

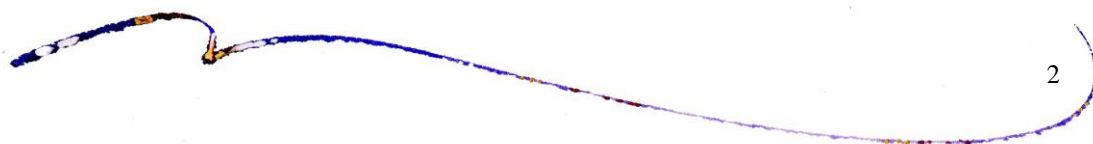
Policy Review Timeline			
Date of review	Reviewed by:	Actions taken	Next review date
May 2016	College of Teachers Education Manager	<i>Bullying and Harassment section removed from Social Welfare and Discipline Policy to be a stand-alone policy: Anti-Bullying Policy</i>	May 2017

Mumbulla School for Rudolf Steiner Education

Anti-Bullying Policy

Developing social skills and values and empowering children, teachers and parents to prevent and respond positively to harmful behaviour.

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1.0 POLICY STATEMENT:

Students, teachers, parents, caregivers and members of the wider school community have a shared responsibility to create a safe and happy environment for children, free from all forms of bullying.

Bullying must be taken seriously and is not acceptable in any form. Students have the right to expect that they will spend the school day free from fear of bullying, harassment, intimidation or victimisation.

This policy builds on and should be read in conjunction with Mumbulla School's *Student Welfare and Discipline Policy*.

2.0 POLICY CONTENT

2.1 Definition:

- Bullying is deliberate and often repeated;
- Bullying intends to cause fear, distress, hurt or harm to another;
- Bullying is action by a more powerful individual or group over a less powerful individual or group.

Bullying may take many forms, all of which cause distress. Examples of bullying behaviours include:

- **Physical** - hitting, pushing, tripping, kicking, spitting on others;
- **Verbal** - teasing, using offensive names, ridiculing, spreading rumours;
- **Non-Verbal** - writing offensive notes or graffiti about others, using email, text messaging or other forms of social media to hurt others, rude gestures;
- **Exclusion** - deliberately excluding others from group, refusing to sit next to someone;
- **Extortion** - threatening to take someone's possessions, food or money;
- **Property** - stealing, hiding, damaging or destroying property;
- **Cyber** - any form of bullying which is carried out through electronic means such as mobile phones, email, chat room, social networking, 'sms', web page.

Bullying may be *malign* if it consciously seeks to do harm to someone, or it may be *non-malign* which is less conscious but often may be of longer duration.

2.2 What Are the Effect of Bullying?

Regardless of the type of bullying, the results for the victim are similar. They can include:

- **emotional** effects such as mood swings, sleep disturbances, depression, low self-esteem and anxiety.
- **social** effects such as negative body language, withdrawal, increased sibling rivalry, isolation and hyper-vigilance.
- **behavioural** effects such as outbursts of temper, decline in work standards, truancy and other forms of acting out.

(See Attachment A: Anti-Bully Information to help Parents)

3.0 STRATEGIES AND PROCEDURES

3.1 How do we prevent bullying at Mumbulla School?

We believe that prevention strategies through education involving the whole school community are more likely to reduce bullying. Therefore, at Mumbulla School we recognise that we all share the responsibility to prevent bullying.

Mumbulla School endeavours to deal with bullying quickly and effectively. Strategies for dealing with and preventing bullying are linked to the school's *Student Welfare and Discipline Policy and Handbook* and encompass a range of options available to deal with unacceptable behaviours, including suspension and expulsion.

