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 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.

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.
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.

At Peakhurst South Public School, bullying is not acceptable in any form. Students have the right to expect that they will be safe at school and spend each day free from the fear of bullying, harassment and intimidation. Teachers, students, parents, carers and members of the wider community have a responsibility to work together to address bullying.

This plan was originally developed in 2009 in consultation with the school community including students, staff and parents. The draft plan was published and feedback considered. In 2012 the plan was reviewed by the Principal, Student Welfare team and School Council.

Statement of purpose

At Peakhurst South Public School we believe a whole school approach is paramount in establishing support systems to address bullying. Students, teachers, parents, caregivers and members of the wider school community have a shared responsibility to:

- Promote positive relationships that respect and accept individual differences and diversity within the whole school community
- Actively work together to resolve incidents of bullying behaviours when they occur.
- Build the necessary resilience in students to prevent disturbing long-term effects for both the target and the bully.
- Ensure strategies for prevention and intervention are inclusive of curriculum, playground, school structure considerations and the manner in which bullying incidents are dealt with.

Protection

Bullying at school is a serious matter. It is a complex issue involving repeated incidents where a person is hurt physically, verbally, socially, emotionally or psychologically by another person or by a group of people. Bullying involves the abuse of power in relationships. The assaults may have long term effects. Bullying is difficult to detect as it usually happens out of sight and away from adults. Parents are usually the first to identify that a problem exists. Cyber bullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies.

Bullying can take many forms. Conflicts or fights between equals or one off incidents are not defined as bullying. At Peakhurst South we believe the following repeated behaviours to be bullying.

1. Physical
Behaviours include hitting, punching, shoving, pinching, tripping, spitting, scratching; damaging, hiding or stealing belongings; throwing objects at someone; and abusive behaviours.

2. Verbal
Behaviours include threatening others, name-calling, abusive language, making offensive remarks, taunting, teasing and put-downs.

3. Emotional/Social/Psychological
Behaviours include spreading rumours, gossiping about or embarrassing someone, making fun of someone, using threatening looks or gestures, excluding or threatening to exclude from groups, ignoring, ostracising or alienating.

4. Cyber (Online Bullying)
Behaviours include verbal and indirect social/psychological bullying through use of technology such as mobile phones, emails, blogs, websites, etc.
Characteristics of Bullying
Bullying behaviour typically contains seven elements. These are:
• An initial desire to hurt.
• The bullying desire is acted out - some form of bullying is perpetrated.
• The action is hurtful.
• There is an imbalance of power - the bullying behaviour is stronger and more powerful than the victim’s behaviour, either physically or psychologically.
• There is no justification for the action - for example, the victim has done nothing to deserve such treatment.
• It is persistent and repeated.
• The person bullying derives enjoyment from hurting the victim.

Strategies we will use to Deal with Bullying
At Peakhurst South Public School we will:
• Openly talk about bullying – what it is, how it affects us and what we can do about it.
• Implement a variety of resilience programs which may include Circle Time, etc.
• Provide opportunities for students to learn social skills and responsibility, and empower them to make decisions and take responsibility for themselves. School initiatives include peer support, leadership and buddy programs, etc.
• Respond to substantiated instances of bullying behaviour in accordance with the school's discipline and welfare policy and all relevant New South Wales (NSW) and Department of Education and Communities (DEC) policies and procedures.

All members of the school community contribute to, prevent and deal with bullying by modelling and promoting appropriate behaviour and respectful relationships.

Students have a responsibility to:
• Behave appropriately, respecting individual differences and diversity
• Follow the school rules
• Respond to incidents of bullying according to the school anti-bullying plan

• Understand how bystanders can positively impact on incidents of bullying and respond accordingly.

Parents and carers have a responsibility to:
• Support their children in all aspects of their learning
• Be aware of the school anti-bullying plan and assist their children in understanding bullying behaviour
• Assist their children in developing positive responses to incidents of bullying consistent with the school anti-bullying plan and discipline policy
• Support their children to deal effectively with bullying through the strategies of the anti-bullying plan and discipline policy
• Notify the school when incidents of bullying are suspected.

