



**MERRYLANDS HIGH  
SCHOOL  
ANTI- BULLYING  
Procedures/Guidelines**

# SAFE RESPECTFUL LEARNER

## ANTI-BULLYING

### Procedures/Guidelines

The school's Anti-bullying Plan sets out the processes for preventing and responding to student conflict. The school has a range of policies and practices, including well-being and discipline policies that apply to student behaviour generally.

#### 1. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

A prime responsibility of every school is the care and safety of the students in its charge. Students learn most effectively in an environment in which they feel safe and respected. All students have the right to expect that they will spend each day in and out of the classroom free of bullying. Students therefore have the responsibility to behave in such a way that does not interfere with this right. The expectation at Merrylands High School is that students will participate in safe respectful learner activities.

#### 2. DEFINITION

A clear understanding of what "bullying" is can help both adults and students deal with the situation more effectively. 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**, e.g., name calling, teasing, abuse, putdowns, sarcasm, insults, threats
- **Physical**, e.g., hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting
- **Social**, e.g., ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating, making inappropriate gestures
- **Psychological**, e.g., spreading rumours, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions
- **Cyber**, malicious SMS and email messages, inappropriate use of electronic devices including camera phones.

#### 3. PROTECTION AT MERRYLANDS HIGH SCHOOL

At Merrylands High School every person has the right to feel safe and respected. Any person who bullies another is denying them that right.

The school does not tolerate any action that undermines a person's right to feel safe and respected, and will take whatever steps are necessary to endeavour to stop such behaviour. Every person at Merrylands High School is expected to ensure that bullying does not happen and has the responsibility to tell.

#### 4. RESPONSIBILITIES

##### **Staff have a responsibility to:**

- Respect and support students
- Model and promote appropriate behaviour as per behaviour code of students
- Have knowledge of school and departmental policies relating to conflicting behaviour; understand what bullying is
- Respond in a timely manner to incidents of bullying according to the school's Anti-bullying Plan
- Provide adequate supervision in the playground and classroom environments
- Act promptly to stop bullying behaviour from recurring, applying sanctions as necessary
- Give the clear message that bullying is unacceptable and breaches the school's Code of Conduct
- Create a climate which encourages a student to know "It's O.K. to tell".
- Intervene in bullying situations
- Initiate serious talks with those who bully and their victims (and their parents when deemed necessary)
- Discuss bullying behaviours in the classroom and implement conflict resolution strategies
- Listen to and investigate reports of bullying
- Endeavour to protect the victim from further harm
- Record incidents of bullying in order to determine patterns of behaviour, and report such cases to executive staff
- Act as role models, displaying caring and tolerant behaviour

##### **Youth Outreach Officer has a responsibility to:**

- be one point of contact for students to refer concerns of bullying
- refer the incidents of Bullying to the appropriate executive member
- investigate incidents of suspected cases of Cyber-Bullying and refer it on to appropriate executive member

##### **Students have a responsibility to:**

- Behave appropriately, respecting individual differences and diversity
- Behave as responsible digital citizens
- Follow the school Anti-bullying Plan
- Understand definition of bullying
- Behave as responsible bystanders
- Report incidents of bullying according to their school Anti-bullying Plan.

##### **Students who are bullied:**

- Report bullying behaviours promptly to a member of staff, trusted adult or friend, providing full details of the event. Tell someone and keep telling, until something is done
- Try to be assertive and confident and not show that they are upset
- Avoid risk situations where possible, or stay close to adults or friends
- Consider talking to a counsellor to develop skills which can be useful in bullying situations
- Use strategies discussed in class to prevent being bullied

##### **Student witnesses to bullying (bystanders):**

- Show disapproval of bullying behaviours
- Be sympathetic and supportive of students who are bullied
- Report it and seek teacher or other assistance

##### **Students who exhibit bullying behaviour:**

- Undertake a proposed counselling/behaviour modification program
- Modify their behaviour
- Undertake restitution if appropriate
- Make a commitment to refrain from bullying

### **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
    - Encourage the child to talk about any bullying incident and report it to their class teacher
    - Encourage the child to form friendships and to build self esteem
    - Let the child know that bullying behaviour is not acceptable
    - Communicate incidents with school personnel, avoiding personal intervention
    - After contacting the school/class teacher and initiating anti-bullying strategies, try to give the situation time to change
    - Work with the school in seeking a solution
- Please also see our [Advice to Parents About Bullying document by clicking here](#)

### **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. Name and confront bullying behaviour
- Work collaboratively with the school to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur.

