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.
Macksville High 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.

Explain how representation from the whole school community has been ensured.

School staff, students, parents and the community will be involved in collaboratively developing the MHS anti-bullying policy through meetings, surveys and forums. Draft documents will be distributed electronically and in hard copy, ensuring wide consultation with responses collated and the policy developed.

Explain how and at what stages you have/you will engage the school community in developing, implementing, evaluating and reviewing this plan.

Development of any new policy will involve the full consultative process of the whole school community, followed by a regular review schedule with adjustments being made every year, with an updated document published by 1st March each year. A full review of the policy will occur every three years commencing in 2012.

Statement of purpose

Enter a statement of purpose that outlines the key beliefs or principles about bullying behaviour and the aims of the school on which this Anti-bullying Plan is based.

MHS is committed to providing an educational environment in which students feel valued and secure. To achieve this, the school will seek to create a school-wide culture that:

- Creates an awareness of what constitutes bullying behaviour.
- Allows students to flourish free from discrimination, harassment or any form of bullying.
- Does not tolerate, condone or trivialise bullying behaviours.
- Provides support to the victims of bullying.
- Deals firmly with bullying behaviour and applies appropriate consequences.

The Welfare Team is dedicated to supporting students dealing with bullying behaviour and this team consists of: Teachers, Year Advisors, Girls’ Supervisor, School Counsellor, Aboriginal Education Officer, Aboriginal Engagement Officer, Deputy Principal and/or Principal.

Protection

Explain the understandings the school has reached about bullying behaviour that captures all forms of bullying including cyberbullying.

Bullying is the repeated misuse of power, position or privilege. It is done to intimidate, coerce, create fear, control, embarrass, exclude, or cause pain or discomfort. Bullying behaviours can be:

- Verbal e.g. name calling, teasing, abuse, sarcasm, insults, threats.
- Physical e.g. hitting, punching, kicking, tripping, spitting.
- Social e.g. ignoring, excluding, alienating, making inappropriate gestures.
- Psychological e.g. spreading rumours, dirty looks, being threatened.
- Cyber e.g. using social media / phones to send malicious SMS/email messages, inappropriate use of cameras/phones.

Explain what is considered by the school community to be bullying behaviour, how that behaviour is viewed by the school and what the school will do about it.

Bullying may be motivated by jealousy, distrust, fear, misunderstanding or lack of knowledge. Bullying is systematic and ongoing, continuing over a period of time, rather than a “one off” incident. Bullying can be hidden from adults. Bullying can continue if adults and peers take no action.

The aim of any anti-bullying strategy is to create an environment where bullying is not tolerated. At MHS, a twofold approach is used. Firstly, preventative programs establish an environment that deters bullying behaviour. Secondly, responsive and remedial programs aligned to MHS Student Welfare, Good Discipline and Effective Learning Policy is in place to deal with any incidents that may arise. If the incident constitutes a criminal offence under the NSW Crimes Act, the issues will be referred to the NSW Police for further investigation.

Explain the understandings the school has developed about the individual and shared responsibilities of students, parents, and teachers in preventing and responding to bullying behaviour.

Responsibilities of Students:

- Build positive relationships with others in order to create an environment where bullying is not tolerated.
- If you are bullied tell the person(s) that their actions are unwanted and they need to stop.
- If you see someone else being bullied, tell the person(s) that their actions are unwanted and they need to stop.
- If you feel uncomfortable approaching the person displaying the bullying behaviour, report this person displaying the bullying behaviour to your Welfare Team.
- Refuse to be involved in any form of bullying.
- In cases of cyber bullying, keep evidence of incidents for further investigation and do not respond to the person displaying the bullying behaviour.
Responsibilities of Staff:

- Be positive role models in relationships with all members of the school community.
- Understand that through punctuality to class, active supervision and challenging unacceptable behaviour, staff can play an active role in preventing bullying.
- Teachers will report suspected victims of bullying behaviour to the Welfare Team for early intervention and monitoring whilst respecting confidentiality.
- Participation in professional learning activities to address and manage bullying behaviour.

