

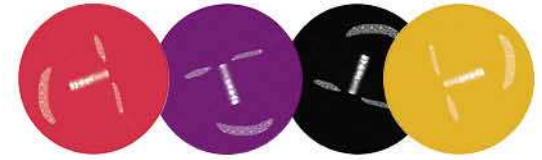


Education &
Communities

Anti-bullying Plan

Berkeley West 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 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 was initially developed in collaboration with parents of the Berkeley West Public School community. Parents were invited to view a draft version of the plan posted on the school website or pick up a hardcopy from school. They could then written provide feedback over a four week period on its content either by dropping it off at school or by email to the Principal. Senior students from Year 5 and 6 were also consulted on key elements of the plan before it was finalised. At the end of the four week consultation period, the plan was presented by the Principal at a regular P&C meeting on 13 September 2011. The plan will be implemented from Term 4 2011 and evaluated on an ongoing basis and formally reviewed at least once every three years.

Statement of purpose

Berkeley West Public School (BWPS) is committed to providing a safe and caring environment which fosters respect for others and does not tolerate bullying. At BWPS we will-

- create a culture where it is acceptable and encouraged to report incidents of bullying; and
- empower students by listening to their experiences and allowing them to feel that they can be in control of what happens to them at school.

Outcomes

As a result of implementing an Anti-bullying Plan, we strive to see-

- Berkeley West Public School providing a safe place for students to learn and play;
- an increase in the number of students who report bullying behaviour;
- the incidence of bullying behaviours being reduced;
- better attendance at school;
- better performance in school work;
- Berkeley West Public School staff utilizing the plan and procedures as set out in the Anti-bullying plan;
- Berkeley West Public School students using strategies and procedures as set out in the plan and taught by staff in the classroom; and
- Parents recognising and supporting the school's Anti-bullying plan.

Protection

What is Bullying?

Bullying is defined as repeatedly hurting another person who is less powerful- either physically or psychologically. Bullying can take many forms. We consider the following behaviour to be bullying:

1. Physical:

including hitting, punching, shoving , pinching, tripping, spitting, scratching, damaging, hiding or stealing belongings or throwing objects at someone.

2. Verbal-

name-calling, making offensive remarks, taunting, teasing, put-downs

3. Indirect Social/Psychological-

spreading rumours, gossiping about or embarrassing someone, making fun of someone, using threatening looks or gestures, excluding or threatening to exclude from groups, ignoring, ostracising or alienating.

4. Cyber (Online Bullying)-

verbal and indirect social/psychological bullying through use of technology such as emails, blogs, websites etc

Characteristics of Bullying

Bullying behaviour typically contains seven elements-

1. An initial desire to hurt.
2. Bullying desire is acted out- some form of bullying is perpetrated.
3. This action is hurtful.
4. There is an imbalance of power- the bullying behaviour is stronger and more powerful than the victim's behaviour, either physically or psychologically.
5. There is no justification for the action- ie. the victim has done nothing to deserve such treatment.
6. It is persistent and repeated.
7. The person bullying derives enjoyment from hurting the victim.

Strategies We Will Use to Deal With Bullying

At Berkeley West Public School we will:

- Openly talk about bullying- what it is, how it affects us and what we can do about it.
- Teach our students the skills which build their self-esteem and empower them to take the responsibility for themselves- and give them the opportunity to practise these skills.
- Respond to substantiated instances of bullying behaviour in accordance with the school's discipline and welfare policy and all relevant NSW Department of Education and Communities (DEC) policies and procedures.

Responsibilities of Staff

All staff have a responsibility to-

- model appropriate behaviours at all times;
- teach students skills and strategies to deal with bullying as per the lessons distributed to staff ("Bullying" available from library);
- deal with all reported and observed incidences of bullying as set out in this plan and the school's discipline policy;
- ensure that students are supervised at all times;
- report incidences of bullying to the Assistant Principals or Principal consistent with school welfare reporting procedures; and
- create a culture where it is acceptable and encouraged to report incidents-("Awareness breaks the cycle of violence").

Responsibilities of Students

All students have a responsibility to-

- be assertive- Tell the "bully" that they don't like the behaviour, how it makes them feel and that how they must tell a teacher about it if the person continues;
- see a teacher or ask to see the Principal if the perpetrator/s do continue;
- "Tell" if they are being bullied or if they see someone else being bullied- both at school or on the way to and from school- ("Awareness breaks the cycle of violence");
- report any cyber-bullying to their teacher or Principal (do not delete any emails or make note of any websites);
- ask to see the Principal directly to report incidences of bullying if the teacher is busy with other playground issues, or if they would prefer to do so;
- help someone who is being bullied; and
- not bully others.

Responsibilities of Parents/Caregivers

All parents/caregivers have a responsibility to-

- watch for signs their child may be being bullied;
- speak with someone on the staff at Berkeley West Public School if they suspect their child is being bullied; and
- instruct their children to "tell" if they are bullied ("Awareness breaks the cycle of violence")

Prevention

Staff at BWPS use the lessons and strategies contained in the book, "Bullying: an effective Anti-bullying program for primary schools" to educate students on ways they can protect themselves and others from bullying behaviours. The resource is an evidence-based text authored by Sue Berne. Lessons are explicitly taught and adapted so that all students can be involved in learning key concepts.

