

# Anti-bullying Plan

GOULBURN 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.

*Bullying in Schools Policy* of the New South Wales Department of Education and Communities.

This Goulburn Public School Anti-Bullying Plan is an important part of regular and on-going work on bullying at the school. Implemented in 2017, anti-bullying groups comprising teachers and the student leadership group (PBL) have met to evaluate school policy, publicise information and build on strategies and resources. Information and ideas have been gathered from staff meetings focusing on bullying issues. Parents have been part of this process through the involvement of P&C. Through the recent work of Goulburn Wellbeing Team (Learning Support Team and Executive Team), the School Counsellor is also a vital contributor as are all teachers who from Term 2 2017, integrate Anti-Bullying into a fortnightly Wellbeing lessons with students.

## Statement of purpose

At Goulburn Public School we believe that everyone has the right to come to school and be safe from bullying and harassment of any kind. Respect is an important school value and it applies to every member of the school community. We respect others and we expect to be respected. This plan is based on the belief that we are in a place of learning (including learning about citizenship, community and personal development) and education is an effective way to change attitudes and behaviours. Students who bully, who are bullied or who witness bullying all require education to better understand what is happening and how they can make better choices to develop into resilient and successful citizens. We encourage all

## Our School Anti-Bullying Plan

### Goulburn Public 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*

who see or experience bullying to 'speak up' so the problem can be resolved. We encourage all school community members to see the development of a safe and happy school as their business.

## Protection

At Goulburn Public school we understand that bullying is repeated harmful behaviour from an individual or group of people towards another. It can be verbal, physical, emotional or digital. It can happen at school or on your way to or from school. It cannot be dismissed as 'harmless fun' or 'mucking around' even if the one being bullied does not complain. It stems from a lack of respect for others and a misuse of power based on age, size, race or social standing. It makes people feel sad and excluded and, over time, can seriously affect their self-image.

Bullying among students could include: repeatedly pushing others, calling names, spreading rumours, not allowing them to take part in learning or social activities, demanding money from them in the canteen, writing offensive graffiti, sending/posting digital messages, laughing at them when things go wrong and making repeated offensive comments about their race, disability, gender, sexuality or other lifestyle choices. It is bullying to make fun of someone for doing their best and aiming for academic success just as it is bullying to criticise someone who struggles with their learning.

Students who repeatedly refuse to follow certain teachers' directions, are abusive and persistently undermine particular teachers are bullying those staff members. Casual teachers, in particular, need to be protected from this bullying behaviour.

Staff members may also abuse their power or position and fail to treat others with respect. Yelling at students, refusing to listen to them and treating them unfairly are bullying behaviours. Staff members who undermine other teachers through words or actions or who ignore, exclude or belittle others are bullying those people.

Such bullying behaviour will not be tolerated at Goulburn Public School. We will encourage all members of the school community to speak up when bullying occurs and we will follow school and departmental procedures to respond to bullies, support those who are bullied and empower bystanders.

We understand that all members of the school community have responsibilities to ensure that Goulburn Public School is a safe and happy place for all. Students must treat each other with respect and speak up and support others when bullying occurs. Parents and caregivers must be aware of what constitutes bullying and its effects so they can reinforce messages at home. The school should inform parents and caregivers when bullying affects their children so they can work together to resolve problems. Teachers must take seriously all reports of bullying, give a clear and consistent message and follow school and departmental policy.

Developing a positive climate of respectful relationships is a powerful way to decrease incidents of bullying behaviour. Respectful words and actions are modelled by the school's executive teachers to all staff and students. Assembly items and discussions in wellbeing lessons teach students what respectful looks like in the school, classroom and other school contexts.

## Prevention

Goulburn Public School implements the following strategies to prevent bullying and embed anti-bullying messages:

- Peer support with School Leadership Team, promoting positive and supportive relationships and forums to discuss concerns.
- Classroom wellbeing/PBL lessons allow students to talk about issues, learn strategies and receive ongoing support.
- 'KidsMatter' program, professional learning sessions, playground program and classroom lessons which focus on improving social skills, self-esteem and a sense of connection and community among students. This program, which employ research-based and teacher support are timetabled into the school timetable.

- The Wellbeing Team distributes information and resources to assist classroom teachers in discussing bullying issues especially on key days (eg. National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence and Harmony Day).
- There is a focus on bullying across the curriculum. Bullying is included explicitly in content covered in PDHPE and English.
- Large, bright posters, designed and created by students are displayed throughout the school communicating a range of powerful anti-bullying messages and promotion of respect.
- School Liaison Police Officer reinforces messages of anti-bullying and promotion of respect to students periodically throughout the year.
- Teachers are regularly reminded of the importance of being prompt and vigilant on playground duty.
- Anti-bullying messages are frequently communicated at school assemblies which are attended by all students and staff.
- Bullying audits and surveys (Tell Them From Me) ensure that an accurate picture of school climate and behaviours are gained.
- School personnel are members of the 'Keep Them Safe' network of government and non-government organisations operating locally to support students in need.

Social Skills playground programs include 'passive play' areas and explicit social skills areas targeting connection to others and respectful relationships.

## Early Intervention

Early Intervention strategies at Goulburn Public School include:

- A comprehensive transition program from one year to the next, with Executive Teachers facilitating student information collection.
- Peer support Leadership Team work on activities supporting students on identified days and/or school activities.

