Anti-bullying Plan
Primbee Public School 2014
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.

All school staff members, as well as several parent representatives, were involved in putting together the draft of our Anti-Bullying policy.

Once the first draft was completed it was sent to all parents for comment via a feedback sheet.

Changes were made as required and the final document was put on our school website for ongoing reference. Parents were notified in writing of any significant changes to the original draft.

Ongoing newsletter articles highlighted the nature and importance of parent support.

The document will be reviewed again in 2015.

Statement of purpose

We believe that children attend school in order to participate in quality education which will help them to become self directed, lifelong learners who can create a positive future for themselves and the wider community.

Any behavior that gets in the way of teaching and learning and interferes with the well being of students is not acceptable.

Students, teachers, parents, carers and members of the wider school community have a shared responsibility to create a safe and happy environment, free from all forms of bullying.

Parent/carer support

A great deal of research has been undertaken to determine the most effective ways of dealing with bullying. The Department of Education and Communities recommends the following:

- Show your child respect and kindness at home. If members of the family treat each other well, your child will most likely treat others the same way.
- Model how to solve differences of opinion and other potential conflict situations calmly and honestly. Show children that it is O.K. to admit being wrong and to say sorry.
- Show children how to listen to others and try to see their point of view and if necessary “agree to disagree”!
- Talk to your child about bullying and keep the lines of communication open. That way they are more likely to confide in you. Listen without rushing in with a solution.
- Encourage your child to ask bystanders to help stop the bullying.
- Encourage your child to offer comfort and support afterwards to a child who has been bullied.
- Tell your child to keep their own safety in mind and tell an adult if they are worried about bullying.
- Make sure your child understands that: *Telling an adult is not dobbing.* If the child wants the bullying to stop and is not just out for revenge, then it is important to tell an adult and get help.
• Tell your child not to join in bullying behaviour. If gossip is being spread encourage your child to speak up and tell the truth.

• Make sure that your children know that they can report bullying to a teacher. Ask your child which adults at school they are comfortable reporting bully to.

Staff and volunteers:

• Are encouraged to watch out for incidents of bullying. It needs to be reported to a teacher by the staff member or volunteer. The child needs to be encouraged and supported in reporting it themselves to the teachers.

• Are expected to be role model of our core values as well as of acceptable ways to resolve conflict and show empathy for others.

Protection

At Primbee P.S. we understand that:

• Both the person being bullied and the student doing the bullying are likely to have ongoing social, emotional and academic issues such as anxiety, depression, low self esteem and poor academic results.

• Teachers need to support those who are bullied and provide training in skills that will empower those children to be resilient and assertive. This will be done generally as part of our values focus and at the point of need.

• Teachers need to teach bullies how to resolve conflict with empathy not violence at the point of need.

• Teachers need to teach all children to be supportive bystanders by using the training package at the beginning of each school year.

• Teachers need to develop friendly and supportive relationships between all students and teach children how to restore damaged relationships throughout the year as part of the Personal Development program.

• Teachers need to acknowledge and be alert for the existence of cyber bullying at all times.

Resolving bullying incidents is the responsibility of school staff, students, parents and all members of the school community as outlined in the introduction to this policy document.

Through our whole school teaching and modeling of our core values of respect, responsibility, compassion and personal best, we have embedded anti bullying messages in all Key Learning Areas and all school activities.

Bullying is defined by Ken Rigby (author, research professor and leading educational expert from the University of South Australia), as:

“an initial desire to hurt, this desire is expressed in action, the action is directed by a more powerful person or group, it is without justification, it is typically repeated and it is done so with evident enjoyment. “

Bullying can be:

Face to face and involve punching, tripping, kicking, scratching, spitting, direct verbal abuse e.g. name calling, teasing, putdowns, insults, humiliation, sarcasm, threats, rude gestures or taking a child’s property. This is more likely to be done by boys.

Covert or indirect: which includes excluding or ignoring people, spreading lies, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions and playing humiliating tricks. This is more likely to be done by girls.
**Cyberbullying:** where bullies use digital forms of communication such as SMS, social media sites, chat rooms and mobile phones to intentionally and repeatedly humiliate and cause distress to another person. It can be anonymous and easily broadcast widely.

**CONFLICT OR FIGHTS BETWEEN EQUALS OR SINGLE INCIDENTS ARE NOT DEFINED AS BULLYING.**

Bullying can make a child feel insecure, unhappy, stressed, anxious and depressed.