Not only do lessons provide students with effective strategies to deal with bullying behaviour, those who may possibly witness bullying behaviour, "bystanders", are educated on what they can do to help possible victims of bullying behaviour.

In relation to cyber-bullying, students and the community are also educated through newsletter snippets and articles that they can:

- **Guard their contact information i.e.** Only give your mobile phone number, instant messaging name or e-mail address to trusted friends, and keep a note of who you've given it to. Consider using caller ID blocking to hide your phone number when making calls. Similarly, don't leave your name on your voicemail. Don't give your details to people you don't know – or don't want to know!
- **Take a stand against cyber-bullying i.e.** Speak out whenever you see someone being mean to another person online. Most people respond better to criticism from their peers than to disapproval from adults.

At least once a year, the Principal will hold an Anti-bullying information session for parents outlining not only the school's Anti-bullying Plan, but strategies they can employ to help prevent their child from becoming a possible victim of bullying.

This Anti-bullying Plan will be made available for viewing and reference on the BWPS website.

Early Intervention

Those students who are at risk of being ongoing victims of bullying type behaviour, will be encouraged to report directly and immediately to a member of staff that they themselves have nominated when they feel either threatened or intimidated. Their parents will also be informed of this arrangement so that they too can reinforce this strategy with their child. These early intervention arrangements for students at risk will be communicated to all teaching staff.

Response

Reporting Bullying

Incidences of bullying can be reported immediately to any teacher or the Principal by students and their parents. Any bullying incidences reported will be investigated and recorded by the Assistant Principals. Consequences for the perpetrators of clearly substantiated bullying behaviour will also be imposed as outlined in the school's discipline policy and if necessary, suspension procedures.

Responding to Reported Incidences of Bullying

When a bullying incident is reported or observed the following procedures will apply:

- Children involved speak with Assistant Principal/Principal about the incident.
- If clearly substantiated, and depending on the nature of the incident, the student responsible for bullying is issued with a pink slip for the incident and is warned of the consequences for further incidences (i.e. white slip- Level 3 detention).

- If it is noted that a student is repeatedly perpetrating bullying behaviours, a behaviour management plan will be developed for him/her in consultation with his/her parents to hopefully modify behaviour and reduce risk to other students.
- In the case of cyber-bullying initiated through school accounts, the student may have their DET account blocked for a period determined by the Principal- subsequent consequences for this behaviour determined in line with the school's discipline policy.
- Inform other staff of the incident.
- Monitor the behaviour of the children involved.
- If aggression is repeated, student will receive a Level 3 detention. (3 days out of the playground)
- If the child continues to bully, make an appointment to speak to the parent/carer. Remind them of the policy and ask for their cooperation in stopping the child from bullying other students. Develop a behaviour management plan if necessary.
- If bullying behaviour does not stop, student may be suspended as per the school discipline policy.
- Victims of bullying will have access to school counsellor support if the need exists or the student so requests it.

Reporting Instances of Cyber-bullying

If students are being harassed online, they are encouraged to take the following actions immediately:

- **Tell an adult you trust.** This can be a teacher, parent, older sibling or grandparent – someone who can help you to do something about it.

- **Leave the area or stop the activity.** People who bully get their kicks from knowing they've upset their target. Don't let them know they've upset you, and you've taken away half their "fun". Easier said than done when it's face-to-face, but if it's on your mobile or the Internet — easy!
- **Block the sender's messages.** If you are being bullied through e-mail or instant messaging, block the sender's messages. Never reply to harassing messages.
- **Keep a record.** Save any harassing messages and record the time and date that you received them.
- **Advise your Service Provider.** Most service providers have appropriate use policies that restrict users from harassing others. They can respond to reports of cyber-bullying over their networks, or help you track down the appropriate service provider to respond to.
- **Report to police.** If the bullying includes physical threats, tell the police. Some people think that they can get away with it because they believe it is anonymous. They are wrong. Most can be traced and it's a criminal offence to use a mobile phone or any form of communication to menace or harass or offend another person.

Evaluating the Program

The plan and strategies put in place will be evaluated on an ongoing basis and will be formally reviewed at least once every three years by:

- noting if there has been a reduction in reported or observed incidences of bullying;

- noting if there has been a change in the ethos of our school. ie. a culture within the school which makes it safe to "tell"- without fear of reprisals; and
- speaking to parents who have reported incidences to find out if the problem has been resolved.

Additional Information

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

Bullying. No way!

www.bullyingnoway.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 1800 708 777.

Principal's comment

Berkeley West Public School strives to provide a quality education for all students targeting their educational and social needs in an environment free from violence, harassment and bullying. In response, this plan has been developed and revised in consultation with staff, students and parents of the Berkeley West Public School community.

We look forward to empowering ourselves and others to better address bullying type behaviours and reduce its otherwise negative impact on victims. Thankyou to all who actively contributed to the development of this plan and its ongoing evaluation and review.

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