Anti-bullying Plan
North Nowra Public School
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

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 (NSWDEC).

Statement of purpose

North Nowra Public School believes that all students have the right to learn in a safe and happy environment. Our overarching purpose is to create a school culture in which the values of respect, responsibility, cooperation and resilience are firmly embedded. We believe that by doing so we will develop positive relationships where bullying is less likely to occur.

We aim to be a place where children are free to learn, play and express themselves without fear of ridicule, intimidation or violence. The school encourages effective communication strategies whilst working together as a school community to change bullying behaviours.

The North Nowra school community has made a commitment to address bullying in our school in a supportive and consistent manner. We will do this by educating victims, bystanders and those who are bullying in a range of strategies and interventions to prevent, intervene and respond to bullying behaviours.

Staff and parents will model appropriate behaviour at all times. Behaviour that may be regarded as bullying will not be tolerated.

Protection

Bullying can be defined as 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 communications technology.

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

Conflict or fights that are single incidents are not defined as bullying.

Bullying can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation and victimisation of others, and all forms of harassment including that based on gender, race, disability, homosexuality or transgender.

Bullying behaviour can be:

- **Verbal** eg repeated and unwanted 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 and/or social networking sites

These behaviours are not tolerated at North Nowra Public School. There is a clear mandate for all members of the school community to take appropriate action if they recognise bullying behaviours occurring.

North Nowra Public School will implement a positive behaviour program and explicitly teach skills and strategies to reduce bullying behaviour; provide a framework in which victims and bystanders feel secure, supported and confident in reporting bullying; respond quickly and seriously against bullying; and support the emotional and social welfare and development of students who experience, witness or are bullying.
**Areas of Responsibility**

The responsibility of preventing and responding to bullying behaviour is shared amongst students, parents/caregivers and school staff. All members of the school community are responsible for following the school’s Anti-Bullying Plan.

**Students** have a responsibility to:

- Behave as respectful, responsible, cooperative and resilient school, community and cyber citizens.
- Recognise bullying as a variety of repeated harmful behaviours.
- Respond assertively as victims or bystanders of bullying in a manner consistent with the Anti-Bullying Plan.
- Report incidents of bullying to staff, and to follow reports up until they are satisfied that the incident has been addressed.

**Parents/Caregivers** have a responsibility to:

- Behave as respectful, responsible, cooperative and resilient school, community and cyber citizens.
- Support their child’s efforts in being a respectful, responsible, cooperative and resilient school, community and cyber citizen.
- Support their child (as victim or bystander) in recognising bullying behaviours and encourage them to respond assertively to incidents of bullying in a manner consistent with the Anti-Bullying Plan.
- Report incidents of bullying to staff, and to follow reports up until they are satisfied that the incident has been addressed.
- Work collaboratively with the school to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur.

**All School Staff** have a responsibility to:

- Behave as respectful, responsible, cooperative and resilient school, community and cyber citizens.
- Actively participate in, and be committed to, creating a positive school culture which fosters healthy social and emotional development in students and cultivates positives relationships in which bullying is less likely to occur. Enthusiastic participation in the school’s Positive Behaviour for Success (PBS) program is a demonstration of this commitment.
- Recognise bullying as a variety of repeated harmful behaviours, being vigilant in observing and intervening where necessary.
- Have knowledge of school and NSWDEC policies and plans relating to bullying.
- Respond promptly to reports of incidents of bullying as outlined in the Anti-Bullying Plan; and follow reports up until they are satisfied that the incident has been addressed.
- Assist in the provision and determination of appropriate support strategies for victims, bystanders and bullies.

**Identified staff with specific additional roles.**

**Teaching Staff** have a responsibility to:

- Explicitly teach students the knowledge and skills of how to respond assertively as victims or bystanders of bullying in a manner consistent with the Anti-Bullying Plan.
- Explicitly teach students the appropriate skills to be, and support their efforts in being, respectful, responsible, cooperative and resilient school, community and cyber citizens.
- Refer students of social and emotional concern (whether victim, bystander or bully) to the Learning and Support Team.
Executive Staff also have a responsibility to:

- Engage as a group in collaborative, reflective practices to analyse data on bullying in order to determine, design and implement effective school-wide or individual anti-bullying programs and support strategies.

- Take an active role in addressing reported incidents of bullying, following the guidelines and processes outlined in the Anti-Bullying Plan, including liaising between home and school in order to effectively manage incidents of bullying.