The victims of bullying often lack confidence dislike taking risks have fewer friends and lack age appropriate social skills.

They may worry more; have poor physical health, impaired academic performance and greater school non attendance.

**Prevention**

When we talk about bullying at Primbee P.S. we mean:

Bullying of:

- **Children** by children, teachers, other staff members or community members including parents.

- **Teachers/staff members** by children, teachers, staff members or community members including parents.

- **Parents/community members** by teachers/staff members, children or other community members including parents.

Primbee P.S. implements the following programs to maintain a positive climate of respectful relationships where bullying is less likely to occur:

- **Whole school value focus.** All teachers teach children what each of our core values means and what that looks like in practice in all Key Learning Areas. Our values are Respect, Responsibility, Compassion, Personal Best and Live Life Well. (See Welfare and Discipline Policy)

- **Whole school reward system.** Children receive tokens when they exhibit behavior that shows their understanding of our core values. When they have earned 20 tokens they receive a badge which is worn on their school hat. When they have a full set of badges (one in each value area), they receive a wristband. Individual token tallies are displayed in the classroom.

Tokens from each class are tallied each week and the total recorded publicly. When a target number is achieved then the whole school participates in a reward activity. Two student’s names are drawn each week from the token box for a Primbee Prize (ruler or pencil)

- **Peer Support Program.** All classes are involved in this program of cross stage group activities led by Stage 3 students. Leadership, cooperation compromise, consideration of others are some of the skills developed through this program. There is an expectation that if children know each other better then they will be less likely to engage in bullying behavior.

Genuine friendships should also develop so that children are more inclined to support each other rather than bullying. This unofficial Buddy system encourages older students to be considerate and understanding towards younger students, fostering a sense of whole school community.
• **Anti Racism policy.** The Department of Education and Communities is committed to the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination. We work towards eliminating all expressions of racism and promote acceptance of Australia’s cultural, linguistic and religious diversity.

An Anti-Racism Contact Officer has been nominated and trained at our school to provide informal resolutions for any complaints of racism. If complaints cannot be resolved then they are passed on to the principal.

• **Student Representative Council.** Elected members are reminded of their responsibility to be supportive of all school members as well as being another person to whom children can communicate any concerns. We expect all SRC members to take seriously the expectation that they are role models of appropriate behavior.

• **Classroom Reminders and behavior slip program.** In class children are given 2 warning that their behavior is not acceptable. Children are required to reflect on the reason for the reminder and what they need to do to prevent further consequences. The third reminder results in a 10 minute time out in another classroom.

   Time out provides an opportunity for children to think about what rule they have broken and how to avoid getting into trouble in the future.

   A fourth reminder results in time out with the principal and a letter home to the parent.

   More serious incidents are recorded on a purple slip which is kept by the class teacher. Three classroom purple slips results in lunch time detention.

• **Playground behavior slips.** Information about rule incidents of breaking rules is recorded on a purple slip and sent to the principal. Once the appropriate action has been taken they are filed in the office. This enables us to analyse data if necessary, see any continuing patterns of inappropriate behavior and discuss concerns with parents.

• **Active After school activities reminders.** A yellow card is given to children as a warning that their behavior is not acceptable. If inappropriate behavior continues then the student will receive a red card which will mean that he/she is excluded from the program for the rest of the term. They can rejoin the program the following term.

• **Proactive playground supervision.** Rostered teachers will be vigilant in supervising the playground with a view to preventing incidents from getting out of hand. This will involve reminding children of our school values and safety rules.

• **Codes of Conduct and Risk Assessment.** For sport and excursions codes of conduct and risk assessments identify appropriate behavior. Discussions are held to ensure that children are aware not only of behavior expectations but also why.

• **Workplace health and safety procedures.** The Department of Education and Communities requires schools to ensure a safe and healthy learning environment for all. Many of our rules and procedures are part of our commitment to keeping children safe and healthy as far as practicable.

• **Effective bystander training.** This is a proactive strategy that trains bystander students to behave in a supportive way to students that are being bullied, to intervene where feasible or to report the incident to a teacher.
• **Assertiveness training.** Teachers include this in their values work in relation to Respect. Children need to recognize that they are important and their opinions are valid and can speak up and stand up for what they believe. Children will be taught skills to help them to be self confident.

However, this needs to be done in a calm and controlled manner without being rude.

• **Mediation.** If there is not a huge imbalance of power then we need to help students find a win-win solution or compromise.