The school has a responsibility to:
• Develop an anti-bullying plan that clearly identifies both the behaviours that are unacceptable and the strategies for dealing with bullying in the classroom and playground
• Inform students, parents, carers and the community about the school discipline policy and the anti-bullying plan
• Provide students with strategies to respond positively to incidents of bullying behaviour, including responsibilities as bystanders or observers
• Provide parents, carers and students with clear information on strategies that promote appropriate behaviour, and the consequences for inappropriate behaviour
• Follow up complaints of bullying, harassment and intimidation.

Teachers have a responsibility to:
• Respect and support students in all aspects of their learning
• Model appropriate behaviour
• Respond in an appropriate and timely manner to incidents of bullying according to the school anti-bullying plan and discipline policy.

The Principal and Executives have a responsibility to:
• Lead the development, implementation and evaluation of the Anti-Bullying Plan
• Ensure the plan is readily accessible to all members of the school community.

Prevention

Students, staff, parents and the community have a common understanding of what bullying is, the school's position on bullying and how to manage bullying. Our prevention strategies include:

- Teachers attend professional learning sessions to understand the behaviours that are unacceptable and how to deal with bullying
- Staff, students and parents are informed of the definition of bullying and how to identify unacceptable, bullying behaviour
- Promote anti-bullying through newsletters, assemblies, class lessons, etc
- Provide programs that promote resilience, life skills and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and communication skills
- Review and improve use of playground and activities regularly
- Ensure students know and understand what is acceptable in the school. School rules and values are displayed throughout the school
- Learning and Support Team
- Provide information sessions for parents
- Provide resource material for parents
- Source and provide appropriate teaching resources
- Student Representative Council (SRC)
- Peer Support
- Buddies
- Anti-Bullying performances
- Values Education
- Resilience Programs
- Social Skill programs

Curriculum

The relationships theme of the interpersonal relationships strand of the PD/H/PE syllabus covers the issues associated with bullying. A bullying focus is a part of each stage's PD/H program and addresses the outcomes and indicators for this strand. Bullying can also be integrated wherever possible across all curriculum areas. The school implements resilience programs in Kindergarten to Year 6, giving students strategies to deal with bullying behaviour.

Playground Supervision

The role of staff in playground supervision is very important in preventing incidents of bullying. Staff will monitor playground hot spots and encourage isolated students to join a group and remind students about strategies to manage playground conflict.

Early Intervention

- Students will be identified through referrals to the Learning and Support team.
- Risk Assessments and Individual Education Plans will be devised as required to support students.
- Social skills programs will be established for group and individual needs.
- Resilience programs will be implemented, for example, Circle Time, to support students.
- Students will be encouraged to report bullying incidents early.
- Parents are to contact the school if they become aware of a problem.
- Students are recognised for positive behaviours, including receiving school mini merits and climbing Peak Award levels.
- Tracking sheets of playground incidences are monitored at stage meetings to identify any patterns of repeated behaviour. Executives regularly monitor playground and classroom behaviour records to identify possible bullying incidents and patterns of offence.
- Opportunities need to be provided for students to voice their concerns and formulate solutions. These may be through class meetings, through Circle Time, or through the SRC.

Response

Reporting Bullying

Incidences of bullying will need to be reported immediately to any staff member by students and their parents. Any bullying incidences will be investigated and recorded by class teachers, Assistant Principals and the Principal.
Consequences for the perpetrators of clearly substantiated bullying behaviour will be imposed as outlined in the school’s discipline policy and in the Department of Education and Communities (DEC) policies.