- Process documentation and record incidents on the school’s data system, SENTRAL.

- Provide ongoing support for all involved.

The School Counsellor has a responsibility to:

- Assist school staff to be informed of current best practice.

- Provide advice to the Learning and Support Team when bullying behaviour is identified and referred to the Learning and Support Team.

- Provide support and/or therapy to victims and perpetrators of bullying.

Additionally, the Principal has a responsibility to:

- Lead Executive staff and the wider school community in collaborative, reflective practices to analyse data on bullying in order to determine, design and implement effective school-wide or individual anti-bullying programs and support strategies.

- Ensure that the Anti-Bullying Plan reflects the current school community priorities; responds to evolving theories of best practice in this area and is implemented consistently and equitably.

- Allocate resources and staff as necessary and appropriate to effectively prevent, intervene and respond to bullying.

- Liaise with welfare agencies and seek NSWDEC support as necessary and appropriate to effectively prevent, intervene and respond to bullying.

The Learning and Support Team has a responsibility to:

- Respond to the referral of students by staff for social and emotional reasons by developing individual support strategies in consultation with class teachers, implementing conflict resolution/anti-bullying programs, or initiating whole school interventions as appropriate.

Creating a Positive Climate

The most significant strategy North Nowra Public School uses to create a positive climate of respectful relationships is the implementation of the school-wide Positive Behaviour for Success program that is woven into all aspects of school life – classroom and playground behaviour management strategies, reward and consequence systems, and the school’s cultural values. PBS was adopted in 2009 and is a well-regarded program with proven results in improving the behavioural climate and culture of schools. North Nowra Public School is committed to continuing to implement PBS.

North Nowra Public School is committed to offering students opportunities to be leaders and decision-makers. A Student Representative Council (SRC) established in 2014 will provide students with a forum for raising issues and subsequently, contribute to designing and implementing problem-solving and community-building activities. Students will have the opportunity to positively impact their school and student culture through the decisions they make as a group.

Our senior students participate in a School Leaders Program. Rather than selecting ‘Captains’, all students are given the opportunity to experience a variety of leadership roles including speaking at events, monitoring technology, implementing recycling programs, and caring for school...
equipment. They are regularly and publically celebrated as positive role models for younger students.

One of the roles of the Year 6 leaders is the “Buddy” program whereby, these students work closely with Kindergarten students to enhance the successful transition to school life and again, positively impact on the development of appropriate behaviours.

The school community is constantly engaged in consultation and dialogue around key issues such as student welfare programs, whole school events and supporting quality learning and teaching. Methods of communication include weekly newsletters, website updates, specialist information notes, parent/teacher meetings, regular staff meetings and workshops, and countless informal opportunities to connect. Executive staff all have ‘open door’ policies and are committed to collaborative management practices.

**Prevention**

**Social, Emotional and Welfare Support**

North Nowra Public School believes that bullying behaviour is often the symptom of a student’s low self-esteem or other social/emotional skills deficits. Victims of bullying often also exhibit under-developed social/emotional skills, insecurities or low self-esteem. Therefore, an important way to prevent bullying behaviours is to provide support to all students, but particularly those who are assessed as having social and/or emotional challenges.

Social/emotional support is offered to students through:

- A nurturing, positive school culture enhanced by our focus on, and explicit teaching of core PBS Values.
- The provision of rich learning experiences addressing NSW PDHPE Curriculum Outcomes.

**Education – Anti-Bullying Lessons**

Education has a significant role in the prevention of bullying behaviour. Students need to understand the causes and effects of bullying; have opportunity to practise bystander interventions and victim assertions; and to have a clear understanding of how to access their social and emotional support network.

North Nowra Public School has developed a series of ‘Anti-Bullying Lessons’ that draw on PDHPE Curriculum Outcomes and teach communication, inter-relationship and problem-solving skills. These are taught each year, supported by stage-appropriate activities. Teachers adapt lessons to address particular issues/arising problems within the social relationships of their students. The key themes of the Anti-Bullying Lessons, and specific school-wide strategies that are included within them, are reviewed with the Anti-Bullying Plan to ensure that they are up-to-date and remain in line with NSWDEC policies.

These lessons particularly focus on the role of the ‘bystander’. Research has shown that bullying behaviour is less likely to re-occur if witnesses intervene, rather than providing an active or passive audience that condones the behaviour (Ken Rigby, 2012). We are committed to creating a culture within the school where individuals feel safe and have the necessary skills to take a positive bystander role and either intervene in, or report instances of bullying.