## **5. PREVENTION**

### **An Anti-bullying climate is supported by**

- Provision of opportunities to cater for each child's skills, talents, abilities or interests
- Encouragement of teachers and all staff to praise and acknowledge students for safe, caring and non-violent behaviour
- Presentation of class and assembly awards to students who demonstrate positive behaviour and good citizenship
- Implementation of Child Protection lessons in all classes to promote anti-bullying strategies
- Encouragement of students to identify developmental assets in themselves and others and to utilise these to problem solve
- Enhancing the friendship circles of students through buddy classes
- Training of leadership and communication skills for all students
- Encouraging and celebrating diversity
- Provision of professional learning for staff to increase their understanding of what bullying behaviour is and strategies to deal with it

### **Teachers, while modelling appropriate behaviour, will attempt to achieve the following:**

- Address bullying behaviours in the classroom
- Avoid labelling students as bullies
- Separate behaviour from the person
- Help students to understand and encourage "reasonable restitution" eg. Apologise
- Help students to understand and practise forgiveness
- Counsel and advise students on recognising and appropriately responding to feelings

## **6. ACTION Procedures/Guidelines**

We can help to control what happens by following this Action Procedures for students, parents and school staff.

What students can/should do to prevent or deal with bullying:

- Speak in a firm, clear voice say loudly “Stop it. I don’t like it, go away.” or say, “Stop it. That’s bullying. It’s not O.K.”
- If the bullying behaviour continues go directly to your teacher, don’t stop, don’t be afraid, just report what happened
- Go to the teacher on duty if you are in the playground

## **Parents**

### **What parents can/should do if they suspect bullying:**

- Have a responsibility to understand “what is bullying?”
- Take a pro-active approach and talk with children if they suspect they are victims of bullying
  - Be aware of the signs of bullying
  - Be aware of the child’s friendship groups
  - Approach the school/child’s teacher
  - Reinforce that one should not accept being bullied or being a bully is never OK
  - Be a good role model with everyone in the community
  - Be responsible for encouraging anti-bullying attitudes
  - Be understanding and supporting of your child
  - Help your child to respond to bullying behaviour by encouraging your child to follow the action plan

## **School Staff**

### **Preventative measures:**

- Create a safe respectful learner environment at school
- Educate students as expected behaviour according to the Code of Students Behaviour
- Communicate safe respectful learner expectations of the school
- Encourage students and parents to understand that they have a responsibility to report incidents of bullying to school staff
- Be a good role model with parents and students
- Provide specific lessons and role play acceptable behaviour
- Provide network for students
- Child protection
- Safe respectful learner skills programs
- Conflict resolution program
- PDHPE lessons
- Active student representative council presenting workshops and focus lessons
- Learning support team including school counsellors and Youth Outreach Officer

### **Reporting and Consequences:**

#### **Staff will:**

- Use the school’s Discipline Policy and Code of Behaviour of students to manage inappropriate student behaviour
- Refer concerns to the school executive team who may take action, including parent/student interview
- Referral to school counsellor, involvement of District Office support staff
- Separate the bully from the peer group to disempower the bully

## **7. RESPONSE**

When incidents of bullying behaviour are reported by students, parents or staff; teachers and Executive will follow the School’s Discipline Policy in the management of inappropriate behaviour and will:

- Endeavour to protect and support the victim of bullying
- Assist the student exhibiting bullying behaviours to change their behaviour
- Work with parents of the victim to assist the student to develop strategies to avoid being bullied
- Provide parents with suggested strategies to assist their child

- Work with parents of the student exhibiting bullying behaviours to establish joint strategies for behaviour modification
- If appropriate refer students for counselling, behaviour modification or anger management program
- Educate students about bullying through lessons, class discussions, year meetings, performances
- Executive staff will monitor incident report sheets and refer to principal as necessary
- Keep adequate records of all reported bullying incidents.

