PREVENTING AND MANAGING BULLYING

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To be read in conjunction with the Responsible Behaviour Plan

Newtown goals

The aims of our school anti-bullying strategies and intervention systems are:

• To prevent, de-escalate and/or stop any continuation of harmful behaviour.

• To react to bullying incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way.

• To safeguard the student who has experienced bullying and to trigger sources of support for the student.

• To apply disciplinary sanctions to the student causing the bullying and ensure they learn from the experience.

Rationale

Staff, parents and students at Newtown State School are committed to treating each other with care and respect and accepting individual differences. 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.

We are dedicated to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our students so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at Newtown State School. If bullying does occur, all students, staff and parents should be able to tell, and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a TELLING school. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to follow the procedures for reporting.

Here is why bullying, and policies and strategies to combat it, are such a high priority for our Newtown community.

• One student in every four in Australia is affected by bullying, according to recent research commissioned by the Federal Government.
• An estimated 200 million children and youth around the world are being bullied by their peers, according to the 2007 Kandersteg Declaration Against Bullying in Children and Youth.
• Bullying is the fourth most common reason young people seek help from children's help services.

Definition of Bullying

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, psychological or cyber forms of bullying.

Bullying is the repeated intimidation of a person using actions or words.

Forms of Bullying

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at Newtown State School

Bullying takes many forms and can include:

- 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.

- 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 from their social connections, 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.

- Cyber Bullying: Involves the use of information and communication technologies such as e-mail, 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 to Bullying:
  Bullying also involves the concept of "bystanders". A bystander may be someone who sees bullying or knows about it but he or she is not usually directly involved. Everyone at the school can have a role in supporting those who are being bullied. All members of the whole school community at Newtown State School need to be aware of their role in supporting those who are being bullied and their responsibility to discourage bullying behaviours when they observe them. Any member of the school community can be a bystander and can act successfully to prevent or stop bullying. Sometimes it is difficult to act at the time of the bullying incident but reporting bullying behaviour is also important. Bystanders are encouraged to report to someone who can help, such as a member of the school staff.

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What Bullying is Not

There are many negative behaviours which, although distressing to those involved, are not classified as bullying. These instances will still require teacher intervention and management. The following situations are often confused with bullying:

Mutual conflict:
In mutual conflict situations, there is an argument or disagreement between students, but not an imbalance of power. Mutual conflict may evolve into a bullying situation at some point if it is not resolved; for example, when one person becomes targeted repeatedly for 'retaliation' in a one-sided way.

Social rejection or dislike:
Unless the social rejection is directed towards someone specific and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others, it is not bullying.

Single-episode acts of nastiness or meanness, or random acts of aggression or intimidation:
Single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If a student is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion, this does not constitute being bullied. This does not, however, lessen the seriousness of the incident or the subsequent consequences.

Signs of Bullying

There is no single way to tell if a student is being bullied. The way a student reacts will depend on how bad the bullying is, as well as the student's personality. Apart from obvious physical signs of bullying, the things to look for are changes in student's social or emotional behaviour. The following behaviours may indicate that an individual has been bullied.

- An unwillingness or refusal to go to school;
- Feeling ill in the mornings;
- A decline in quality of school work;
- Becoming withdrawn and lacking confidence;
- Major changes in relationships and friendships;
- Changes in eating habits (overeating or loss of appetite)
- Bed wetting, altered sleep patterns or having nightmares;
- Getting into trouble more often and acting out;
- Asking for money or starting to steal (to pay the bully);
- Refusing to talk about what's wrong;
- Moodiness, withdrawal, tension or tears after school;
- Having unexplained bruises, cuts, scratches;
- Beginning to bully other children or siblings;
- Become distressed or anxious;
- Changes usual routine;

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- Regularly has possessions which are damaged or "Go missing";
- Come home starving (stolen lunch);
- Becoming aggressive and unreasonable;
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above.

Obviously these signs can also point to many other issues. To find out if bullying is responsible for the change in behaviour it is important to talk to the student and encourage them to open up about what's happening.

Whole-school Community Rights and Responsibilities in Relation to Bullying

Students, staff, parents, caregivers and the wider community have the right to a safe and supportive learning environment in schools. For this to occur, all school community members have a responsibility to prevent and respond to reports and observations of bullying.