Engaging media, including contemporary movies and music, and theatre will be used to enhance explicit teaching. Students will view performances that specifically examine the issues of bullying and cyber-bullying when available and appropriate.

**Early Intervention**

Through the Anti-Bullying Lessons, students are taught to assert themselves and report incidents of bullying both as a victim or bystander. Students practise the following phrases in role-play situations and are prompted by staff to use these when experiencing social problems:

1. **Stop** - “Stop it, Jane, I don’t like it when you...”
2. **Walk** - “Stop it, Jane, or I will tell the teacher.”
3. **Talk** - Go and tell someone you trust

These are commonly known as ‘The Anti-Bullying Steps’ and are widely used with the NSW education system. This provides continuity for students as they move from one school to another, from preschool to
primary to high-school and, eventually, out into the community. Research has shown that bullying behaviours are more likely to cease when the unwanted behaviour is clearly named, and when a bystander intervenes. The ‘Anti-Bullying Steps’ are easily modified to be the same statements used by a bystander e.g. "Stop it, Jane, I don't like it when you pull Tom's hair."

As part of the PBS value, Resilience, students are counselled to report the problem. Parents are advised to report the problem to the school if they become aware of bullying.

School staff are aware of the need to respond to reports of bullying in a serious and timely fashion.

Staff will be diligent, consistent and vigilant in identifying and reporting bullying behaviours. Our Behaviour Management/Consequences system includes opportunities to record and communicate incidents of bullying providing data on its recurring nature, victims and bystanders.

Minor incidents are recorded in the Playground Duty Folder and communicated to classroom teachers. Major incidents are recorded through Behaviour Slips on SENTRAL and are managed by Executive Staff who develop a sense of patterns and individuals involved in bullying incidents. A referral to the Learning and Support Team is completed after a number of ‘major’ incidents.

Students will also be referred to the Learning and Support Team (LST) who are identified as being at risk of developing long-term difficulties with social relationships and those students who are identified at, or after enrolment, as having previously experienced bullying or engaged in bullying behaviour.

Social and Emotional Learning Support

The Learning and Support Team(LST) includes the Principal and Executive staff, Learning and Support Teachers, the School Counsellor. The Defence Service Transition Aide (DSTA) is also a key person in referring and managing bullying. The LST makes recommendations and implements support programs that meet the individual learning needs of students. Programs developed to intervene in bullying behaviours may include strategies such as:

- The Classroom Teacher or Learning and Support Teacher teaching explicit skills using whole class or small group sessions.
- Available and relevant staff (eg Learning and Support Teacher, DSTA) offering programs focussing on boys’/girls’ social development such as “Every Girl”, resilience programs.
- The School Counsellor undertaking or recommending psychological and / or emotional assessment.
- The School Counsellor / Principal liaising with other relevant support agencies.

Response

Our Anti-Bullying Plan can be accessed through our school website and is available from the school office. Summaries of the plan are also provided on enrolment. These summaries contain a clear definition of bullying and its specific behaviours. They also contain descriptions of responsible bystander behaviour and appropriate responses to bullying.

Students are explicitly taught how to recognise, respond and behave when experiencing bullying, as detailed in our ‘Prevention’ strategy. This is part of the Personal Development and Health program.

Teachers participate in ongoing professional learning regarding PBS, behaviour management and procedures for preventing, reporting and managing bullying.

Teachers respond to reports of perceived bullying by counselling all students involved immediately whenever possible. Teachers will refer students to the school executive if counselling does not remedy the behaviour and a pattern of bullying behaviour is identified. Behaviour slips are utilised and include the names of all students involved. These slips are provided to executive staff immediately or, as a minimum requirement, on the same day that the incident has occurred in order to implement procedures quickly.
All incidents of perceived bullying are recorded as incidents in the student welfare database. This enables repeated behaviour or a pattern of behaviour to be identified.

The Student Welfare Procedures are regularly communicated to families, published on the school website and available from the office.

Executive staff use a wide range of strategies to respond to incidents. The unique nature of incidents requires individual responses. All will involve direct communication between staff and students, and usually, staff and parents/carers. Students are led through a process of identifying:

- specific behaviour that is unacceptable or causing harm
- the consequences of this behaviour for others
- their role in the incident
- possible alternate actions or responses that could have avoided or resolved the incident
- actions that can minimise harm or show acceptance of responsibility eg sanctions, apologies, conversations.

