



Department of  
Education



# **PREVENTING AND MANAGING BULLYING**

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## Rationale

*“All members of our school community are committed to ensuring a safe and supportive environment where all members have the right to be respected and have a responsibility to respect each other.”*

## Definitions

*Bullying is when an individual or group misuses power to target another individual or group to intentionally threaten or harm them **on more than one occasion**. This may involve verbal, physical, relational and psychological forms of bullying. Teasing or fighting between peers is not necessarily bullying.<sup>1</sup>*

Confirming if the behaviours were intentional is not required to implement the strategies for responding effectively. Young people involved in bullying are not always fully aware of the impact of their actions on others. It is more important to act as a result of the effects on the targeted individual immaterial of the determination of intent.

Bullying involves:

- Verbal Bullying: The repeated use of words to hurt or humiliate another individual or group. Verbal bullying includes using put-downs, insulting language, name-calling, swearing, nasty notes and homophobic, racist or sexist comments.
- Emotional/Psychological Bullying: Includes repeated stalking, threats or implied threats, unwanted email or text messaging, abusive websites, threatening gestures, manipulation, emotional blackmail, and threats to an individual’s reputation and sense of safety.
- Relational Bullying: Usually involves repeatedly ostracising others by leaving them out or convincing others to exclude or reject another individual or group, making up or spreading rumours, and sharing or threatening to share another’s personal information.
- Physical Bullying: Includes repetitive low level hitting, kicking, pinching, pushing, tripping, ‘ganging up’, unwanted physical or sexual touching and damage to personal property. More serious violent behaviours are not necessarily treated as bullying and may be better managed through the school’s discipline processes.
- Cyber Bullying: Involves the use of information and communication technologies such as email, text messages, instant messaging and websites to engage in the bullying of other individuals or groups. This technology provides an alternative means for verbal, relational and psychological forms of bullying.
- Bystanders: Bystanders are those who are aware of, or witnesses to, bullying but are not directly involved in bullying or being bullied themselves. All members of a school community need to know how to support those who are being bullied and how to discourage bullying behaviours. Any member of the school community can be a bystander and can learn ways to act successfully in preventing or stopping bullying.

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<sup>1</sup> *Behaviour Management in Schools* policy, Department of Education

## Rights and Responsibilities of School Community Members

Members of the school community have the right to expect that our school is safe and has a supportive learning environment. This expectation comes with a shared responsibility by the whole-school community to prevent and effectively respond to behaviours that have the potential to affect school safety and wellbeing, including bullying.

At Lakelands Primary we focus on ensuring all members of the school community have explicit knowledge of their responsibilities and support to develop the required skills to fulfil them. It is through each school community member fulfilling their responsibilities that the rights of all are supported. Focusing only on the rights of individuals or groups will not effectively contribute to this same goal.

The whole-school community includes students, staff, parents, caregivers and the wider community who interact within the school context.

### Rights and Responsibilities of School Community Members

<b>MEMBERS</b>	<b>RIGHTS</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES</b>
<b>All students, teachers, parents, wider school community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are safe and supported in the school environment</li> <li>• are included</li> <li>• are treated with respect</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• participate and contribute to school positive behaviour programs</li> <li>• build positive relationships</li> <li>• demonstrate respect and tolerance towards others</li> </ul>
<b>School leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is supported in developing the school's plan to prevent and effectively manage bullying</li> <li>• is supported in implementing the strategies and programs under the school's plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provides leadership in resourcing the school's plan</li> <li>• ensures the school community is informed of the plan</li> <li>• implements the plan</li> <li>• supports staff to implement the strategies and programs under the plan</li> </ul>
<b>Staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• feel safe and supported in the workplace</li> <li>• are informed of the school's plan on bullying</li> <li>• have access to professional learning in preventing and effectively managing bullying</li> <li>• have access to curriculum resources suitable for supporting students in building positive relationships, resiliency, safety and bullying prevention (including social/emotional learning)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promote and model positive relationships</li> <li>• participate in developing the school plan</li> <li>• identify and respond to bullying incidents</li> <li>• deliver the strategies and programs to students in responding to bullying effectively</li> <li>• promote effective bystander behaviour</li> <li>• promote social problem-solving</li> <li>• use appropriate terminology when referring to bullying and the students involved</li> </ul>
<b>Students</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have access to curriculum that supports the building of resiliency and social skills</li> <li>• are informed of the school's plan on bullying</li> <li>• are provided with supports to stop bullying</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understand and value the concepts of inclusion and tolerance</li> <li>• identify and respond effectively to bullying</li> <li>• are aware of themselves as bystanders</li> <li>• seek help for themselves and others as needed</li> </ul>