### Early Intervention

Students who have been identified as at risk of being a victim of bullying or lacking resilience will be monitored in the following ways:

- **Learning Support Team** meetings will inform all staff of specific needs of new students or students with an assessment of a particular social or mental health need. Background information will be shared with staff if it will enable them to support students more effectively.

- **Individual learning plans and/or behavior plans** will be compiled for students with specific, assessed learning or behavior difficulties.

- **Medical practitioners, external agencies or parents** will be consulted as to the best way to support these students.

- **School counsellor** referrals will be made with parental permission so that regular monitoring can occur and/or referrals to appropriate external agencies/medical practitioners for assessment/support as required.

• **The whole school values program**, individualized learning approach and reward system will provide explicit strategies for dealing with bullying.

• **Student mentoring** by teachers and other students will help to develop appropriate social skills.

• All staff will be made aware of any special needs children and the most appropriate support strategies.

• Staff will discuss progress on these students as required, in weekly staff meetings.

### Response

*Primbee Public School* takes a strong stand against all forms of bullying which includes a proactive program to prevent bullying. (See Prevention)

**If bullying does occur then our strategy includes the following:**

Teachers discuss the incident with the student(s) involved and any eye witnesses. A decision is made to do one of the following:

- Place the child on a time out in class or in the playground. This is 10 minutes in another classroom or on a seat in the playground.

- Record the event and consequences on a purple slip.

- If a detention or further investigation is required then the principal will be informed via the purple slip. 3 classroom purple slips will also result in a detention. The parents will be informed about detention via a green slip which needs to be signed and returned to the school office. Parents are invited to make an appointment to discuss the incident with the class teacher and/or the principal if necessary.

- Detention is given for serious incidents when children do not:
- Keep hands and feet to themselves, resulting in serious injury to staff or students.
- Follow teachers directions, resulting in unsafe behaviour and lack of progress in class
- Show respect for other people, property and the environment (including speaking to others respectfully) resulting in serious damage.

Suspension can be given for the following:
- Continued disobedience
- Disrupting other students
- Aggressive behaviour – damaging property, bullying, verbal abuse, cyberbullying
- Physical violence resulting in injury
- Use of or possession of a prohibited weapon e.g. firearm or knife
- Possession, supply or use of illegal substances
- Malicious damage to school property or that of staff or students
- Using an implement as a weapon (made or adapted).
- Persistent serious misbehaviour e.g. not following the discipline code, making threats
- Bullying, harassing, victimisation

Expulsion is only given when all welfare and discipline strategies have been implemented but a serious incident has occurred.

Parents can appeal against a suspension or expulsion decision if the correct procedure has not been followed or if the decision is unfair.

This appeal is made in writing to the Education Director or Regional Director (if involved in the suspension or expulsion). Regional Office staff can help parents with this process.

Empowering the Community

Parents need to be aware of the following:
- At Primbee P.S., parents are informed in writing if their child is placed on a formal detention. Parents are asked to return a slip to the office, indicating that they have seen the green slip and have discussed the incident with their child.
- Parents have the option of making an appointment with the class teacher or principal to discuss the incident.
- Teachers and the principal will talk to parents about serious incidents i.e. when another student has been hurt or upset.
- All parents are encouraged to let the principal or class teacher know if there is current, ongoing bullying which is seriously affecting their child. (See Bullying can be : ). This can be in writing, phone, email or face to face conversation.
- The Anti Bullying policy is available to all parents as a hard copy and online on the school website.
- Parents will receive regular updates and information about our policy via the school newsletter (also online) as well as advice on how they can support their children.
- Parents will be provided with Department of Education and Communities produced support material.

Appeal Process
• Parents are encouraged to inform class teachers as soon as possible about any incidents that seem to be bullying. Teachers will inform parents about the results of their investigation.

• Details of our support programs will be available in our newsletter. This will include our responsible bystander program.

• Bullying that appears to involve criminal behavior such as violence, threats, intimidation, inciting violence, hacking will be reported to the School Safety and Response Unit hotline on 1300 363 778.

• Children involved in such incidents can be given a short or long suspension or an expulsion in extreme cases. (See Response section).

• Parents will receive information via the newsletter about any whole school concerns relating to student safety plus advice on recommended action that can be taken to support the school

Dealing with Bullying

When a bullying incident is reported to the school it is investigated by the class teacher or principal as soon as possible after the event. This investigation will include the following:

• The children involved will be interviewed by a teacher or the principal. If appropriate and available any eye witnesses will also be interviewed.

