



Porters Creek Public School

Anti-Bullying Plan

Purpose

The NSW Department of Education requires all NSW public schools to have an Anti-bullying Plan which details the strategies implemented to reduce student bullying behaviours. This policy has been developed in line with the recommendations and guidelines from the NSW Department of Education, the Porters Creek Public School Wellbeing Policy and our school values of *Connect, Empower, Innovate* and *Excel*.

Rationale

Porters Creek Public School does not tolerate bullying or anti-social behaviours and seeks to provide a school environment that foster inclusivity and positive relationships. One in four Australian students (27%) report being bullied at least once every few weeks (Cross et al., 2009). It is important that schools focus on building a solid whole-school culture that actively discourages bullying behaviour; develops proactive, preventative strategies; and establishes effective responsive strategies to address bullying if it does happen.

Evidence indicates that bullying is most effectively addressed through interventions that take a holistic, whole-school approach; include educational content that allows students to develop social and emotional competencies and learn appropriate ways to respond to bullying; provide support and professional development to teachers and other school staff; and ensure systematic program implementation and evaluation.

The Anti-Bullying and Wellbeing Policies at Porters Creek Public School are multi-faceted and take on a proactive rather than a reactive approach. The reactions of those witnessing bullying behaviour (bystanders) can influence whether the behaviour continues and can also have long-term effects on the wellbeing of the person being bullied. Someone making an effort to help can have a positive impact on the person being bullied. As such, we recognise the important role of equipping our students to move from being bystanders to become upstanders by explicitly teaching and practising effective responses.

Background Research

The way in which schools and communities understand and define bullying strongly influences the approaches they will take to respond to the problem (Safe and Supportive School Communities Working Group 2015). Bullying can be face-to-face, covert or online. While there is no universally accepted definition of bullying, most researchers agree that bullying:

- involves repeated actions
- is intended to cause distress or harm
- is grounded in an imbalance of power (Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs 2011; Olweus 1993; Smith 2005).

Bullying is defined in the National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF) as:

“an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more persons. Bullying can happen in person or online, and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying. However, these conflicts still need to be addressed and resolved.” (Australian Government Department of Education and Training 2016)

At Porters Creek Public School, we recognise and describe bullying behaviour as having three key features. It involves the intentional misuse of power in a relationship. It is ongoing and repeated, and it involves behaviours that can cause harm. This understanding is what guides our response and actions in the case of a situation involving bullying. In keeping with the above definition, “one off” incidents involving social isolation, conflict, random acts of aggression/intimidation or meanness are not defined as bullying. Although these behaviours will not be tolerated at Porters Creek Public School, it is important to understand the distinction when dealing with varying levels of disconnecting behaviours.

School culture and inclusion

Porters Creek Public School rejects all forms of bullying behaviours, including online (or cyber) bullying by maintaining a commitment to providing a safe, inclusive and respectful learning community that promotes student wellbeing. Executive staff are committed to establishing evidence-based approaches and strategies that promote a positive climate where bullying is less likely to occur.

Student bullying and expectations about student behaviour will be discussed and information presented to promote a positive school culture where bullying is not accepted. During whole school assemblies, students will be reminded of our ‘Learning Link’ focus for the week. Students will then engage in class discussions regularly throughout the week around what this might look, feel and sound like across our school.

Staff will be supported with professional learning that provides evidence-based ways to encourage and teach positive social and emotional wellbeing and discourage, prevent, identify, and respond effectively to student bullying behaviour. New and casual staff will be informed about our school’s approaches and strategies to prevent and respond to student bullying behaviour through our induction processes (see Induction policy for further details).

Partnerships with families and community

Effective schools have high levels of parental and community involvement. This involvement is strongly related to improved student learning, attendance and behaviour. Porters Creek Public School proactively builds collaborative relationships with families and communities to create a shared understanding of how to support student learning, safety and wellbeing. Our school website has information to support families help their children to regulate their emotions and behaviour and develop socially. Information is provided to assist if children have been involved in bullying behaviour (as the person engaging in bullying behaviour, as the person being bullied or as the person witnessing the bullying behaviour).

The following are published on our school’s website:

- BYOD Policies and Behaviour Agreements to support cyber safety and digital citizenship
- Total Behaviour Car – information which outlines our Choice Theory pedagogy
- NSW Anti-bullying website
- Porters Creek Public School Anti-Bullying Policy and Plan

Porters Creek Public School will provide information to parents to help promote a positive school culture where bullying is not acceptable and to increase parent’s understanding of how our school addresses all forms of bullying behaviour.

Support for wellbeing and positive behaviours

Porters Creek Public School’s practices support student wellbeing and positive behaviour approaches that align with our school community’s needs. Social and emotional skills related to personal safety, resilience, help-seeking and protective behaviours are explicitly taught across the curriculum in Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE). Examples of other ways our school will embed student wellbeing and positive behaviour approaches and strategies in practices include the following:

- Learning Link Lessons
- Zones of Regulation
- Dhinewan Program
- Anti-Racism in Action (ARiA) Program - The ARiA program aims to raise teacher confidence to discuss and address racism, and support the development of students’ awareness of racism as well as their knowledge about, and confidence in enacting positive bystander responses.

SCHOOL IMPLEMENTATION

Rights and Responsibilities

Rights

- Every person has the right to feel safe.
- Every person has the right to be treated with respect and fairness.
- Every person has the right to learn.

At Porters Creek Public School, it is everyone's responsibility to ensure a positive school environment, taking necessary steps to promote connecting behaviours and stop bullying behaviour.

