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.

The policy was developed in consultation with staff, parents and students. The following steps were taken:

- Staff investigated best practice anti-bullying policies
- Meetings presented best practice to staff and parents
- Parents, students and teachers all surveyed to determine frequency and types of bullying
- Survey data was presented to all stakeholders
- Policy was developed in consultation with staff and parents
- Students were interviewed, discussing effective strategies to deal with bullying

Statement of purpose

The teachers, parents and children at Tuncurry Public School believe that every child has the right to learn, in an environment where they feel safe and protected from any form of bullying, physical, verbal, emotional abuse or threat.

This school policy promotes positive relationships and specifically prevents bullying and harassment. Bullying is frequently hidden from teachers and parents. Through consistent and open communication across the school community, bullying behaviour can be reduced. Furthermore, specific programs and strategies should be consistently taught and reviewed.

Data continues to monitor the success of programs and inform the future directions.

Protection

As part of their duty of care and professional relationships, all teachers are required to adhere to the Department of Education and Community (DEC) ‘Code of Conduct’ policy when dealing with students and parents.

All bullying behaviour is considered to be unacceptable and is dealt with through the school welfare policies, planning room and in accordance with the guidelines of the Department of Education and Community’s Complaints Handling policy.

Bullying is an ongoing behavior and involves oppression by more powerful individuals or groups. Bullying is repeated, seeking to disempower, embarrass, exclude or dominate others. It is not conflict between equals or single incidents.

This is particularly relevant to our students during class lesson times, moving to and from class, play times, before school, recess, lunch time, bus lines, to and from school (either walking or by bus), at the bus stop and when accessing and communicating with social media (cyber bullying). Awareness of the context in which bullying occurs is significant for staff, students and parents.

The severity and frequency of bullying determines what immediate actions need to be taken. Individual counseling is the first step in determining future action.
Prevention

As part of the preventative strategies for all students, the following programs are included as part of the curriculum and classroom lessons.

- The Positive Behavior for Learning (PBL) initiative provides the structures and procedures for monitoring and maintaining positive relationships and respectful interactions between students and all adults on the school premises. The school core values of Respect, Safety and Personal Best are constantly reinforced through specific lessons, staff training and communication to the whole school community. Specific programs and strategies for protection and prevention are in place.
- Friendly Schools and Families
- Rock and Water for targeted groups
- Promoting Positive Bystander Behaviour (DEC document)
- Social Skills lessons teaching assertive behaviour, building and maintaining friendships and conflict resolution.
- Bowen Therapy and Yoga for targeted individuals
- Lamp Program for targeted individuals (trained tutors mentor through a ten week program)
- For individual students involved in bullying, the ‘Pikas No Blame Interview’ is undertaken. These interviews are conducted in the planning room and empower effected students to act and to cease their bullying behaviour. Effected students are monitored regularly. The planning room processes require regular communication with parents and engender cooperation between the school and community.

Early Intervention

Information regarding anti-social or bullying behaviours are identified at Pre-School level and communicated to the school through the school transition to Kindergarten program. Kindergarten students are assigned a trained; Year Six ‘buddy’ to accompany them in the playground. Buddies assist them to socialise and learn the school behaviour expectations.

New enrolments are interviewed by the Principal and the previous school is contacted to determine if students have been bullied or involved in bullying of others. Classroom teacher is informed and monitors behaviour.

Assistance from the Learning Supported Team is sort if required.

Teachers have been trained to be vigilant and report bullying behaviour and implement social skills programs in their classrooms. Classroom teachers counsel affected students and refer them to the planning room for ongoing support. Behaviour records are kept in the Sentral Data Base. Bullying behaviour (both the bully and those being bullied) can be tracked and monitored for regular review. When identified, targeted children are monitored and supported through counselling and special programs already outlined.

Reporting bullying is a central component in early intervention. Staff are encouraged to report any incident of bullying and discuss these in weekly meetings and fortnightly staff planning. Students are encouraged to report by classroom teachers, planning room self referral and regular assemblies. Through the school newsletter parents are encouraged to report bullying and to look for the early signs of bullying.

As some students feel intimidated by bullies they are less likely to report publicly. A ‘post box’ is located in the main office foyer and students are encouraged to post their concerns here.
Response

The anti-Bullying Policy is available on the Tuncurry Public School website and parents informed through newsletter that a copy of the policy document is available at the school if required. Parents to know and understand what support is expected from them. This support is outlined in the School Information Booklet and discussed at the Term 1 Parent/Teacher meetings.

Parents and children are to be educated on ‘what bullying is and is not’ including ‘cyber bullying’. Establish a hierarchy of complaint system for parents i.e. what to do, where to go etc.

Helpful hints to parents in the Newsletter in the PBL section.

The school will provide regular updates in several ways:

- School newsletter - information will not specify student identity but outline the procedures and general outcomes of counseling and support
- Individual contact – some incidents are not resolved without direct parent contact. These meetings with class teachers, planning room coordinators and the principal provide a forum regular updates
- Pikas – as part of the “Pikas No Blame Interview” procedures students are monitored regularly and feedback is provided to parents from these interactions
- Weekly Communication Meetings – A forum to discuss students of concern and overall issues effecting classes or the whole school. Planning room coordinators communicate directly with parents and students
- Annual School Report – provides general data on the levels and types of bullying within the school. This data provides analysis of trends and strategies which have been applied to manage bullying.

