



Education &
Communities

Anti-bullying Plan

Castle Cove 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.

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.

Statement of purpose

Castle Cove Public School has amongst its aims the provision of an environment in which each student is personally involved in the school community and where they can each develop as a person of integrity, social conscience and courage. We aim to establish a community in which everybody feels valued and safe, and where individual differences are appreciated, understood and accepted.

Our community does not tolerate any forms of bullying or harassment and has a zero tolerance position in this area. Respect for others is expected and encouraged.

DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF ALL INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS TO BE FREE FROM BULLYING

- Everyone has the right to feel safe and be safe at school.
- Everyone has the right to be accepted and respected as they are.
- Everyone has the right to be happy about coming to school.
- Everyone has the right to have his or her concerns taken seriously and appropriate action taken.
- Everyone has the right to have his or her concerns dealt with in private.
- Everyone has the right to a quality educational program devoid of disruption.

AIMS

- To create a culture and environment where everyone has a shared responsibility for each other's welfare.
- To educate and engage the school community (teachers, parents and students) on the issue of bullying.
- To build trust and respect between all groups.
- To reinforce within the school community what bullying is and that it is unacceptable behaviour.
- To assist students to resolve conflicts and differences without bullying.
- To encourage all members of the school community to be alert to signs and evidence of bullying, to have a responsibility to report it to teachers, parents and/or peers.
- To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up appropriately and that support is given to victims and the bullies.
- To seek parental and peer group support and co-operation at all times.
- To foster a happy school climate where students feel safe and confident that teachers will listen and follow through concerns.

Protection

Our school understands that bullying is a form of repeated aggressive behaviour, which is usually hurtful and deliberate; sometimes continuing for weeks, months or even years and it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. Underlying most forms of bullying behaviour is an abuse of power and a desire to intimidate and dominate. (Sharp & Smith, 1994)

These following are some examples of bullying:

- Any form of physical violence such as hitting, pushing or spitting on others.
- Interfering with another's property by stealing, hiding, damaging or destroying it.
- Using offensive names, teasing or spreading rumours about others.
- Posting or sending offensive material to others via text, Internet or other digital communication
- Using "put-downs" or belittling others'.
- Writing offensive notes or graffiti about others.
- Making degrading comments about another's culture, religious or social background.
- Hurtfully excluding others from a group.
- Ridiculing another's appearance
- Forcing others to act against their will.

Bullying behaviour in all its forms is not tolerated by this school community. Castle Cove Public School takes a proactive approach to prevent bullying behaviours, intervening early and responding appropriately should incidents of bullying occur. The rest of this document goes on to explain our processes in further detail.

The Anti-Bullying Plan – NSW Department of Education and Communities

All members of our community share in the responsibility to prevent and respond to bullying, following the procedures outlined in this document.

Prevention

The prevention of bullying at Castle Cove Public School is the responsibility of all members of the community.

The school will:

- Program units of work that cater for gender, ability, cultural and ethnic diversity to ensure all students are able to access the curriculum in an equitable manner without feeling excluded.
- Provide professional development in identifying the processes for preventing and responding to student bullying specifically cyber-bullying
- Respond in a timely manner to incidents of bullying in accordance with the school's anti-bullying plan.
- Educate all stake holders in the schools' anti-bullying and cyber-bullying policies.

Prevention programs provided by the school are explicitly taught each year. These programs include:

- Safe Living program for all students at beginning of every school year.
- Cyber safety programs for all students
- The Bounce Back & UR Strong programs for all students.
- Units of study across the curriculum which foster and encourage respect and appreciation for students' diversity.

Early Intervention

Castle Cove Public School takes a proactive approach in identifying students who are at risk of developing long term difficulties with social relationships, including experiencing or engaging in bullying behaviour. The Learning Support Team and Student Welfare coordinator use a

range of reporting and tracking systems to identify students who may be at risk. If a child is considered to be at risk, a number of early intervention strategies are used.

Examples of early intervention strategies include:

- Social Skills programs targeted at specific needs, run within the classroom, or in small groups with the LaST
- Lunch Club to provide a calm and supported social environment with positive role models and LaST
- Buddy mentoring programs to teach playground games.
- Case management for students with specific needs.
- Positive Behaviour Support processes to help students with specific needs develop appropriate social behaviours.

Response

The whole school community shares the responsibility to recognise and respond appropriately to bullying, harassment and victimisation and behave as responsible bystanders. Castle Cove Public school seeks to empower its community to do this using strategies including:

- Parent information sessions to build a shared understanding of how to recognise and respond appropriately to incidents of bullying.
- Website support including a copy of the school's anti bullying plan, and resources to assist families recognise and respond to bullying.
- A common definition of bullying is defined and discussed in all classes periodically throughout the year.
- Social skills lessons are taught to students through specific units of work that cater for current needs such as;
 - How to recognise and respond appropriately to incidents of bullying.

- Students' moral responsibility as bystanders.

Any concerns about bullying should be reported to the school as early as possible. These include concerns not only about what might be happening to you or someone in your family, but also to any student in our school community.

Students and parents can report concerns to the classroom teacher, the school office or any member of the school executive team. Students and parents are encouraged to use a range of reporting methods to suit their needs including in person, email, letters or using the online form on the school website.

When a report is made, it is helpful to provide as much factual information as possible, including where possible, names, dates and details of any incidents. This will assist in the investigation process.

All reports of bullying are investigated carefully following procedures outlined below.

Procedures for reporting and investigating bullying are publicised on the school website and discussed in class during anti-bullying and social skills lessons.

What happens when an incident of bullying is reported?

The school responds to reports of bullying using the following procedures.

- Teachers determine whether the incident fits the agreed definition of bullying in the school Anti Bullying Plan
- If the incident falls outside the agreed definition, it is dealt with following the procedures in the school's Student Welfare Policy.
- If the incident appears to fit the agreed definition of bullying, or there is sufficient cause for concern, an investigation of the incident will take place. Investigations typically take up to one week and ensure procedural fairness for all concerned.
- Feedback following the investigation is then provided to the person who made the report.

- If the investigation determines that bullying is occurring then appropriate interventions and/or disciplinary actions are taken following procedures in the Student Welfare Policy.

If an incident is determined to be bullying, the principal appoints a case management team. This will typically include the principal, classroom teacher, student welfare coordinator, LaST and other members of staff whom the principal deems appropriate. The case management team plan and implement a range of interventions appropriate to the particular incident of bullying. Interventions may include, but are not limited to:

- social skills support for the victim, bystanders and the students engaging in bullying behaviours
- referral to the school counsellor
- playground restriction programs that limit the contact between bully and victim
- disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Welfare Policy
- Ongoing monitoring by the case management team.
- Throughout the case management period, regular updates are provided to parents and caregivers of students involved, within the bounds of privacy legislation.
- Reported incidents of bullying, and their follow up, are monitored using Sentral tracking software. This provides data that allows evaluation and adaptation of school procedures. The school executive use this information to identify and respond to patterns of bullying behaviour.

The Castle Cove Public School Anti-Bullying Plan is available for all parents and community via the school's website. It is promoted through school information evenings, and during class anti-bullying and social skills lessons.

Reported incidents of bullying, and their follow up, are monitored using Sentral tracking software. This provides data that allows evaluation and adaptation of school procedures.

The Anti-Bullying Plan – NSW Department of Education and Communities

The effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Plan is reported on annually to the school community through the Annual School Report. The school executive use this information to identify and respond to patterns of bullying behaviour.

The Anti-Bullying Plan is reviewed every three years by the student welfare committee. Data from the Sentral tracking software is used as part of this evaluation along with feedback from staff, students and parents.

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