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.

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

Our school anti-bullying 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.

A copy of the Queanbeyan South Anti-Bullying Plan can be obtained from the school office and is also available on the school website at: www.queanbeyas-p.schools.nsw.edu.au

Statement of purpose

At Queanbeyan South Public School we value respect and acceptance of others. Students have the right to expect that they will be safe at school and spend each day free from the fear of bullying, harassment and intimidation. At Queanbeyan South Public School, bullying is not acceptable in any form. Teachers, students, parents and members of the wider community have a responsibility to work together to address bullying. Our Anti-Bullying Policy aims to deal effectively with and prevent incidences of bullying.

Protection

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is a pattern of behavior by one or more persons towards another which is designed to hurt, injure, embarrass or upset or cause discomfort to that person. (Rigby,1996:15)

Queanbeyan South Public School is committed to creating a safe caring environment in which all students can achieve success, socially as well as academically. As a school community we do not tolerate bullying or harassment. Any bullying incident which comes to the attention of students and staff, should be dealt with according to the policy and procedures outlined below. Managing the incident swiftly and consistently enforces our zero tolerance of such behaviour within the school and promotes a safe learning environment for students and staff.

Different Types of Bullying

Physical:
- Hitting / punching
- Pushing / shoving
- Stealing
- Spitting

Verbal:
- Threatening
- Name calling / teasing

Indirect:
- Spreading rumours
- Writing notes
- Not reporting bullying

Cyber bullying:
- Sending abusive text or emails
- Posting unkind messages
- Stealing passwords
- Taking and sharing private images
- Assuming another's identity
Staff Responsibilities

- To model appropriate behavior at all times
- To monitor and track incidences of bullying and respond in an appropriate and timely manner according to the Anti- Bullying Policy
- To communicate any bullying behavior to their stage supervisor
- To implement school programs which promote positive relationships that incorporate strategies to deal with bullying
- To communicate bullying incidences with parents when needed

Parents Responsibilities

- To be aware of and support the schools Anti – Bullying Policy
- To take an active part in their child’s school life and watch for signs that their child may be being bullied
- To encourage their child to adopt learnt strategies to deal with bullying
- To instruct their child to ‘tell’ if they are being bullied
- To inform the school if any bullying is suspected

Student Responsibilities

- To behave appropriately at all times
- To show consideration and respect and to support others
- To ‘tell’ if they are being bullied or if they see someone being bullied – both at school and on the way to and from school
- To attempt to use learnt strategies to deal with bullying incidents

Prevention

It is important that the school community address the underlying causes of bullying relating to school organisational issues, learning and teaching issues and relationship issues.

Preventative Strategies

- Education and promotion of the school’s Anti – Bullying Policy
- Student Welfare Program including schools Core Values
- Compass Program
- Productive and respectful relationships established between all members of the school community
- Classroom rules, routines and processes negotiated and applied consistently
- Adequate supervision of students during breaks on playground and classrooms
- Active intervention when bullying occurs

Strategies to Deal with Bullying:

Reported cases can be dealt with in several ways. It is recognized, that each case is different and may require an individual case by case approach. In all cases it is important to ensure:

- That victims are believed and made safe
- That the principles of natural justice and due process are followed in regard to students reported for bullying
- School Counsellor intervention
- Monitored by the Learning Support Team
- Incidences kept on the School Data base
- Parents and school staff work together
Strategies for Students on How to Deal with Bullying Behaviours

- Stay in sight of peers and adults
- Try to stay calm. Walk away without looking back
- Try to show you are not upset. Practice this
- Look at the person. Try to speak in a strong voice. Say something like “You might think that but I don’t” OR “Why are you doing this?"
- Throw arms in the air and say “Go away” in a loud voice
- Use an ‘I’ message. Express your feelings in an assertive way e.g. ‘I want you to stop ‘or ‘I don’t like it’
- Go to a safe place e.g. with other children or near a teacher
- Talk to someone who can help you (a teacher or parent) Tell them what has happened, how you feel and what they can do to help. This is not dobbing.
- Use humour if appropriate
- Never keep bullying a secret

Procedures for Dealing with Bullying Behaviour

All students have the right to be heard and listened to. Class teacher deals with smaller issues in the classroom in line with the school Discipline Policy and class rules

Teacher on playground duty deals with smaller issues in the playground if more serious in nature the duty teacher informs the Assistant Principal responsible for the stage who then deals with the bullying

Have discussions with the students involved – take appropriate action

Parents and class teacher work with student to look at the underlying problems and seek solutions

Principal, Assistant Principal work with parents and individual to identify bullying behaviours where necessary

School Counsellor and Learning Support Team and relevant Department of Education and Communities welfare officers are involved in individual programs if required

Serious bullying incidents are recorded and consequences are in line with the schools discipline procedures

Issues are resolved in a calm manner with as much time as necessary given to hearing each student and assisting with coping strategies

Students with identified bullying behaviour will take responsibility for their actions

Teachers and their stage supervisors should organize meetings with parents if they are concerned about bullying amongst students

Principal and Assistant Principals deal with major bullying incidents and may need to implement the DEC Suspension and Expulsion of Students Procedures

Procedures for Dealing with Cyber Bullying

The school reserves the right to determine whether incidents of cyber bullying relate to the responsibility of the school.