3.2 At Mumbulla School we adopt the following strategies to prevent bullying:

- a) Explicit teaching of positive behaviours embedded within the curriculum addressing positive relationships, conflict resolution, resilience and bystander action. See the following associated documents and resources for specific strategies and practices that are used at the school:
 - *"Rights and Responsibilities"* section of *Student Welfare and Discipline Policy*;
 - *Attachment A of Student Welfare and Discipline Policy: Class by Class Suggestions for Teaching Social Behaviour*;
 - *Attachment B of this policy: Methods of Challenging Bullying for Bystanders*
 - KidsMatter website <https://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/>;
 - BounceBack! program designed to teach social and emotional skills.
- b) vigilant classroom, playground and transition supervision;
- c) promote a climate of friendliness and trust throughout the whole school and within each class to minimise the likelihood of bullying occurring, and so that children feel it is safe to report problems;
- d) encourage co-operative and fair play. Notice and encourage healthy play and positive social behaviour;
- e) use supportive language;
- f) focus any criticism on the behaviour and not the child;
- g) refer to good/wise and bad/unwise choices;
- h) not use the word "bully" or "victim" as a label for a child. Labelling will not help to change the behaviour, and may entrench it further;

- i) clarify expectations at the start of each year. (see *Attachment A of Student Welfare and Discipline Policy: Class by Class Suggestions for Teaching Social Behaviour*);
- j) strengthen the role of bystanders in preventing bullying behaviour and in putting a stop to it. Methods of challenging bullying will be explicitly taught. (see *Attachment B: Methods of Challenging Bullying for Bystanders*);
- k) Provide extra support for children who have specific learning and/or social difficulties associated with a diagnosis. (Children of concern section of College meetings is a regular opportunity for shared issues of concern);
- l) Use social stories to help explain social situations and for teaching particular social skills especially for children with difficulty understanding social dynamics and cues.

3.3 At Mumbulla School students are encouraged to:

- take some positive action to stop the bullying if they observe an incident (see *Attachment B: Challenging Bullying for Bystanders*);
- report the bullying incident to a teacher as soon as possible (see Attachment D: *Walk Talk Tell*)

3.4 At Mumbulla School teachers and staff are expected to:

- respond in a positive and timely manner to stop incidents of bullying according to the *Anti-Bullying Policy* and *Student Welfare and Discipline Policy and Handbook*;
- pass on information about any reported or observed bullying behaviours to the Education Manager and the Class Teacher/s for further action;
- provide active supervision at play times, be observant of social interactions and be aware of any signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying.

3.5 At Mumbulla School parents are encouraged to:

- listen to their child and encourage their child to speak to their class teacher;
- communicate with class teacher/s about their children's reported experiences as parents can often hear of problems before teachers;
- NOT approach another child about a social behaviour or discipline issue;
- speak to their child's teacher before approaching any other parent about an issue;
- become familiar with and refer to the section on bullying on the KidsMatter website <https://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/mental-health-matters/bullying>

Teachers make use of strategies and recommendations outlined by **KidsMatter** along with making appropriate use of the social-emotional learning strategies as outlined in the program **BounceBack!**

3.6 How do we respond to bullying at Mumbulla School?

Bullying is viewed as a major breach of the school rules and behavioural expectations and therefore follow up action will align with our school *Social Welfare and Discipline Policy and Handbook*.

Any reports of bullying will be investigated and appropriate action will be taken promptly. The response to bullying will include:

- a) guidance and other support for the recipient of the bullying (eg re-skilling and re-

- teaching of strategies, resilience and social skills, counselling, conflict management skills, social networking etc).
- b) guidance and support for 'bystanders', 'supporters' and witnesses of the bullying (eg intervention strategies etc),
 - c) age appropriate and consistent sanctions for the student who is bullied (i.e. consistent with the school's *Student Welfare and Discipline Policy and Handbook*).
 - d) interventions and support for the student who bullied included in a Behaviour Support Plan (eg specific interventions developed to reduce the bullying behaviour, teaching of replacement behaviours, reinforcers etc).
 - e) where appropriate, informing parents and involving them in any action and follow up.

3.7 Procedures for investigating bullying and follow up

In discerning appropriate responses to bullying, the collective welfare of the school community will be balanced with the individual needs of the student.

