and Communities District Office – 02 66702300
Department of Community Services – 133627
Child Well Being Unit – 02 9269 9400
School Safety and Response Unit – 1300 363 778

Additional information, resources and support relating to effective ant-bullying strategies can be found at:-

Bullying. No way! www.bullingnoway.com.au
Kids Help Line www.kidshelpline.com.au
Reach Out! www.reachout.com.au

*Bullying Among Young Children: A guide for parents* by the Australian Attorney General’s Department To get your copy, call 1800708777

Principal’s comment

Murwillumbah South Infants School consistently strives to provide high quality education for all students, ensuring their academic and social needs are met in a safe and caring environment free from violence and bullying. This plan has been developed in consultation with the following representatives:

Brendan Quinn – Principal
Francesca Yasukawa – Teacher
Tonia McLeod – Student Learning Support Officer
Sean Wulff – Parent Representative

School contact information

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