Bullying: Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying in Schools Policy 2013

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. This Anti-bullying plan correlates with our School’s Discipline Policy.

Kentlyn Public School has a strong and respected partnership with the school community. We value the importance of community input to our programs and policies.

Notice of the update of our schools anti-bullying plan was initially provided through the P&C association and then extended to weekly newsletters.

A planning team of volunteers including the executive team, teaching staff and P&C representative drafted a plan and made this public for input from staff, parents/carers and students. This input was considered by the team and responded to appropriately. The final plan, once endorsed by all parties concerned, will be published and made available to all members of the school community through staff meetings, parent meetings, the newsletter and the school website.

The beliefs of this plan are continually reinforced through the school newsletter and teacher dialogue with students. The plan will be reviewed every three years through a consultative process with all stakeholders. Ongoing evaluation should exist through communication between all sectors of the school.

Statement of Purpose

Students, teachers, parents/carers and members of the wider school community of Kentlyn Public School have a shared responsibility to create a safe, happy and inclusive environment free from bullying, harassment and intimidation. Our school will not tolerate bullying in any form and collectively we will strive to maintain a positive climate of respectful relationships.

Protection

What is Bullying?

At Kentlyn Public School we understand bullying to be intentional, 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.

Conflicts or fights between equals or single incidents are not defined as bullying.

Different types of bullying maybe:

**Physical:**
- Hitting/punching
- Pushing/shoving
- Kicking
- Throwing objects
- Taking others belongings/stealing from others
- Damaging others belongings
- Spitting and urinating on others
- Intimidation-making someone do something they don’t want to do

**Verbal:**
- Threatening
- Name calling/teasing
- Swearing at others
- Ridiculing (making fun of) another person because of their actions, appearance, physical characteristics or cultural backgrounds.
- **Indirect:**
- Spreading rumours
- Excluding others
- Writing notes
- Choosing not to tell if you see another person being bullied

**Cyber Bullying:**
- Sending of abusive texts or emails
- Taking and sharing unflattering or private images
- Posting unkind messages or inappropriate images on social networking sites
- Assuming the identity of the victim online and representing them in a negative manner or manner that may damage their relationship with others
- Stealing passwords

**Roles and Responsibilities**

The school understands that there are individual and shared responsibilities in preventing and responding to bullying behaviour.

**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
- Contribute to the development of the Anti-bullying Plan and support it through words and actions
- Work collaboratively to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur.

**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
- respond in a timely manner to incidents according to the school Anti-bullying Plan.

In addition, **teachers have a responsibility** to support students to develop an understanding of bullying and its impact.

**Students have a responsibility to:**
- behave appropriately, respecting individual differences and diversity
- behave as responsible digital citizens
- follow the school Anti-bullying Plan including being responsible bystanders and reporting incidents of bullying.

**Parents/carers have a responsibility to:**
- support their children to become responsible citizens and to develop responsible behaviour in the use of all technology
- be aware of the school Anti-bullying Plan and assist their children in understanding bullying behaviour and how to respond to it consistent with the plan
- report incidents of school related bullying behaviour to the school and work collaboratively with the school to resolve incidents of bullying.

**Kentlyn Public School implements a variety of strategies to foster and maintain a positive climate of respectful relationships including:**
- staff modelling and promoting appropriate behaviour and respectful relationships
- the ‘Peer Support’ program
- the Personal Development program which addresses the Positive Interpersonal Relationships, Anti-bullying, Healthy Choices, Growth and Development and Safety strands of the PDHPE syllabus
- promoting the culture of active by standing and immediate referral of issues for the purpose of a prompt investigation
- promoting active participation in a wide range of sporting and extra curricula activities with an emphasis on sportsmanship and cooperation.

**Prevention**

The most effective measure for prevention is a quick response to all instances of unacceptable behaviour. To support this process the school uses a variety of strategies and programs for bullying prevention including:

- safety lessons within Technology lessons
- behaviour management programs to reduce the number of incidents in the playground such as ‘orange slips’.