Reporting to Police

The following represents a summary of the contents of two relevant DEC documents: “Incident Reporting Procedures”- PD 2007/0362 and Memorandum to Principals “Reporting Incidents Involving Assaults, Threats Intimidation or Harassment” – DN 10/00225

In general, incidents are to be reported as soon as possible by the principal. Cases of assaults, to and from school, are reported to police.

Other incidents including; possession/use of weapons (occurring off school premises), fights or threats made while students are travelling to or from school, reports of serious cyberbullying, or threats made over telecommunication devices, may require reporting by the principal if:

"...the behavior is capable of having a harmful effect on staff and students, the principal must notify police and take appropriate disciplinary action, including notifying the School Safety and response hotline.”

Procedures for Contacting the Child Well Being Unit and Community Services

When deciding to access these services teachers, executive and the principal need to initially determine if students are at risk of significant harm.

The Mandatory Reporters Guide assists teachers and principals to decide whether a student is at risk of serious harm or whether contact with the Child Wellbeing Unit is the appropriate action.


- If students are at risk of significant harm Community Services are notified on Child Protection Helpline Ph: 132 627 or fax Risk of Significant Harm Report Fax: 9633 7666
- Child Wellbeing Unit Ph: 02 9269 9400 from 8am to 5.30pm Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays).

The Child Wellbeing Unit can be contacted by telephone on 02 9269 9400 from 8am to 5.30pm Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays).
Procedures for Handling Complaints

If, after direct contact with the school, and informal means have failed to successfully resolve a complaint, the principal must apply the guidelines outlined in The Complaints Handling Policy. This policy provides information for handling complaints, including how to make a complaint, how to deal with a complaint and how to support the people involved. School staff and school community members can access this document directly from the school or by visiting the DEC website: [http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au](http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au) and follow the links from “Policies and procedures/Complaints Handling Policy Guidelines”

Identifying and Responding to Patterns of Bullying

The school collects bullying data on individual students and student groups through planning room interviews and teacher referrals. This data is entered in the Sentral Data Base and is reviewed at the end of each term. Severe or intractable issues are assessed by the planning room coordinators and the principal and may require immediate sanctions and support for affected individuals. The PBL team analyses this data and reports findings to the staff and school community. The response to findings will vary, depending on severity, frequency and magnitude. In general the PBL approach is to identify specific teaching strategies, ensure all stakeholders share an understanding of the problem and have understood the consequences that will be uniformly applied when bullying behaviour occurs.

Promoting and Publicising

Informing the school community about the Anti-bullying Plan helps empower all stakeholders. The prime location for general information will be the school’s website: [http://www.tuncurry-p.schools.nsw.edu.au](http://www.tuncurry-p.schools.nsw.edu.au). Follow the links from…. (ADD).

Parents with concerns about bullying frequently make phone contact and are referred to the class teacher. Classroom teachers discuss the procedures and strategies to apply and will refer parents to the Principal and the planning room coordinators when the situation seems more complex or if previous strategies have been unsuccessful.

The school information booklet makes specific reference to the Anti-Bullying Plan and parents are encouraged to access a copy from the office or to visit the school website. The school newsletter is published fortnightly and contains information about bullying and suggests contacting the school if they have concerns.

The school will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Plan in the following ways:

Reporting to the School Community

The school will report annually in the Annual School Report. The following issues will be addressed:

- Report on bullying data – location; type; frequency per stage and grade groupings
- Specific strategies and programs taught
- Comparison to previous years data
- Summary of Newsletter publications specific to bullying
- Survey results
- Reporting through the office post boxes

Reviewing the Anti-bullying Policy

The school will review the Anti-Bullying policy with the school community every three years commencing 2012. The process will involve the following steps:

- Principal and staff develop action plan
- Notify the school community of the review and meeting dates
- Survey the whole community (staff and students)
- Meet with the school community to discuss the survey findings and to review the current policy.
- Determine effective and ineffective strategies
- Review current best practice and new support programs
- Incorporate new and effective strategies in the reviewed policy
- Distribute the reviewed policy via the school website and inform the school community that copies are available from the office

Additional Information

Enter here contact information for the Police Youth Liaison Officer (YLO) and the School Liaison Police officer (SLP) where appropriate.

Brad Barry – Taree Police Youth Liaison Officer 65520399
Kids Helpline – 1800 55 1800
Home-Base Forster – 6555 562

Principal's comment

This plan has been developed in accordance with the 2011 NSW DEC Anti Bullying Policy in consultation with staff, students and ultimately parents, careers and the wider community. We believe it will enhance already robust procedures to ensure students are free from bullying and harassment in all its forms.

Tim Putland (Principal)
Janet Northey (Assistant Principal)
David Graham (Relieving Assistant Principal)
Lyn Jones – (Classroom Teacher and Aboriginal Education Coordinator)

School contact information

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