Recommended resource for interviewing and follow up of bullying incidents – see Attachment C: *Structured Interview Technique* from "*Breaking the Cycle of Victimisation.*"

1. Preliminary interview(s) will be conducted to ascertain the specific nature of the bullying. These interviews should be with individuals initially (ie student being bullied, students witnessing bullying, student engaging in bullying behaviour, staff etc).
2. The initial interviews should focus on the safety of individuals. This should include:
 - a clear statement on the consequences if the bullying continues or if there are any reprisals as a result of the reporting of the incident.
 - immediate preventative actions that will be implemented to avoid further incidents.

Decisions will be made as to the level of severity of the incident and whether the parents of those involved need to be informed.

3. Follow up interviews should focus on appropriate strategies to assist and support all involved within a Behaviour Support Plan. This Plan will specifically identify the inappropriate behaviours, name the replacement behaviours, outline strategies to support the replacement behaviours and reinforcers (both negative and positive) when behaviours occur.
 - A record of the separate interviews should be kept.
 - Regular monitoring and follow up with the students involved is necessary. For example daily, prior to and after break times.
 - Review of the Behaviour Support Plan will take place to modify strategies and supports within an agreed timeframe. For example, twice termly.
4. Any further recurrence of bullying may result in an issue of warning for suspension which could lead to the implementation of suspension procedures and, if

necessary, removal of the student from the school. See Section 3.3.4 of *Student Welfare and Discipline Policy and Handbook*.

4.0 VIOLENT OR AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR

All forms of violent behaviour, including habitual bullying, are not condoned. In instances where this behaviour is seen to be pre-meditated and in cases where this behaviour has become a pattern of response by a student, Mumbulla School has set out the following **procedure**:

- a. When a serious incident of aggressive and violent behaviour occurs outside the classroom but during school hours the class teacher and Education Manager will be notified immediately.
- b. The class teacher and/or appropriate available staff member will follow Restorative Justice practices (see *Student Welfare and Discipline Policy and Handbook, Attachment D: Restorative Justice Practices*) and Structured Interview Technique (*Attachment C* of this policy).
- c. Where the incident is severe and involves a student with a history of violent behaviour, the Education Manager will be notified, parent/s or carer/s will be called, and the student will be immediately suspended for two days;
- d. If a student has been suspended, the class teacher and the Education Manager, will meet with the student and parents to set out conditions for the student returning to school (See *Social Welfare and Discipline Policy Attachment E: Behaviour Support Plan* template);
- e. Any further aggressive or violent behaviour will result in an immediate one-week suspension;
- f. Re-admission to the school will be considered after discussion between the Education Manager, class teacher, College of Teachers and the Board.

5.0 RELATED LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

5.1 Student Welfare and Discipline Policy and Handbook

Mumbulla School aims to create a safe and caring environment which fosters healthy social and emotional development.

Collaboration between school staff, students and parent/s or carer/s is an important feature of Mumbulla School's *Student Welfare and Discipline Policy*.

When parents enrol their children at Mumbulla School they enter into a partnership with the school which is reflected in the school's Enrolment and Fee Contracts.

The school does not sanction, either implicitly or explicitly, the administration of corporal punishment by teachers, staff or parents to enforce discipline.

Bullying and harassment will not be tolerated at any level.

For full details of our welfare and behaviour policy and procedures please refer to *Student Welfare and Discipline Policy and Handbook*.

5.2 Child Protection Policy

Mumbulla School values a safe and supportive environment for all students. Our prime concern is for the happiness and well-being of each child in our school. We foster an environment where the care and protection of children is paramount. Child protection is an important facet in keeping children safe.

Mumbulla School adopts both a prevention and response focus. Prevention is important and teachers present in-class child protection programs. They also have staff training in Child Protection and current legislation. A response focus has been developed through relevant training courses, including Association of Independent Schools NSW training courses. The Education Manager, in consultation with the Management Team is responsible for this area, including investigation of reports and incidences.

See separate policy documents including the Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct for Staff, Parents and Students.