Responsibilities of Parents:

- Be positive role models in all your relationships and with members of the school community.
- Take an active interest in your child’s social life and acquaintances and monitor your child’s computer and mobile phone usage.
- If your child feels that they are being bullied at school, advise your child to speak with a trusted member of staff and in less confronting situations, encourage your child to try to deal with the situation in order to build their resilience.
- If the bullying behaviour continues, seek the support of the school to collaboratively resolve the incidents.

Detail the strategies the school will implement to maintain a positive climate of respectful relationships where bullying is less likely to occur.

- Identify the needs of our students and develop strategies to meet these specific needs.
- A vibrant transition program for incoming Year 7 students ensuring peer and staff support as they commence their education at MHS.
- All new enrolments to MHS are welcomed and supported during their transition to education at MHS.
- Model respectful relationships that promote and engage the establishment of sustainable respectful relationships.

Prevention

Detail the strategies and programs the school will implement for bullying prevention. All members of the school community should contribute to the prevention of bullying by modelling and promoting appropriate behaviour and respectful relationships.

- Students will continue to participate in anti-bullying forums provided by external agencies and performance groups. For example, SANDS, Resilient Young People’s Program, Bush to Beach, Nambucca Valley Indigenous Sports Facilitation Program, Love Bites and Transition Into Manhood.
- Anti-Bullying strategies will continue to be provided to all students through specific units in the PD/H/PE syllabus and through Scripture classes.
- Teacher documentation on SENTRAL and consequent referrals to the Welfare Team.
- Regular survey’s for students on bullying behaviour incidents.
- Students to access the School Councillor through teacher referral, self-referral and the Welfare Team.

Detail how the school is embedding anti-bullying messages into each curriculum area and in every year level.

- A Cross-Curriculum Anti-Bullying philosophy continues to be presented in all subjects throughout Macksville High School. Staff professional learning will continue to focus on anti-bullying strategies.

Early Intervention

Detail the early intervention strategies and programs your school will implement for students 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.

- Identification of students who have a history of being bullied or engage in bullying behaviour. The Welfare Team will provide the students with remediation programs such as social skills development, assertiveness training, anger management, communication skills and mentoring.
- Transition data is reviewed by the Year Advisor, Transition Coordinator and the Learning Support Team to inform staff of students that identify with bullying issues.
- As a strategy the Deputy Principal will access teacher referrals for bullying behaviour through the Sentral Welfare database.
- MHS will initiate an electronic bully box which is accessible by all students to report bullying behaviour.
- MHS will provide links to website relevant to dealing with bullying behaviour. For example, Beyond Blue. These links will be publicised through the school newsletter, school website and posted around school.

Response

Detail the strategies your school will implement to empower the whole school community to recognise and respond appropriately to bullying, harassment and victimisation and behave as responsible bystanders.

- Bullying behaviour is reinforced where people watch and do nothing. When bystanders do intervene, the bullying is more likely to stop quickly most of the time.
- Incorporate bullying education into parent information evenings to promote their understanding of the anti-bullying plan and strategies to support their child.
- Educate students on the role of bystanders through role-paring, informational dvd’s and other activities.
- Use of an electronic bully box accessible by all students to report bullying behaviour.
Detail the procedures for reporting incidents of bullying at your school. Detail how these procedures will be publicised to your school community.

- Students can report bullying to any member of staff and/or the Welfare Team.
- Students witnessing bullying behaviour are expected to report this behaviour to any member of staff.
- Parents can contact the school and report incidents of bullying to the Welfare Team.
- Use of an electronic bully box accessible by all students to report bullying behaviour.
- The Deputy Principal will review the welfare and discipline data and report to the school community the incidents of bullying behaviour via school assemblies, P&C meetings, the school’s newsletter, MHS website and through staff meetings.
- As a strategy the Deputy Principal and Welfare Team will access teacher referrals for bullying behaviour through the SENTRAL Welfare database.

Detail the procedures and timeframes that your school will implement when an incident of bullying is reported to the school.

MHS is committed to investigating a bullying allegation in a manner that protects the rights of all involved, including the alleged student displaying the bullying behaviour and the victim. Procedural fairness must be exercised at all times. Support and understanding is sought from parents of alleged bullies and alleged victims when the school is investigating an accusation of bullying. Proper investigation of an alleged bullying incident takes time and patience is required for all parties involved in order to achieve an agreed resolution.

Detail the processes that will be used at your school to match planned combinations of interventions to the particular incident of bullying.