<b>Parents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are treated with respect</li> <li>• are confident their children are provided with a safe and supportive school environment</li> <li>• are provided with access to information on the prevention and management of bullying</li> <li>• are informed of the school's plan and opportunities to participate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support and encourage children to treat others with respect and tolerance</li> <li>• act in accordance with the school plan if they observe/ know about bullying</li> <li>• encourage children to report bullying incidents</li> <li>• work effectively with the school in responding to bullying</li> </ul>
<b>Wider community: including other professionals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are strategically included in prevention and bullying management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide support and input into the school's approach to preventing and managing bullying</li> </ul>

### **Whole-School Prevention Strategies**

- a school culture that seeks to be proactive and restore relationships damaged through conflict;
- awareness-raising and planning to deal with specific forms of bullying in particular cyber-bullying and racism;
- close collaboration with parents and the wider community on bullying;
- professional development for staff on identifying the signs of a student being bullied;
- positive staff role modelling;
- provision of parent information to raise parent awareness of bullying - Bullying Brochures.
- implementation of school wide social skills program - PAThS
- school based Chaplain to liaise with at risk students;
- providing incentives for respectful behaviour;
- long term, whole school prevention curriculum which starts in the early years and includes:
  - understanding what behaviours constitute bullying;
  - why bullying is unacceptable;
  - the development of effective bystander behaviour;
  - understanding the school's processes for preventing and managing bullying; and
  - awareness raising of cyber-bullying and strategies to deal with it.
- a coordinated, highly visible (orange jackets) and active approach to playground supervision;
- identification of and supervision adjustments to high-risk situations;
- recognising and reinforcing positive playground behaviour and positive social relationships;
- recording and managing playground incidents on INTEGRIS.

### **Investigation of Behaviour or Suspected Bullying Incident.**

Each playground incident will require careful and thorough investigation.

1. Staff informed of incident by child or parent
2. No Blame approach implemented. Parents notified.
3. Behaviour / Bullying re-occurs - Sanctions to apply. These may include specific play area, detention or suspension.
4. Ongoing monitoring of students involved.

## **Targeted Early Intervention Strategies**

At Lakelands Primary School we effectively identify and respond to bullying behaviours early. Early identification and effective responses reduce the associated risks and potential long-term harms caused by bullying.

Targeted early intervention strategies include:

- raise awareness and plan around specific forms of bullying, such as cyber-bullying and racism;
- identify and target early signs of problematic peer relationship issues within the school community;
- identify individuals and groups at risk that require targeted programs;
- teach effective bystander behaviour to targeted groups or for specific situations;
- teach pro-social behaviour to identified students and groups;
- provide high supervision areas for students with higher support needs;
- provide effective options for individual students experiencing safety issues (such as buddy systems, alternative play areas and transition routines);
- provide access to specialist/pastoral care staff and case management processes for students at risk of being targeted or those who demonstrate bullying behaviour; and
- promote the inclusion of parents of students at risk in identifying and addressing bullying behaviours that may be occurring within the community.

### No blame approach

The no blame approach provides teachers with a way of encouraging empathy and dealing with individual bullying or harassment behaviours. The teacher acts both as facilitator and intermediary between the parties. Here is the no blame approach sequence:

#### Step 1 - Talk with the victim

Teacher talks to the victim to establish the impact that the bullying has had on them. It is not designed to gather "facts" about who said or did what to who. The victim will be encouraged to suggest the names of people to form a group who should help solve the problem. These will include those involved, colluders and perhaps friends of the victim.

#### Step 2 - Convene a meeting of the group

Teacher gathers the group together ensuring that there is a balance between helpful and reliable students and those whose behaviour has been causing a problem.

#### Step 3 - Explain the problem

Teacher explains that there is a problem and that "Sarah" is experiencing certain difficulties. Without discussing specific incidents or accusations the facilitator explains how "Sarah" is feeling.

#### Step 4 - Share responsibility

Teacher points out that no one is going to be punished and that the group has been convened to help solve the problem because there is a shared responsibility for "Sarah's" happiness.

#### Step 5 - Ask for ideas

Teacher asks the group to suggest ways that they may be able to alleviate the suffering felt by the victim. Members of the group are encouraged to use "I" language (I will sit next to her in lessons, I will walk to school with her etc) so that they take ownership of the solutions. These ideas are not imposed on the group by the facilitator.

#### Step 6 - Leave it up to them

Teacher ends the meeting by passing responsibility for the problem over to the group, thanks them for their support and arranges a meeting to see how things are going.

#### Step 7 - Meet them again

Teacher meets each of the group individually a week later to see how things are going.