



# Megalong Public School Anti-Bullying Policy

2018

# Megalong Public School

## Anti-Bullying Policy

### Definition

Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or a group towards one or more persons.

Cyberbullying 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 and transgender.

Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved, including innocent bystanders.

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

### Different Types of Bullying may include:

#### **Physical:**

- Hitting/punching
- Pushing/shoving
- Kicking
- Throwing objects
- Taking other's belongings/stealing from others
- Damaging others belongings
- Spitting at 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

- Excluding individuals from online chats or other communication
- Assuming the identity of the victim online and representing them in a negative manner or manner that may damage their relationship with others
- Repeatedly and for no strategic reasons attacking players in online gaming
- Stealing passwords
- Blogs
- Websites

## Rationale

The NSW Department of Education 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. The policy applies to all student bullying behaviour, including cyberbullying that occurs in NSW government schools and preschools, and off school premises and outside of school hours where there is a clear and close relationship between the school and the conduct of the student. At Megalong Public School, we believe that every person, has the right to be treated as an individual and with dignity, every person has the right to feel safe and that every person has the right to be able to learn, free from anxiety. The school regards bullying of any kind – harassment, teasing, intimidation, cyber-bullying, rejection, intentional harming or hurting of a person or their property – as a serious matter.

## Aim

At Megalong Public School we value and show tolerance of others in a safe and supportive environment. We believe that everybody has the right to enjoy our school equally and feel safe, secure and accepted, regardless of colour, race, gender, popularity, athletic ability, intelligence, religion or nationality and foster positive relationships through our Student Welfare and explicit Teaching and Learning programs. All members of the school community are responsible for implementing and maintaining a whole school approach to address bullying as it occurs. The whole school community will work together to ensure that students' rights and responsibilities are sustained.

### Implementation

Students, teachers, parents, caregivers and members of the school community can expect:

- That students will be safe at school, free from bullying, harassment, intimidation and victimisation
- To be involved in the collaborative development of the school's Anti - Bullying Plan
- To know what is expected of them and others in relation to the Anti - Bullying Plan
- That all students will be provided with appropriate support when bullying occurs.

Students, teachers, parents, caregivers and members of the school community have a responsibility to:

- Promote positive relationships that respect and accept individual differences and diversity within the whole school community
- Contribute to the development of the Anti- Bullying Policy and support it through words and actions
- Actively work together to resolve incidents of bullying.

#### **Staff responsibilities:**

- Respect and support students
- To model appropriate behaviour at all times
- To have knowledge of school and Departmental policies relating to bullying behaviour
- To monitor and track incidences of bullying and respond in an appropriate and timely manner according to the school's Anti-Bullying Plan
- To communicate any bullying behaviour to their stage supervisor
- Provide curriculum and pedagogy that support students to develop an understanding of bullying and its impact on individuals and the broader community
- To implement school programs which promote positive relationships and positive psychology
- To communicate bullying incidences with parents when needed.

#### **Student responsibilities:**

- To behave appropriately at all times, respecting individual differences and diversity
- To behave as responsible digital citizens
- To follow the school Anti-Bullying Plan
- To behave as responsible bystanders
- To report incidents of bullying according to the school Anti-Bullying plan – both at school and on the way to and from school
- To attempt to use learnt strategies to deal with bullying incidents as outlined in the Bounce Back Program.

#### **Parent and caregivers responsibilities:**

- To support their children to become responsible citizens and to develop responsible online behaviour
- To be aware of and support the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and assist their children in understanding bullying behaviour
- To take an active role in their child's school life and watch for signs that their child may be being bullied
- To support their children in developing positive responses to incidents of bullying consistent with the school Anti-Bullying Plan
- To 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.