#### **Help is provided in the following ways:**

- Help for the person being bullied by acknowledging their distress and acting to make them feel safe
- Help for the person who is bullying others by intervening in a decisive and positive way
- Help for onlookers by empowering them to challenge bullying behaviour
- Help students discuss ways to help the bullies become part of the group
- Help for teachers by providing information about bullying and setting out clear procedures to be followed when bullying is reported
- Help for parents by giving them a clear course of action, if their child reports bullying
- Help for the whole school community by modelling respectful relationships whenever adults interact with students or with other adults
- police talks on bullying and specifically cyber-bullying
- Harmony Day to promote positive and inclusive behaviours
- utilising a range of interagency and regional personnel to run workshops

## **8. STRATEGIES**

#### **Strategies for parents and teachers to use when someone tells about bullying:**

- Believe, understand, acknowledge the seriousness and praise them for telling
- Give time and space for them to describe the situation and express their anger, hurt and frustration
- Let them know bullying is not O.K. and we all have a right to feel safe.
- Acknowledge their strengths. Help build resilience and positive self-thoughts.

#### **Strategies for implementation of Anti- Bullying Procedures**

- Provide opportunities for all teachers to become informed about and reflect upon bullying and teasing
- Inform all members of the school community of the school's Anti-bullying Plan through the school's newsletter, website, staff meetings, P & C meeting and year meetings.
- PBIS focus lessons delivered regularly
- Students are given opportunities to become informed about and discuss issues of bullying in class activities, assemblies, SRC meetings
- Students and staff explore issues of bullying through drama with theatrical performers visiting the school
- Purchase resources including online ACMA which assist teachers in exploring bullying with students and provide ideas for developing positive relationships
- Students inform other students on how to deal with bullying behaviour through dramatisation, poster competition, and student ideas.

## **9. EARLY INTERVENTION**

The school has early intervention strategies 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.

### **For students at risk, the school will intervene to:**

- work with relevant parents to support students encountering difficulties in social relationships
- the learning support team will work with parents/caregivers to develop a negotiated personalised plan for students with disabilities who may encounter difficulties with social relationships
- use the expertise of the school's counsellor to develop intervention
- strategies and provide opportunities for counselling sessions
- mentor at - risk students using key personnel, for example, the Year Adviser, home room teacher, Head Teacher , Deputy Principal, Principal, Student Support Officer, Community Liaison Officer or a nominated person who can provide trust and support
- ensure students and parents know the school's Anti-Bullying Action Plan so that appropriate action can be taken by the school to support all parties via the school website and newsletters
- seek outside agency support to further encourage resilience and self esteem
- utilise the expertise of regional personnel to provide support and guidance
- All reported incidents of bullying will have investigations initiated within a reasonable timeframe. Consideration must be given to the reactive nature of schools and the difficulty in establishing concrete timelines.
- Where significant bullying has been determined, parents/ caregivers of those concerned will be informed. In instances, where appropriate, the Child Wellbeing Unit and/or Community Services will be informed.
- School Anti-bullying Plan – NSW Department of Education and Communities Student Welfare Directorate
- For serious bullying behaviours, the DEC School Safety and Response Unit will be called and the School Education Director informed. Such instances are those in which physical injury necessitating medical treatment has been required or where student/staff safety may be compromised. In the most serious of cases, the school will call the police immediately.
- Parents can report suggestions, complaints and allegations to the Principal. These will be dealt with according to DEC Policy: Responding to suggestions, complaints and allegations PD/2002/0051/V001.

## **10. EVALUATION**

The school's PBL team and the school community will review the effectiveness of this policy on an annual basis and suggest modifications accordingly. Regular surveys of bullying will be undertaken to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this Anti-Bullying plan.

## **11. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Senior Constable Dusan Dakic (School Liaison Police) Ph: 9633 0703 Mob: 0437 882 232

Department of Community Services 132 111

Child Wellbeing Unit – 133627

Department of Education & Communities has a number of policies that are located at <https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies>

Department of Education & Communities Wellbeing Framework

“Bullying: Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying in Schools policy”

“The Student Welfare Policy”

“Complaints Handling Policy”

“Code of Conduct Policy”

“Values in NSW Public Schools”

**Additional information can also be found on the following websites:**

Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800 or [www.kidshelp.com.au](http://www.kidshelp.com.au)

Bullying No Way [www.bullyingnoway.com.au](http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au)

A link to “Bullying amount young children a guide for parents” can be found on the Bullying No Way website.

Parentline New South Wales [www.parentline.org.au](http://www.parentline.org.au) or 1300 1300 52 (cost of a local call) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

**SCHOOL CONTACT INFORMATION**

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