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Rights and Responsibilities of School Community Members

MEMBERS	RIGHTS	RESPONSIBILITIES
All students, teachers, parents, wider school community	• are safe and supported in the school environment; and • are treated with respect.	• establish positive relationships • respect and accept individual differences.
Administrators	• are supported in developing and implementing the school's plan to prevent and effectively manage bullying.	• Provide leadership in resourcing the school's prevention and effective management of bullying; • implement the school plan; • ensure parents are informed of the school plan; • support staff to implement the school's plan.
Staff	• feel safe and supported in the workplace; • access to curriculum resources suitable for supporting students in building positive relationships, resiliency, safety and bullying prevention; • are informed of the school's plan on bullying; • are treated with respect in the workplace; • access to professional learning in preventing and effectively managing bullying.	• promote and model positive relationships; • participate in implementing the school plan to counter bullying; • identify and respond to bullying incidents; • teach students how to treat other with care and respect; • teach students how to respond effectively to bullying; • promote social problem solving with students; • respect and accept individual differences.
Students	• access to curriculum that supports the building of resiliency; • are informed of the school's plan on bullying; • if involved, are provided with support to stop bullying.	• treat others with care and respect; • identify and respond effectively to bullying.
Parents	• expect children to be safe and provided with a supportive school environment and treated with respect; • are provided with access to information on the prevention and response strategies related to bullying.	• support and encourage children to treat others with respect and act in accordance with the school plan if they observe bullying; • encourage children to report bullying incidents; • are aware of and follow the school reporting process for bullying incidents by speaking to the appropriate person.
Wider community: including other professionals	• strategic inclusion in prevention and bullying incident management.	• provide support and input into the school's approach to preventing and managing bullying.

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Terminology

The Department of Education promotes the use of affirmative language that supports the values of the *Curriculum Framework*. The terms "bullies" and "victims" are not recommended as appropriate terminology to use when identifying, reporting, recording and responding to bullying incidents. More appropriate terms to use may include "bullied students", "students who are bullied", "victimised students", "students who bully", "students who engage in bullying behaviour" and "students who bully others". This will ensure that the unacceptable behaviours are separated from the students involved. This allows the behaviours to be addressed in a manner that remains respectful of the individuals.

Whole School Strategies to Prevent and Manage Bullying

The following whole-school strategies will be implemented to prevent and manage bullying at Newtown State School:

- Effective school leadership that promotes an open and honest anti-bullying ethos.

- Use of curriculum opportunities to teach appropriate resilience and social and emotional wellbeing skills.

- SWPBS lessons and structures will facilitate the development of acceptable standards of behaviour to create a safe and supportive learning environment, foster mutual respect and encourage all students to take increasing responsibility for their own behaviours and the consequences of their actions.

- Use of opportunities throughout the school calendar and at certain times of the school day to raise awareness of the negative consequences of bullying (e.g. Anti-Bullying Week in November of each year and whole-school assemblies).

- Promoting open and honest reporting among staff and students.

- Monitoring and modifying routines in the school environment, looking in particular at staff supervision patterns, key times and locations where bullying is more prevalent.

- Regular staff professional development on bullying prevention and management, current wellbeing issues and strategies used within the school setting.

- Staff, students and all wider community members are aware of, and follow, the anti-bullying policy.

- Playground Pals used daily in the P-3 playground setting to promote problem solving and harmonious interactions.

Targeted Early Intervention Strategies

- Effective anti-bullying policies, strategies and procedures implemented across the school consistently.

- All students participate in school resilience and wellbeing lessons within their class to develop their social and emotional resilience.

- A one hour information session has been booked in 2013 for year 4-7 students with ACMA (Australian Communication and Media Authority).

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- The peer group needs to know how to take action to protect vulnerable kids and intervene respectfully.
- SWPBS lessons reinforce desired behaviour and skills to use in the school grounds.
- Information sessions provided by Government agencies and Police authorities to students and parents on the topic of cyber safety and cyber bullying.
- The development of effective bystander behaviour through the curriculum.
- Identifying cohorts of students and year groups who are either engaging in bullying behaviours or who are being bullied (or both) that require targeted interventions to modify their behaviour.
- Ollie up program
- Parents are encouraged to refer to the Newtown State School webpage for ideas on how to teach their children social survival skills or social resilience.

Reporting Bullying Incidents

See flow chart (Appendix 1)

Intervention for Bullying Incidents

At Newtown State School students should never be left to sort out bullying on their own. They can be seriously hurt by it. It is important for adults to stop bullying before it starts happening over and over again, or damages a child's confidence.

Procedures

1. Report bullying incidents (reporting via the correct procedure)
2. In cases of serious bullying, the incident will be recorded by staff
3. In serious cases parents should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem
4. If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted
5. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly
6. An attempt will be made to help the student who bullies change their behaviour

Outcomes

1) The student who bullies may be asked to genuinely apologise. Other consequences from the Responsible Behaviour Plan may also take place.

2) If possible, the pupils will be reconciled

3) In serious cases, suspension or even exclusion will be considered

4) After the incident / incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

5) Parental contact to inform them.

6) In the case of cyberbullying, possible suspension of internet access for a period of time (Students will only have internet access to complete assessment for curriculum purposes during this time of suspension)

7) Police contact made in cases involving threats of physical harm or repeated, prolonged occasions.

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