## **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 and Plan
- Open-door policy and transparent communication that nurture a productive and respectful relationship between all members of the school community
- Student Welfare programs including Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), Kids Matter, Friendly school, and the PdHPE curriculum
- Explicit teaching of the *T.H.I.N.K Before You Speak* Strategy and Marvin Marshall's *Raising Responsibility* framework
- 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 recognised, however, 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
- Restorative Practices
- 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

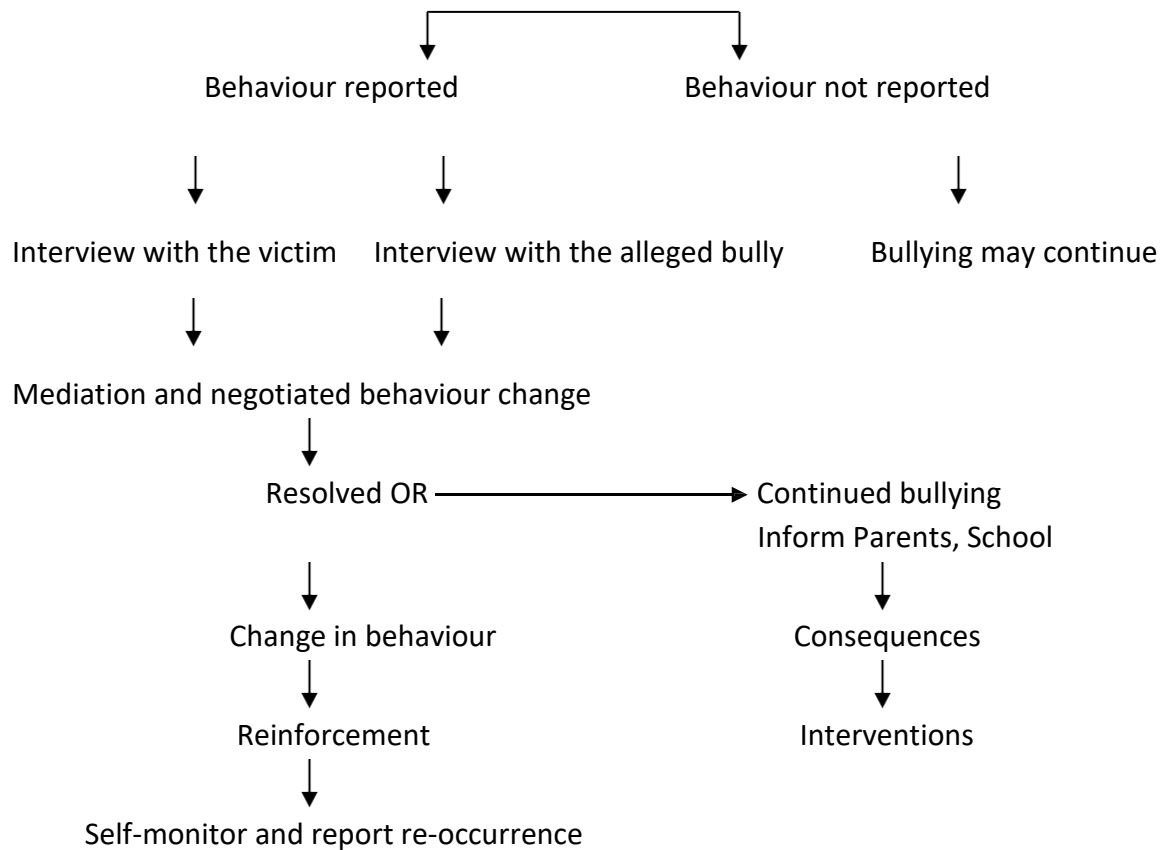
- Stay in sight of peers and staff
- Try to stay calm. Walk away without looking back
- Try to show you are not upset. Say something like: You might think that, but I don't or 'why are you doing this?'
- Try to speak in a strong voice. Express your feelings in an assertive way e.g. 'I want you to stop' or 'I don't like it'
- Talk to someone who can help you. (a teacher or your parent)
- Tell them what has happened, how you feel and what they can do to help.
- This is not dobbing!
- Never keep bullying a secret

## Procedures

### 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 school Student Welfare Policy and class rules
- Teacher on playground duty deals with smaller issues in the playground – if more serious in nature the teacher informs the Principal
- Have discussions with the students involved – take appropriate action
- Parents and class teacher work with student to look at underlying problems and seek solutions. Meetings with parents should be organised if there are serious concerns regarding bullying
- Principal works with parents and individuals to identify bullying behaviours where necessary
- School Counsellor and Learning Support Team and Department of Education Student Wellbeing Officers involved in individual programs if required
- Serious bullying incidents are recorded and consequences are in line with the School's Discipline Procedures
- Issues are resolved in a calm manner with as much time as necessary given to hearing what each student feels and assisting all students to feel more able to cope
- Principal will deal with major incidents of bullying and may need to refer to the DoE Suspension and Expulsion of Student Procedures.