- Hand-over meetings of staff to ensure information about bullying behaviour is shared.
- Parents are contacted so they can work with the school if students are bullying others or being bullied.
- Teachers, identify students at risk of developing long-term difficulties with social relationships. These issues are dealt with in wellbeing lessons and students may be referred to the Wellbeing/LS Team or the School Counsellor for more targeted intervention.
- Professional learning at staff meetings focuses on identifying types of bullying and a range of responses and strategies to deal with them.
- Students and parents are asked about bullying at enrolment interviews and the school's expectations and behaviours are explained.

## Response

The whole school community is educated about bullying and how to respond to it through the publication of this Plan, Newsletter updates, posts on the school website, GPS school bag 'app', assembly items by teachers and students, meetings with the School Liaison Police Officers and posters identifying bullying and the school response.

If you are bullied at Goulburn Public School, the first step is to tell someone: the teacher in your classroom or in the playground, Assistant Principal or Principal, your parent or caregiver, an older student or a trusted friend. The importance of reporting all cases of bullying is regularly reinforced by staff and publicised through posters outlining the process.

When you report bullying it will be dealt with as quickly as possible, usually within one school day, by the class teacher or teacher on playground duty. In the first instance, students will be told that 'what you

are doing is unacceptable and hurtful and has to stop'. The conversation will be reported to the Assistant Principal within the GPS Wellbeing process and further incidents will result in additional consequences such as: parents being informed, students working through anti-bullying exercises, mediation or shared concern meetings if appropriate. Repeated or serious matters will also have discipline consequences including exclusion from the playground, Formal Cautions and suspensions. Students who report bullying may be referred to the School Counsellor for further support.

There is not only one effective response to bullying; rather the consequence should match the situation and student. Where bullying is not resolved by teacher intervention (identifying the behaviour as bullying and saying it must stop) a range of interventions will be considered.

- Racist bullying will include the student meeting with an Aboriginal mentor.
- Students who bully in the playground may be removed or restricted at break times and supervised in 'Time Out' areas.
- Students who bully within peer groups may take part in mediation/shared concern meetings if the students experiencing bullying and their parents support this.
- Individuals and groups of students who have difficulty accepting that they are bullying may be required to work through empathy exercises in which they must name their behaviour, admit the negative consequences on others and themselves and determine an appropriate way to 'make it right'.
- Teachers with a special connection to bullying students, eg. past teacher/mentor relationship, will be included in strategies to change their behaviour.
- The School Liaison Police Officer may be included in serious incidents or where injury has occurred.

Students who have reported, engaged in or witnessed bullying will be monitored by classroom teachers and Assistant Principal. In instances of

ongoing or serious bullying, all students will be required to complete a student statement. Students may be asked to complete a Bullying 'journal prompts' Worksheet to ascertain whether ongoing support or further teaching is required. Students may be referred to the School Counsellor for further support.

Parents of students who have reported, engaged or witnessed ongoing or serious bullying will be contacted promptly and invited to be a part of the response through visiting the school for an interview.

Serious or ongoing incidents involving assaults, threats, intimidation or harassment will be referred to the Principal who will assess the situation and may well make a report to the police. The Principal will contact the child Wellbeing Unit or Community Services if there is a concern about a young person's physical, mental or emotional wellbeing as a result of a bullying incident.

Members of the school community who are not satisfied with the handling of any bullying incidents are invited to voice their concerns using the department's appeals procedures. Details of the Complaints Handling Policy will be given and assistance offered to complete paperwork.

Patterns of bullying will be identified by the use of annual bullying audits and analysis of bullying incidents within the student wellbeing reporting system. Information gained from this will inform teaching in the whole school wellbeing lesson planning, affect playground supervision and determine messages to be relayed via assemblies and school publications.

It is expected that this document, and the Plan it represents, will be regularly referred to and amended as necessary.

The Anti-Bullying Plan will be tabled at a Staff Meeting, Student Leadership Team and P&C Meeting, posted on the school's website (with a shortcut easily accessible on the school's intranet) and available to parents and visitors in the school foyer. Links to the plan will be given to new and casual staff.

Goulburn Public School Wellbeing Team will monitor the effectiveness of the plan through audits and surveys, gathering information from student incident reporting and student feedback (Tell Them From Me).

Each year, a report on the effectiveness of the Plan will be published in the school Newsletter closest to the National Day Against Bullying and Violence.

Every three years beginning in 2017, the Plan will be reviewed in a more formal way with the participation of all school community groups: students, staff, parents and caregivers.

## Additional Information

The following are additional sources of support:

School Liaison Police officer (SLP)- Snr Const Croaker (Goulburn Police)

Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800

KidsMatter: <https://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/>

## Principal's comment

This plan is a comprehensive outline of strategies and supports that will ensure a schoolwide approach to maintaining respectful relationships. The implementation of this plan will coincide with Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL). This plan will ensure that we have a school focus on equity, successful learners and personal responsibility. The physical and psychological safety of students is paramount with all students encouraged to be confident, creative and active and informed citizens.

## Wellbeing Team

Sharyn Cox *R/Principal*

Vanessa Deaton *R/Assistant Principal*

Linda McDade *R/Assistant Principal*

Janette Kerr *K-6 Instructional Leader*

Jill Prevedello *Learning and Support Teacher*

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