**Early Intervention**

The school implements a number of strategies and programs for students who are identified as at risk of developing long-term difficulties with social relationships and those who are identified at or after enrolment as having previously experienced bullying or engaged in bullying behaviour.

**These strategies include:**

- careful class selection and placement of students wherever possible
- making contact with a student’s previous school to identify any issues around bullying
- using professional judgement and teacher knowledge of the students to identify and help address student’s needs in social relationships
- the Learning Support Team assisting in the identification and management of students either at risk of being bullied or at risk of engaging in bullying behaviour
- developing individual Behaviour Management plans with LST support
- school counsellor referrals
- implementing and handing out ‘orange slips’ to help manage student interactions within the playground
- contact with parents/carers to facilitate a collaborative approach to early intervention strategies used.

**Response**

Students, teachers, parents/carers and the community will be aware of the school’s zero tolerance position on bullying. Through this the maintenance of a positive school climate is acknowledged where bullying is not tolerated within the school community.

Students will be empowered with strategies to respond to situations, including the importance of bystanders taking a positive role in instances of bullying.

**Reporting Instances of Bullying**

Students will be encouraged to seek support from a teacher when self-managing a situation is not successful. Students will be encouraged to support their peers.

Classroom teachers are responsible for managing and recording the details of bullying incidents within the classroom situation through the use of ‘orange slips’. Teachers will advise their supervising executive of significant incidents or patterns.

Playground duty teachers are responsible for dealing with and if necessary, recording incidents relating to bullying before school, at recess and lunch breaks. Teachers will advise their supervising executive of significant incidents or patterns.

Where incidents are deemed serious or ongoing, contact will be initiated with parents/carers by an Executive member of staff.

Parents/carers are encouraged to make class teachers aware of bullying
situations that may not have been evident at school.

Parents/carers are encouraged to expect that school related conflicts will be dealt with in school based processes.

**Procedures and Timeframes**

Response to incidences of bullying will be followed up as quickly as possible. Consideration must be given to the reactive nature of schools and the difficulty in establishing concrete timelines. Teaching staff and Executive will initiate the follow up of reported incidents and maintain a written record of the event and the follow up by the school. This will ensure that patterns of bullying can be detected. These patterns will be communicated to parents/carers. Identified patterns of bullying behaviour will be raised at Learning Support Team meetings to ensure ongoing consistency of dealing with students.

In cases of several instances of bullying, parents/carers of children (perpetrators and victims) will be contacted by a member of the executive to ensure a common understanding of how these behaviours have been or will be addressed.

Ongoing bullying behaviours will be subject to the school’s discipline system and the DEC’s policy for suspension and expulsion.

**Matching Interventions to Bullying Incidents**

No method of addressing bullying has been reported as 100% effective and no one intervention is appropriate in all circumstances of bullying. The classroom teacher, school Executive and/or Learning Support Team will decide on the appropriate combination of interventions for the individual circumstances of bullying behaviour. These may include:

- implementation of the school’s Discipline Policy and behaviour management systems
- sanctions such as ‘time out’, detention, levels and suspension
- executive intervention for significant incidences/patterns of behaviour
- principal/executive contact with parents/carers in cases of significant incidents/patterns of behaviour
- mentor teachers – this involves pairing involved students with a teacher they respect and have a rapport with to have regular contact and support regarding behaviour.
- bystander training – a proactive strategy which trains bystander students to behave in a supportive way to students who are being bullied and to report incidents
- mediation- assisting the students involved in incidents of bullying to resolve their differences and to create an awareness of the mitigating factors of the situation
- assertiveness training
- playground behaviour levels and ‘orange slips’ to separate students and to reduce possible incidents
- referral to the Learning Support Team and counsellor as appropriate
- ongoing support provided through school Executive, the Learning and Support Teacher, the Student Welfare Officer and/or School Counsellor as required.