5.3 Code of Conduct for Staff and Parents/Guardians

The school sets out general expectations of the standards of behaviour required by staff and parents/guardians at Mumbulla School. This policy places an obligation on all employees and parent/carers to take responsibility for their own conduct and to interact with others cooperatively to achieve a consultative and collaborative learning place where people are happy, safe and proud to be.

For full details of our code of conduct procedures please refer to Code of Conduct for Staff and Parents/Guardians.

ATTACHMENT A

ANTI – BULLYING INFORMATION TO HELP PARENTS

The school has a Student Welfare and Discipline Policy and Handbook which clearly sets out Rights and Responsibilities as well as Strategies and Procedures used throughout the school to encourage harmonious social behaviour and to prevent and deal with bullying and other harmful behaviour. The following information has been adapted from the brochure *Bullying: Information for Parents* by the NSW Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs.

Bullying is a serious issue for children. In order to prevent and deal with it, parents, teachers and children all need to take a proactive, cooperative, supportive and positive approach. You as a parent are very important in helping your child if a problem arises. Bullying usually happens out of sight and away from teachers or other adults. Children who are experiencing bullying often don't like to tell anyone because it makes them feel weak or ashamed or because they think it will make no difference or even make things worse. They might also feel it is wrong to "dob".

Children often will tell their parents before they tell a teacher about difficulties with other children. However, even telling parents can be difficult. The sooner children can speak about it, the sooner the behaviour can be stopped and less harm will be done. Nipping bullying early can avoid patterns of reaction that can become a negative cycle.

Children need to:

- feel believed and listened to;
- develop trust in how parents will handle it;
- talk more openly about what has happened;
- gain some control over what is happening;
- learn things they can do to protect themselves; and
- regain self-confidence

What you can do:

Be aware of telltale signs. These will not always indicate bullying but a cluster should raise concern:

- unexplained minor injuries such as bruises and scratches
- torn clothing
- damaged or missing belongings
- unusual headaches, tummy aches or other unexplained pains.
- unexplained tears or depression
- increased aggressiveness towards younger siblings
- unusual temper outbursts
- unwilling to go to school
- not wanting to play with friends
- not wanting to go on the bus
- taking money or asking for it without giving a reason

It helps if parents:

- listen to what children say
- tell them they understand
- involve the children in making decisions about what to do.

It does not help if parents:

- get angry or upset
- feel guilty or ashamed
- make the children think it is not important
- blame the children
- blame the school
- accuse people without knowing the facts
- look for scapegoats
- demand to know all the details at once
- look for easy solutions
- encourage children to retaliate.

Many parents do get angry, quite understandably, and want to go to the school and sort it out NOW! This is usually not the best first step. For one thing, the child will almost certainly be reluctant to involve the school straight away because something they would rather keep quiet could be spread around. The child might also feel at risk of revenge.

As a first step, it is usually best to:

- encourage the child to talk through it as far as he or she wants to, so you get the basic facts straight
- try to keep an open mind, remembering you are hearing one part of the story only
- ask questions gently
- help the child reflect on what has been done so far
- help the child work out what might be done.

It is important to find out:

- what happened
- who was involved
- where
- when
- did anybody else see it, and if so, who?

It is a good idea to write down what you find out.

There are some important next steps to consider:

- Never try to deal with the perpetrators yourself. This rarely works and often makes matters worse.
- Once you have a clear picture of the situation, and some idea about how you and the child would prefer to handle it, contact the school.
- Make an appointment to see the class teacher or whoever you think would be best to see. Don't barge in.
- Present the information you have as calmly as possible.

- Do it in a way that makes it clear to the school that you see yourself and the school as partners in trying to fix this situation. Tell the school what you and your child would like to do, and ask them for ideas as well.
- The school will need time to investigate the matter and to talk to teachers, other students and even other parents if that's the best thing to do. Remember the school staff may not have seen the incidents and it is not always easy to judge if it is bullying or whether it is a case of one child not understanding another's feelings very well.
- Make a note of what the school says it will do, and arrange to make a follow-up call to see what has been done.