## **BULLYING BEHAVIOUR OCCURS**



### **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
- Student's 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 involve.
- Implement appropriate responses to address the bullying using evidence-based responses such as restorative justice approaches 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 them (block their mobile number or email address)
  - ✓ Report any further correspondence from the bully to the parent 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 bullying distresses the student, ensure they are provided with options for psychological support including school counselling and the DoE Wellbeing Unit.

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

### Early Intervention

Some 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 will deal with this:

- Referral to Learning Support Team
- Using social skills programs
- Using Social stories and role play situations
- Develop a plan of action on how to cope with situations
- Find things the students are good at and celebrate the successes
- Promote leadership within the school amongst the students
- Using Peer Mediation to assist with small problems
- Liaise with families.

### Procedures for Reporting and Managing Incidents of Bullying

- Students are to report all incidents of bullying to a teacher immediately
- Parents with concerns about bullying should contact the school directly
- All bullying incidents are to be reported, taken seriously and dealt with by teachers and Principal (depending on the severity). These issues will be dealt with immediately or as



soon as practically possible. Key stakeholders will be advised of processes as required and appropriate

- 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 upset by being bullied or experiencing ongoing bullying of a peer
- The Anti- Bullying Policy and Plan will be available on the school website and regular information will be posted in the school's newsletter
- In regards to assaults, threats, intimidation and or harassment, these will be reported to the police by the Principal. The school safety and response unit will also be contacted where necessary. The schools handling critical incidences policy will be implemented in such incidences
- 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
- The Complaints Handling Policy may be used by parents if required
- Staff may access EAPS.

#### **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 taken to school even though it is close
- Takes the long way home or walks instead of catching the bus
- Possessions are damaged or missing
- Becoming withdrawn, appearing depressed or anxious, having mood swings, crying for no apparent reason
- Unable to explain bruises or 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
- Sleeps badly
- Wets the bed
- Gets angry with brothers or sisters
- Uses put-down language when speaking about others
- 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
- Oversensitive – feels that everyone is out to get him/her
- Unhappiness
- Loses temper often
- Quietness or depression
- Decline in academic performance
- Disturbing stories about the child – from other students, their friends or other adults contact with your child, are avoiding you, or hinting at things you don't know

## Monitoring and Evaluation

The Anti-Bullying Policy and Plan will be available through the school website and communicated through the school newsletter. The school will evaluate the Anti-Bullying Plan and policy annually. Reports will be made at P&C meetings. School Community will be surveyed on the effectiveness of our schools' Anti-Bullying Policy. The Principal will report all student welfare incidences at LST meetings.

### Additional Information

Police Youth Liaison Officer 4751 0299

Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800

[www.ncab.org.au](http://www.ncab.org.au) (National Centre Against Bullying)

[www.bullyingnoway.com.au](http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au)

[www.cybersmart.gov.au](http://www.cybersmart.gov.au)

[www.kidshelpline.com.au](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au)

[www.kidsmatter.edu.au](http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au)

### Principal's comment

Our school recognises that bullying is part of society and happens in all places. As a school, we will develop resilience in others and give students strategies to deal with bullying. The school will also work closely with any students who use bullying to gain power. The school's core values: cooperation, honesty, kindness, respect and responsibility, clearly support a culture of support and trust, and reject all forms of bullying behaviour.

### **Team Members who developed the plan**

Miriam Treton: School Principal

Nikki McCabe: Learning and Wellbeing Officer

### **School contact information**

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