**Supporting Students Affected by Bullying**

Students directly involved as a subject of or witness to any bullying behaviour will have the opportunity to discuss what occurred with the teacher dealing with the incident, their class teacher or another member of staff.

Students may request a support person to be present with them. Parents/carers will be contacted to provide additional support to students.

Other supportive interventions for students include the use of mentor teachers, assertiveness training, by-stander training and/or referral to the counsellor.
Patterns of Bullying Behaviour

The school has strategies for identifying patterns of bullying behaviour including:

- documentation and analysis of incident reports, detention records and behaviour data.
- identification of patterns of behaviour through discussions at and minutes of Learning Support Team meetings.

The school Executive will respond to patterns of bullying behaviour using an appropriate combination of interventions in collaboration with parents/carers, the Learning Support Team, School Counsellor and Learning Support Teacher where deemed necessary.

Promotion and Evaluation of the Anti-Bullying Plan

The Anti-bullying Plan will be promoted and publicised through the school newsletter, at P&C meetings and during the Kindergarten Orientation Program. Once this policy has been endorsed by all parties concerned, it will be available to the school community via the Kentlyn Public School website.

The Annual School Report will be used to communicate the effectiveness of the Anti-bullying Plan to the school community.

The Anti-bullying Plan will be reviewed every three years in consultation with staff, students, parents/carers and the school community.

Students who have engaged in bullying behaviour will be interviewed by the relevant teacher dealing with the incident, as a minimum. Depending on the severity of the incident a referral may be made to a member of the school executive team. In such cases, it is anticipated that contact will be initiated with the students’ parents/carers.

Students who engage in bullying behaviour repeatedly may be referred to the school’s counsellor and/or Learning Support Teacher for follow-up programs.

In some cases it may be necessary to set up a Behaviour Management Plan, which is agreed upon by the student, parent/carer and relevant staff members.

Parents/carers can expect ongoing contact whilst a bullying incident is being managed. These updates will be within the bounds of privacy legislation.

**Serious Incidents**

Serious incidents of assault, threats, intimidation or harassment may be reported to the police. This is the responsibility of the Principal who will contact School Safety and Response on 1300 363 778. Parents/carers would be advised immediately of such action.

The Kentlyn Public School staff have all received Child Protection Training and are aware of the procedures for ‘Keep Them Safe’ and mandatory reporting.

Follow-up reporting to the Child Wellbeing Unit or Department of Family and Community Services will be carried out by the Principal.

Any appeal or complaint will be dealt with through the procedures set out in the Department’s Complaints Handling Policy.
Additional Information

Contact information for relevant personnel:
- Campbelltown Police – Louise Michell Constable Youth Liaison Officer - 46201106
- Home School Liaison Officer (HSLO) –

Contact information for relevant support services:
- Kids Helpline: 1800551800
- Child Wellbeing Unit: 1300480420
- Child Protection Helpline: 132 111
- Family and Community Services: 63540800

Principal’s Comment

Kentlyn Public School is committed to maintaining an environment where children feel safe and secure. The importance of positive peer relationships are fostered in a harmonious climate where children feel free to contribute and are able to reach their full potential.

The current policy has been developed to reflect the values of our community through consultation with stakeholders including students, staff and parents/carers. Our Anti-bullying strategies are proactive and involve best practice.

I would like to thank members of the team for the development of the current Kentlyn Public School Anti-bullying Policy.

Kentlyn Public School Staff

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Kentlyn Public School Staff

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Additional Information
Cybersmart School Gateway
Cyberbullying Stories
Bullying. No Way!
Racism. No Way!
National Safe Schools Week
National Centre Against Bullying
Kids Help Line

Related Information
The Department of Education and Communities has a number of very useful sites that may be of interest to you.
Bullying Among Young Children: A guide for parents