Helping Your Child Cope

If the bullying is happening on the way to or from school, see if your child can go a different way or join up with other children. This might help while things are being sorted out. It might also be possible for your child to be paired with another more robust child for the time being. The school could help with this.

If your child finds it hard to make friends, encourage them to reach out. Suggest 'joining in' strategies. You may like to talk to the teacher about this aspect. One good friend can make a big difference. Invite school friends home to strengthen any relationships at school.

Talk to your child about some of the things that have happened, and discuss ways of dealing with them, such as:

- pretending not to hear hurtful comments;
- using silent "self-talk" such as "*That's their problem, not mine*", or "*I'm OK*", to reinforce self-confidence;
- developing greater self-assertiveness, so as to be able to face the bullying without becoming scared, upset, abusive or violent; and
- believing that it is OK to tell someone when bullying happens – that it is not "dobbing".

It is important that children understand the difference between "dobbing in" and reporting something serious.

Occasionally, parents who are well meaning can make things worse for a child by showing too much alarm. While it is very important to respond to children's distress, it can help if parents maintain a positive approach especially in the language used.

It is important to acknowledge yourself and to encourage children to acknowledge the good things that have happened during the school day. By only paying attention to the negative, children can attach greater importance to it and this can increase their feelings of anxiety.

How we greet children in the afternoon can make a difference. Rather than, "*Did anyone give you a hard time today?*", we can ask open questions about various aspects of their day, and show real interest in everything they say, not just focusing on difficulties.

If parents believe that their own anxiety around this or any other issue is creating more anxiety for their children, it is worth seeking help for themselves to address this, as calm and confident parents are able to provide the best support for children.

Refer to KidsMatter website: <https://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/>

Information available on the website is also available in hard copy in the school library.



ATTACHMENT B

METHODS OF CHALLENGING BULLYING – FOR BYSTANDERS

(These are just some examples. Children can add to them during discussion or role play.)

Some things you can say to the person being bullied:

- *“Are you OK?”*
- *“Would you like me to help?”*
- *“You can ask ... to stop doing/saying that. Just say STOP!”*
- *“Come and play somewhere else.”*

Some things you can say to the person who is acting in a bullying way:

- *“Are you listening to...?”*
- *“...doesn't like you doing/saying that.”*
- *“... thinks you are teasing not joking.”*

If the bullying doesn't stop get a staff member.

What to tell the children:

- *“Remember, if you see bullying happening and you DON'T say anything to stop it, then the person doing the bullying will think you agree with what they are doing. But if you DO challenge the bullying, then not only will you be helping now but you will also make it less likely to happen in the future.”*

ATTACHMENT C

STRUCTURED INTERVIEW TECHNIQUE

“Breaking the Cycle of Victimisation”

(AIS article by Lyn Harrison in *Special Education*, Term 3 1999)

For many schools, there is an absence of skills in terms of how teachers talk to the victims of bullying. Traditionally, we have said to students, “Just ignore it” or “Stand up for yourself”. These are simplistic solutions which neither empower the child nor take into account the cast individual variables in any occurrence of bullying. What happens when these suggestions do not work? The child is left feeling that bullying is inevitable, that there is nothing they can do to make a difference and talking to adults when they are unsafe is a waste of time. For the adults, there is also a feeling of powerlessness since many find these simplistic solutions are tokens and have little effect.

We need to provide teachers with a set of structured interview techniques as a way of talking to a victim of bullying. These techniques need to develop in victims a sense that they can do something different which will break the pattern of bullying.

Step 1:

Acknowledge how difficult it is to talk about it.

eg. *“I understand this may be difficult for you.”*

“I am very happy that you have decided to talk to me.”

“Talking with adults can sometimes be really hard.”

- **Encourage students to tell an adult with the understanding that there will not necessarily be sanctions placed on the bully.**

Step 2:

Time Line a specific bullying episode.