Responding to Reported Incidences of Bullying
When a bullying incident is reported or observed the following procedures will apply:

- Students involved will speak with the Assistant Principal and/or Principal about the incident.
- If clearly substantiated, and depending on the nature of the incident, the student responsible for bullying will be issued with a classroom or playground slip for the incident. The student will also be warned of the consequences for further incidences.
- Phone calls to inform parents/carers of the incident or incidents in question may be made.
- For incidences of bullying behaviour in the playground, students will be sent to the Connected Classroom to be instructed on social skills.
- If it is noted that a student is repeatedly perpetrating bullying behaviours, a behaviour management plan will be developed for the student in consultation with his/her parents to modify behaviour and reduce risk to other students.
- Involve the school counsellor through a Learning and Support Team referral where appropriate.
- In the case of cyber-bullying initiated through school accounts, the student may have their DEC account blocked for a period of time as outlined in our Computer Usage Code of Conduct. Subsequent consequences for this behaviour will be in line with the school’s discipline policy.
- Inform other staff of the incident if required.
- Monitor the behaviour of the students involved.
- If the student continues to bully, make an appointment to see and speak to the parent or carer. Remind them of the policy and ask for their co-operation in stopping their child from bullying other students. Develop a behaviour management plan if necessary.
- If bullying behaviour does not stop, the student may be suspended as per the school discipline policy.
- Victims of bullying will have access to school counsellor support if the need exists or the student or parent so requests it.

Reporting Instances of Cyber-Bullying
If students are being harassed online, they are encouraged to take the following actions immediately:

- **Tell an adult you trust.** This can be a teacher, parent, older sibling or grandparent – someone who can help you to do something about it.
- **Leave the area or stop the activity.** People who bully get their kicks from knowing they’ve upset their target. Don’t let them know they’ve upset you, and you’ve taken away half their “fun”. Easier said than done when it’s face-to-face, but if it’s on your mobile or the Internet — easy.
- **Block the sender’s messages.** If you are being bullied through email or instant messaging, block the sender’s messages. Never reply to harassing messages.
- **Keep a record.** Save any harassing messages and record the time and date that you received them.
- **Advertise your Service Provider.** Most service providers have appropriate use policies that restrict users from harassing others. They can respond to reports of cyber-bullying over their networks, or help you track down the appropriate service provider to respond to.
- **Report to police.** If the bullying includes physical threats, tell the police. Some people think that they can get away with it because they believe it is anonymous. They are wrong. Most can be traced and it’s a criminal offence to use a mobile phone or any form of communication to menace or harass or offend another person.

Evaluating the Program
The plan and strategies put in place will be evaluated on an ongoing basis and will be formally reviewed at least once every three years to ensure that it reflects the current needs and practices of the school by:

- Collecting and analysing data on the nature and extent of bullying and harassment in the school. For example, surveys, classroom and playground records, suspension data. This will assist in the assessment of the effectiveness of the plan to address issues of
bullying and harassment and in the promotion of a safe and secure environment. Revise the plan, if necessary, after a review.

- Examining data and noting if there has been a reduction in reported or observed incidences of bullying
- Evaluating if there has been a change in the ethos of our school. For example, a culture within the school which makes it safe to “tell”, without fear of reprisals
- Speaking to parents who have reported incidences of bullying to find out if the problem has been resolved.

Additional Information

Police Youth Liaison Offer (YLO)
Hurstville Police Local Area Command – Phone: (02) 9375 8599

Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800
Family and Community Services 132 111

Resources

- Student Welfare Policy (NSW Department of Education and Training, 1996)
- Values in NSW Public Schools
- www.bullyingnoway.com.au
- www.det.nsw.edu.au/antibullying
- Strategies for Safer Schools
- Responding to Suggestions, Complaints and Allegations (PD/2002/0051/V001)
- Revised Resources for Teaching Against Violence (NSW Department of Education and Training, 1995)
- Anti-bullying: Best Practice in Schools (NSW Department of Education and Training, 1999)
- The Playground: Best Practice in Primary Schools (NSW Department of Education and Training, 1999)
- Countering Discrimination: Support materials for Schools (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2000)
- A Fair Go for All (NSW Department of Education and Training, 1996)
- Strategies for Safer Schools (NSW Department of Education and Training, 1995-1996)
- Code of Conduct (1997)

Principal’s Comment

Peakhurst South Public School strives to provide a quality education for all students targeting their educational and social needs in an environment free from violence, harassment and bullying. In response, this plan has been developed and revised in consultation with staff, students and parents of the Peakhurst South Public School community.

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