Responsibilities

Staff, students, and parents have the following responsibilities:

Leadership Team:

- To promote the Porters Creek Public School Anti-bullying Policy and Procedures and the concepts involved.
- To teach and model appropriate behaviours.
- To teach and clarify for the student the terms, meanings and distinct differences between, bullying, social isolation, conflict, random acts of aggression/intimidation and meanness.
- To teach and promote resilience.
- To teach and model active listening so that all incidents are treated seriously
- To provide appropriate counselling and other support services as required.
- To provide support for parent/guardians through information sessions and newsletter inserts.
- To initiate and arrange meetings with stakeholders at the reporting stage of the procedure.
- To recognise and value the partnership between home and school. (It is the school's responsibility to contact parents of other students when incidents happen. It is the parent's responsibility to care for and support his or her own children).
- To record repeated behavioural incidences on Sentral.

All Teachers:

- To promote our Choice Theory Strategies, Learning Links and Zones of Regulation through teaching and learning that occurs both in the classroom and on the playground.
- To teach and model appropriate behaviours.
- To teach and clarify for the student the terms, meanings and distinct differences between, bullying, social isolation, conflict, random acts of aggression/intimidation and meanness.
- To teach and promote resilience.
- To teach and model active listening so that all incidents are treated seriously.
- To recognise and value the partnership between home and school. It is the school's responsibility to contact parents of other students when incidents happen. (It is the parent's responsibility to care for and support his or her own children)
- To record repeated behavioural incidences on Sentral.

All School Administration or Support Staff:

- To teach and model appropriate behaviours.
- To be aware of the policy and the strategies being implemented in the school.
- To model active listening so that all incidents are treated seriously.

Students will be encouraged and supported to:

- Use strategies taught through the Learning Links Lessons and Zones of Regulation as well as other primary prevention programs.
- Report all behavioural incidences to the hub teachers or teacher/s on playground duty and to alert the hub teacher/s of repeated incidences.
- To model acceptable behaviour to others- Say NO to bullying behaviours.
- To be a responsible bystander and take appropriate action which would be to seek the support of a teacher or other staff member. (i.e. If it's not safe, it's safe to tell)
- To identify a network of trusted adults that they can talk to for support. (The children are often encouraged to identify five adults that they can talk to – one person for each finger on their hand.)

- To let an adult know what is happening. They need to alert their classroom teacher if a behaviour is repeated.
- To keep on telling until the bullying stops.
- To say no to bullying behaviours.
- To use positive language and behaviour towards all others.

Parents should:

- Be aware of the policy and the strategies being implemented in the school and to actively discuss the policy with their children.
- Teach and model appropriate behaviours at home.
- Encourage children to report incidents to the teacher so that they can be dealt with immediately.
- Encourage children to have and to use their nominated support network when at school.
- Encourage their children to speak openly with them and to look at positive strategies to do with their feelings.
- Recognise and value the partnership between home and school. It is the school's responsibility to contact parents of other students when incidents happen. (It is the parent's responsibility to care for and support his or her own children).
- Support their children in the knowledge that the resolution of the situation may take some time.
- Help them to identify their situation of concern.

Response

When an investigation about bullying is required, the following procedures will be followed:

Porters Creek Public School adopts a 'no blame' approach and process in the first instance. Those involved will be interviewed (by teacher or Leadership Team member) and made aware of the suspected bullying and the school's anti-bullying position. At this stage there may not be any consequences and parents may not be notified. The incident, if deemed not to be bullying, may be recorded and tracked according to our school Wellbeing and Anti-bullying policies.

If bullying is identified, the teacher/ Leadership Team may choose to use the following methods with the children involved:

- Mediation
- Method of shared concern (if group involved)
- Individual counselling
- Parents of both the child exhibiting the bullying behaviour and the child who has been bullied will be notified of the level and severity of the incident/s and our response. A record of the incident is kept on Sentral and an action plan is formulated.

Support and Monitor - continued monitoring by the hub teacher/s and support will take place for an agreed period. Any monitoring and/or support given will be recorded on Sentral. This will be dependent on several variables some of which may be:

- Age
- severity of incident
- frequency
- patterns of behaviour.

Continued bullying would result in a further action plan being devised, appropriate consequences for the child (see list below), and further dialogue with the parents. The School Counsellor and or Learning Support staff may be involved in formulating this action plan.

Responses to bullying actions may include:

- Risk management procedures (e.g. Withdrawal from playground)
- Teaching of social problem solving strategies
- Offering opportunities for reconciliation between victim and bully
- Ongoing counselling from an appropriate agency
- Internal suspension
- External suspension

Other Resources

Bullying. No Way! - Provides information for students, parents and teachers to help schools create learning environments where every student and school community member is safe, supported, respected and valued. bullyingnoway.gov.au

Office of the eSafety Commissioner - The Office is committed to helping young people have safe, positive experiences online and encouraging behavioural change to promote responsible online behaviour. It provides online safety training, a complaints service for serious cyberbullying and for offensive and illegal online content. www.esafety.gov.au

Kids Helpline - Kids Helpline is Australia's only free 24 hour, seven day a week phone and online counselling service for children and young people, aged 5 to 25. For some young people, connecting with Kids Helpline has been a life-saving experience, while for others it has provided practical help and emotional support at the critical moment they needed someone to listen www.kidshelpline.com.au

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle or as need arises.

Review Version	Edited by/Comments	Next Review
1 – Jan 2022	B Maasepp, R Christie	Jan 2023
2 – Feb 2023	R Christie	Feb 2024