“Tell me about one particular time when you were bullied...perhaps a recent time.”

“Start at the very beginning and tell me every detail.”

“What happened next?”

“What was said?”

- **Teacher needs to patiently question the student about what happened so they can have an accurate understanding of the student’s perceptions and experiences.**
- **Teacher needs to look for a pattern of interaction between the victim and the bully or bullies.**

Step 3:

Introduce the concept of a vicious cycle

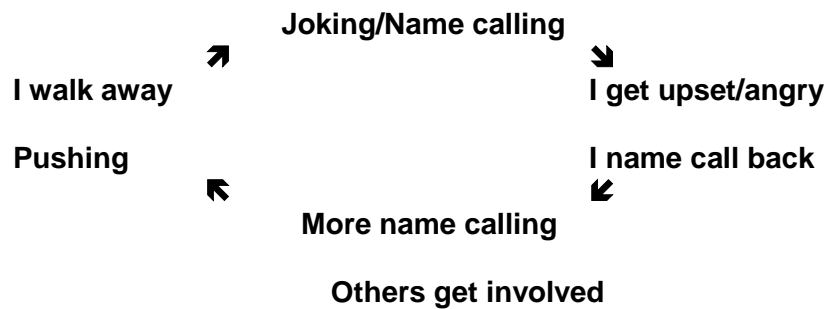
“It sounds like you are caught in a vicious cycle.”

“Every time this bullying cycle happens it is more likely to recur.”

“You are not responsible for the cycle but I think you are part of it.”

- **Using the information from the time-line in Step 2, try to draw the cycle, checking continually with the student that it is correct.**





Step 4:
Breaking the vicious cycle

“I know that you are not responsible for this cycle but I wonder what you could do that might break it?”

“What could you do that is different to what you normally do that might break the vicious cycle?”

- Hand the pen to the student and ask them to show you where and how they could break the cycle.
- Look for a different way of responding and/or interacting. The “different way” is the basis for skill development.
- Discuss the consequences to each of these responses until the student agrees that it is inappropriate.

Step 5:
Experimenting with the vicious cycle.

“How about you experiment for two days with this vicious cycle.”

“You might be able to see the cycle before it starts to grow.”

“If you find yourself in a cycle you could see if you could break it.”

- The concept of the experiment is far easier for a student to accept than giving the impression that these new skills will endure over time.
- The student has two tasks:
 - To predict the beginning of a cycle
 - Doing something different to break the cycle.

Step 6:
Evaluate the amount of effort required.

“On a scale of 0-10 where 10 is a lot of effort and 0 is no effort at all, how much effort do you think you need to put in to break the cycle?”

- The rating scale allows the student to acknowledge the degree of difficulty and the amount of personal energy required.
- In subsequent interviews this rating scale can also be used to monitor the level of motivation of the student.

This six-step technique does not involve advice giving, global solutions or token answers. It is supportive of the victim in that the student is carefully listened to and guided towards a point from which he or she can make decisions.

This approach can also be adapted for parents who often say that they “buy into the cycle” and become part of the process of the conflict escalating.

ATTACHMENT D

“WALK TALK TELL” APPROACH

“Dealing with Bullying Behaviour”

(Dennis Sleigh, *Schooldays for Parents*, March 2006)

Many schools incorporate the “Walk–Talk–Tell” approach to confrontation.

- The subject is asked to walk away and ignore the situation.
- If this doesn’t work, the next step is to explain to the person who is exhibiting harmful behaviour that what they are doing is wrong.
- If this also fails, the behaviour must be reported to the teacher.

This strategy has three positive features:

- The person suffering harm accepts some responsibility for the interaction and this actually affirms them, even when it doesn’t work. (They know they didn’t just run away or cry).
- Secondly, if the conversation goes as it should – with honest “I” statements where the perpetrator learns the effect of the misbehaviour and can no longer claim, “I was only joking.”
- Finally, it acknowledges that some situations demand stronger action.