If determined the school has a role to play we will:

- Ensure each student is safe and arrange support, including the involvement of student wellbeing. Support from staff should be provided on an ongoing basis with the agreement of the student and parent to assist the student to work through the effects of the cyber bullying and to help them develop and implement effective coping strategies
- Students parents contacted to alert them to the issue and ongoing concerns regarding the welfare of the student and discuss the issue and how best to deal with it
- Reassure the student that the school is taking the incident seriously and that the reported bullying will be acted on
- Gather basic facts about the suspected cyber bullying and if possible identify the students involved
• Implement appropriate responses to address the bullying using evidence-based responses to conflict resolution
• Provide the following strategies to the student and parent to assist with managing the issue in the future
• Don’t respond to any further messages/postings from the bully and if possible, block further correspondence from the bully to the parent and an agreed school contract (block their mobile number or email address)
• Report any further correspondence from the bully and an agreed school contact
• Keep evidence of any bullying to assist with tracking down the bully and potentially reporting the matter to police (screen captures, bully’s screen name text and images)
• Report any concerns to the administrator of the service used, including the mobile phone provider (if SMS is involved), website administrator (if social networking or chat services are involved) or internet service provider, as most have measures to assist with tracking and blocking the bully. Some block the bully’s access to their services entirely as bullying is often a breach of website terms of use.

If the student is distressed by the bullying, ensure they are provided with options for psychological support including school counselling and the DEC Well Being Unit.

The school will follow its established approach to incidents of bullying as outlined in the school Anti–Bullying Policy.

Procedures for Reporting Bullying
• Students are to report all incidents of bullying to a teacher immediately
• Parents with concerns about bullying should contact the school immediately
• All bullying incidents are to be reported, taken seriously and dealt with by teachers, Assistant Principals and Principal (depending on issue). These issues will be dealt with immediately or as soon as practically possible

Teachers and executive staff will contact the parents of the student being bullied and the student doing the bullying immediately it is discovered. All staff to be informed so they can monitor students in the playground.

In the case of cyber bullying, the police may need to be contacted to make a report.

Students will be supported by the school counsellor (if available) or executive if upset by being bullied or experiencing ongoing bullying of a peer.

In regards to assaults, threats, intimidation and or harassment, these will be reported to the police by the Principal and the school safety and response unit will be contacted where necessary. The schools handling critical incidences procedures will be followed in such instances.

If there is a need to contact support agencies, then the principal will contact the Child Well Being Unit. The school Counsellor will also research support.

Signs that your child may be being bullied:
• Dislike and avoidance of school
• Decline in academic performance and social interaction
• Gets into trouble more often at school
• Wants to be accompanied to school even over a short distance
• Takes the long way home or walks instead of going on bus
• Possessions are damaged or missing
• Becoming withdrawn, appearing depressed or anxious, having mood swings, crying for no apparent reason
• Unable to explain bruises and scratches
• Complaints of feeling unwell though parents report no specific illness
• Asks for, or steals extra money
• Increased social exclusion and peer rejection
• Having less to do with friends
• Has bad dreams / unsettled sleep / bed wetting
• Gets angry with brothers and sisters
• Consistently uses put down language when speaking
• Increased negative self-perception

Signs that your child may be bullying others:
• Aggressive behaviour – both inside and outside the home (teasing, threatening, hurting others)
• Difficult to manage and loses temper often
• Unhappiness / Quietness / depression
• Oversensitive - feels everyone is out to get him / her
• Decline in academic performance
• Disturbing or out character stories about the student
• Sensing that other parents( parents who have contact with your child ) are avoiding you, or hinting at things you don’t know

Early Intervention
Specific students are identified as being at risk of bullying or developing long term difficulties with social relationships. Some students are also identified as using bullying behaviour. These are some ways we deal with this:
• Peer Support
• Compass Program (Social skills and co-operative play)
• Referral to Learning Support Team

• Using our social skills programs such as Positive Behaviour for Success across the school K-6
• Developing an Action Plan on how to cope with specific behavior’s and situations
• Explore students success and celebrate these achievements
• Promote leadership opportunities within the school for the students

Intervention (in summary)
• Once identified the bully, victim and witness is to be spoken with, all incidents or allegations of bullying to be fully investigated and documented
• Consideration as to why the bullying occurred to be investigated
• Both bully and victim to be offered basic assistance and support
• A meeting of all relevant stakeholders convened following identification of ongoing bullying.

Consequences
Students are aware that if they bully someone, one or more of the following will occur:
• talk to teachers, executive or principal about their behaviour
• their parents will be informed
• they may be removed from the classroom/playground
• they may lose privileges, such as participating in special activities, representing the school
• they will need to offer apologies
• they may be suspended
• they will need to demonstrate that they are able to treat others with respect and follow core school values to restore privileges
• victims and bullies are offered support and counselling

Additional Information

The Department of Education and Communities has a number of useful sites that may be of interest to you, they can be found on the DEC website.

Contacts

- Police Youth Liaison Officer
- Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800

Principal’s comment

Members of the Queanbeyan South Public School community contribute to preventing bullying by modelling and promoting appropriate behaviour and respectful relationships.

A major priority for schools is the care and safety of students. Students learn best in environments in which they feel safe. Every student has the right to expect that they will spend the day both in and out of the classroom free from bullying.

Students also have the responsibility to behave in a way that does not interfere with this right. The expectation is that students will not participate in violence, discrimination, harassment and intimidation.

We aim to make the policy easily understood and also to provide information and programs for teachers, parents and students. Please do not hesitate to ask for help if you are unsure of how to report or support a child you believe is being bullied.

School contact information

Queanbeyan South Public School
101 Cameron Road
Queanbeyan NSW 2620
62973043
62993350
Email Queanbeyas-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au
Web: www.queanbeyas-p.schools.nsw.edu.au