Students who have been affected by, engaged in or witnessed bullying behavior are all offered the opportunity to participate in a range of programs implemented as part the Student Welfare structures and programs in the school.

These may include:

- Peer Mediation (Student Leaders are trained as mediators and resolve minor disputes with the supervision and support of staff)
- Teacher-led Mediation (Using Restorative Practices)
- Boys2Men (Boys have semi-formal interactions with men from their local communities as role models, drawing on the work of educational psychologist Steve Biddulph and the theory of supporting young boys in their transition to manhood)
- Student Engagement (Activities such as gardening, cooking, clay sculpting that offer an experience of success and accomplishment outside of traditional classroom learning experiences)
- A variety of programs offered at the professional discretion of our School Counsellor.

The Principal or Executive Staff will have phone and/or written contact with parents/carers providing regular updates, within the bounds of privacy legislation, about the management of bullying incidents that have been reported at the school.

The consequences for bullying behaviour may include redirection and counselling; time-out from class or the playground; in-school suspension or suspension from school. Time-out and suspension procedures are used in accordance with NSWDEC policies on these matters.

The staff of North Nowra Public School implements the policies and procedures of the NSWDEC. If incidents occur that require notification to the police according to NSWDEC policy, this procedure is followed eg, serious assaults, threats or harassment.

If it is identified that a child is at risk of serious harm due to bullying, a report will be made to either (or both) the Child Wellbeing Unit and Family and Community Services as per policy and procedures for child protection and wellbeing.

Parents/carers are informed through the newsletter and parent information book about the NSWDEC Complaints Handling guidelines. If parents/carers have concerns about bullying behaviour and/or the management of bullying in the school, it is recommended that they discuss the concerns with the Principal. In the event that parents/carers remain dissatisfied with the resolution to their concerns, they can contact the NSWDEC to lodge a complaint.

Our recording system/data base is SENTRAL which contains mechanisms that automatically flag repeated incidents and reports of bullying. The system records all those involved, and it is possible to identify regular victims or bystanders of bullying behaviour. Students who demonstrate bullying behaviour (3 incidents recorded) will be referred to the Learning and Support Team. It is anticipated that this will not be their first referral to the LST; repeated referral will ensure that students remain a priority for this team and joint responsibility is taken amongst staff for urgently responding and supporting students.

As incidents of bullying are recorded on the school database, it is possible to measure whether the prevention and intervention programs are...
effective in reducing bullying behavior. The Learning and Support team and the PBS committee review data on a regular basis. Additionally, from time to time, the school self-evaluation committee will conduct an evaluation of the anti-bullying plan.

As required by the NSWDEC, the anti-bullying plan will be reviewed each year by the student welfare and fair discipline committee. It will be presented to the Parents and Citizens Association for endorsement. The committee will utilise data on bullying for consideration during the review of the anti-bullying plan. The Student Representative Council will also be involved in the review of the anti-bullying plan and the procedures and interventions that are in place to manage incidents of bullying. The anti-bullying plan for this school will be available on the school website.

**Additional Information**
There are a range of community services available to support children and families. The following services are free and may be contacted for advice and support when required:

- **Kids Helpline** 1800 551 800
- **Parent Line** 1300 130 052
- **Salvation Army Youth Line** 1300 363 622

**School contact information**

North Nowra Public School

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**Principal’s comment**
An effective anti-bullying plan requires commitment and co-operation from staff, students and families. This plan includes preventative strategies as well as intervention programs and response strategies. The staff at this school endeavour to maintain and implement best practice in preventing and responding to bullying behaviour. The staff at this school recognise the possibility of long term effects from bullying at school. Hence, the staff work hard and co-operatively with the school community to keep children at this school in a safe and happy environment to learn. The consistent message from staff is that bullying is not acceptable and will not be tolerated at this school. Students are explicitly taught the expected behaviours associated with the school values of respect, responsibility, co-operation and resilience. They are also explicitly taught how to manage situations when they feel that they are being bullied.

The following people were involved in the development of this plan:

- **Julie Ashby** Principal
- **Bronwyn Payne** Learning and Support Teacher
- **Amanda Volpatti** Parent representative
- **Alice Foerster** Learning and Engagement Consultant

The plan involved consultation with school staff, the P & C Association and the wider community through the school newsletter.

(Adopted by the North Nowra Public school P & C Association at meeting held 16 September, 2014.)