- Listen to and acknowledge the seriousness of the report.
- Respond in a timely manner to incidents of bullying by interviewing the students involved in accordance with the Student Welfare, Good Discipline and Effective Learning Policy.

Detail the strategies and programs your school will implement to support any student who has been affected by, engaged in or witnessed bullying behaviour.

- The Welfare Team and the Learning Support Team will provide programs such as social skills development, assertiveness training, anger management, communication skills and mentoring.
- Part of this support will also assess the effectiveness of the feedback received from the action taken in dealing with the effects of bullying.
- Welfare strategies will continue for example SANDS, Resilient Young People’s Program, and Bush to Beach, which will support students who have been engaging in or witnessing bullying behaviour.

Explain the school’s plans for providing regular updates, within the bounds of privacy legislation, to parents and caregivers about the management of bullying incidents that have been reported to the school.

- The Deputy Principal will review welfare and discipline data and report to the school community the incidents of bullying behaviour via school assemblies, P&C meetings, the school newsletter, MHS website, through staff meetings and directly with parents within the bounds of privacy legislation.
- Identified students will have Personalised Learning Programs which will be monitored by the Welfare Team and will include negotiated reporting to students and parents by the Deputy Principal.

Staff Meeting

Explain the school’s procedures for reporting incidents involving assaults, threats, intimidation or harassment to the police.

- After a thorough investigation accessing all relevant information, MHS will refer incidents, dependent upon the severity of assaults, threats, intimidation and harassment, to police for their scrutiny and input. The School Police Liaison Officer will be utilized and their expertise sought in relation to the reporting of incidents.
- Mandatory reporting to the School’s Security and Assessment team and DEC policies.

Explain the procedures the school will use with regard to contacting the Child Wellbeing Unit or Community Services where appropriate.

Check DEC guidelines:


Explain departmental appeal procedures and provide information about the Complaints Handling Policy.

Check DEC guidelines:

Detail the strategies the school will use to identify patterns of bullying behaviour. Explain how the school will respond to such patterns.

- Scrutiny of welfare and discipline data in order of identify bullying behaviour will result in initial referral to the School Counsellor.
- The Deputy Principal will issue consequences aligned with the MHS Student Welfare, Good Discipline and Effective Learning Policy where bullying behaviour has occurred.

Detail how your school will promote and publicise this Anti-bullying Plan including how it will be made widely available to the school community available on any school website.

- MHS’s Anti-Bullying Plan will be placed on the school web site in draft form, whereby comments will be invited by the school community. After final consultation, the anti-bullying policy will be published in full on the school’s web site by the 1st of March 2013.

Detail the processes your school will use to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of its Anti-bullying Plan.

- The Deputy Principal will provide an analysis of the effectiveness of our Anti-Bullying Plan through data collection from the MHS Student Welfare, Good Discipline and Effective Learning Policy SENTRAL statistics.
- Evaluation of visiting performances through surveys.

Explain how your school will report annually to the school community on the effectiveness of the Anti-bullying Plan.

- A report will be prepared by the Deputy Principal during Term 4 and referred to the Principal for appropriate distribution.

Explain how and when (at least every three years) your school will review this Anti-bullying Plan with the school community.

- A full review of this policy will occur in November, 2012, with publishing occurring in March, 2013 of the reviewed policy.

Additional Information

Enter here contact information for the Police Youth Liaison Officer (YLO) and the School Liaison Police officer (SLP) where appropriate.

Senior Constable Steven Jeffery , Police Assistance Line 131444

Enter here contact information for appropriate support services such as Kids Helpline


http://antibullyingaustralia.com/

Principal's comment

This anti-bullying policy has been developed by a dedicated group of specialist teachers in consultation with staff, Parents & Citizen Association and members of the Student Representative Council. Research, both in Australia and overseas, has identified a universal whole-school approach of long duration such as this one, that takes a multi-faceted approach rather than focusing on one single component as most effective in reducing bullying.

Our school community is committed to promoting and providing a supportive learning community where all students feel and are safe. Students have a fundamental right to learn in a safe, supportive environment and to be treated with respect. Similarly, parents and other local community members have the right to feel safe, supported and respected in our school. At Macksville High all members of our school community must take responsibility and take action to prevent bullying if our policy is to be most effective.

Enter team member and position

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