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.

Through consultation with staff, parents and students this plan will be developed, implemented evaluated and reviewed. A team was formed including staff and community members. Draft Plan was presented to parents through the P and C for ratification and review The plan will be reviewed annually.

Statement of purpose

Students attend school to participate in quality education that will help them to become self-directed, lifelong learners who can create a positive future for themselves and the wider community. Any inappropriate behaviour that gets in the way of teaching and learning at the school and interferes with the wellbeing of students cannot be accepted. Students, teachers, SASS staff, school learning support officers, parents, caregivers and members of the wider school community have a shared responsibility to create a safe and happy environment, free from all forms of bullying.

Protection

Bullying behavior is wrong, hurtful, deliberate and repeated.

- devalues, isolates and frightens
- affects an individual's ability to achieve
- has long-term effects on those engaging in bullying behaviour, those who are the subjects of bullying behaviour and the onlookers or bystanders.

Bullying Behaviour

Bullying can be defined as intentional, repeated behaviour by an individual or group of individuals that causes distress, hurt or undue pressure.

Bullying involves the abuse of power in relationships. Bullying can involve all forms of harassment (including sex, race, disability, homosexuality or transgender), humiliation, domination and intimidation of others.

Bullying Behaviour can be:

- verbal - name calling, teasing, abuse, putdowns, sarcasm, insults, threats
- physical - hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting
- social - ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating, making inappropriate gestures
- psychological - spreading rumours, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions, malicious SMS and email messages, inappropriate use of camera phone, digital technology and social network sites.

Prevention

Students, teachers, parents, caregivers and members of the wider 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 Plan and support it through words and actions.
- actively work together to resolve incidents of bullying behaviour when they occur.
Each group within the school community has a specific role in preventing and dealing with bullying.

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

- that students will be safe at school, free from fear of bullying, harassment and intimidation.
- to be involved in the collaborative development of the school Anti-bullying Plan.
- to know what is expected of them and others in relation to the Anti-bullying Plan.

At the beginning of each year strategies to identify bullying behavior and respond to bullying behavior will be specifically taught K-6 through the social skills programs including Stop Think Do, teaching of class rules, Child Protection.

Children who are identified as using bullying behavior or having been victims of bullying behavior will be counseled and referred to the Learning support team and teachers for monitoring.

Response

Strategies to empower the whole school community to recognize and respond to bullying, harassment and victimization and behave as responsible bystanders include:

- Effective communication strategies including the weekly newsletter.
- Bullying audit
- School website
- School prospectus
- The development a parent information brochure which will include the school’s response to bullying behavior.

Reporting incidents of bullying

- Incidents of bullying are reported through the playground and classroom incident reporting system.
- Playground misconduct sheets are passed on to class teachers at the end of breaks.
- All teachers and executive are responsible for investigating and following up bullying incidents as soon as possible.
- Parents and caregivers can report incidents of bullying through verbal or written communication with the school at all levels.
- The school’s discipline and welfare policy will be implemented.
- Parents of children who are victims of significant repeated bullying behavior and parents of children who display bullying behavior will be contacted. School counsellor will be involved if necessary.

To identify patterns of bullying behaviours the behavior incident records will be monitored on a monthly basis by class teachers. Any identified
patterns will be referred class teacher who will investigate and respond appropriately including informing parents and the stage supervisor if necessary.

Interventions for children affected by, engaged in or witnessed bullying behavior may include:

- Mediation facilitated through Redzone, by the class teacher, executive or Principal.
- Referral to Learning Support Team
- School counsellor
- Behaviour management plan
- Counselling and mentoring
- Organised support through various structures.
- Discipline and Welfare policy including suspension and expulsion procedures
- Parents and teachers will be kept up to date on serious incidents that affect the well being of students

Serious threats assaults intimidation or harassment will be reported to the local police and or the School Safety and Response Hotline by the Principal 1300 363 778

Issues regarding the wellbeing of children need to be brought to the attention of the Principal. The Mandatory reporting tree is then applied.

Wellbeing Unit 9269400

When there is significant risk of harm contact

Child Protection Hotline 133627

Parents and teachers can approach the Principal to make formal complaints. In these cases the complaints Handling Policy will be implemented.

The school will report on the effectiveness of the antibullying plan through the Annual School Reporting process.

The antibullying plan will be evaluated every 3 years

Additional Information
Forster Police 6555 1299
Kids Helpline 1800 551 800

Principal’s comment
It is important that students, staff, and parents understand the implications of bullying and respond appropriately. This plan will be reviewed to determine its effectiveness

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School contact information
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