• The child’s age, maturity, past record, intent…will be taken into account when deciding on a consequence and all children involved will be given an opportunity to present their views of the event.

• It will be a priority to find out if it is a genuine, ongoing bullying incident or an isolated event.

• It will also be important to find out if it is abuse of power or normal interactions between children.

• If it is bullying then we will discuss this with the parents and try to work out a solution at school. Information about a serious event will usually be sent home the same day or the following day if further investigation is required.

• This will be in writing, face to face conversation or a phone call if at all possible.

• We encourage children to tell us if incidents continue and to keep telling the teacher or their parents if the situation does not improve.

Our focus is on repairing damaged relationships and making restitution if possible and includes (as appropriate), the bully and/or victim being involved in the following activities:

• Face to face discussion to make the children involved aware of how bullying behavior affects the victim. (Principal or teacher present).

• Mediation discussion with relevant parties to find a solution. (Principal or teacher present).

• Ongoing discussion of possible strategies to prevent future bullying e.g. Stop and think, anger management strategies

• Referral to the school counsellor for ongoing assessment or support.

• Discussion with parents as to what they can or need to do.

• Consequences such as:
  - Detention
  - Suspension
  - Apology
  - Repair damage to property
  - Loss of privileges
  - Chores

The class teacher will be involved in making decisions about the best way to deal with each incident.
Identifying Patterns of bullying behavior

- Children are encouraged to report repeated bullying incidents to the same teacher so that patterns can be identified.
- Staff members share information about reported bullying incidents to identify patterns.
- Purple slip information can be analysed to identify trouble spots and times.

It is important to note the following:

- **Research shows that using punishment as the only intervention is not effective in preventing bullying.**
- **No one intervention is appropriate in all instances of bullying.**
- **More than one intervention will usually need to be implemented.**
- **Not all hurtful behaviours are bullying.**

Support strategies

Children who have been seriously affected by bullying may access the following support:

- **School counselor** support including regular monitoring and/or use of the Anchor program strategies.
- **Regular check** by class teacher /principal as to how everything is going.
- **Assertiveness** training by the class teachers in Personal Development lessons or by the counselor.

- **Provision of a support person** (staff member or student)
- **Feedback to parents** as required

Report procedures for assaults, threats, intimidation or harassments

- After investigation, if the incident is considered to be criminal behavior then a report will be made to the police local area command and the School Safety Response unit.
- Incidents of parents being involved in assaults, threats, intimidation or harassment of children, staff or parents can be excluded from the school grounds using the Inclosed Land Act. A police report can also be made.

**Child Wellbeing Unit or Community Services**

If teachers, other staff members or volunteers have concerns about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child then it must be reported to the principal.

The principal will report it to the Child Wellbeing Unit where advice will be given as to the most appropriate course of action.

If the evidence indicates that the child is in immediate risk of harm then Community Services will be informed immediately.

Risk of harm means:

- Basic physical or psychological needs are not being met.
- Necessary medical care is not being met.
- There is physical or sexual abuse or ill-treatment.
- There is a risk of psychological harm.
- Domestic violence results in risk of serious physical or psychological harm.
Complaints Handling Policy

If you have a complaint about our policy, procedures or decisions when dealing with bullying then the following steps can be followed:

- Make an appointment to see the class teacher to discuss your concerns.
- If you are not happy with the result or you do not feel that it is appropriate to talk to the teacher then make an appointment to discuss your concerns with the principal.
- You may bring a support person or interpreter if necessary.
- If your complaint is about the principal then you will need to contact the school education director in our area. The office staff can provide that information.
- If your complaint cannot be resolved in an informal way then we may ask you to put it in writing. You need to include what you would like to happen as a result of your complaint. We can help you with this. There is a special form that can be used and sent to the Principal or Education Director.

Effectiveness

As part of our Annual School Report we will comment on the effectiveness of our Anti-bullying plan. These comments will be based on staff discussions and data analysis using our behavior slips, class data and surveys comments from parents.

The effectiveness of the plan will be measured by:

- the number of children referred to the principal for detention,
- token and badge statistics
- teachers’ observations of student behavior.
- Focus group discussion – parents, students and staff

Survey results

Review

The Anti-bullying plan will be provided as a hard copy to all families for feedback. The final copy will be placed on our school website so that it is available for anyone who is interested.

Parents and students will be given the opportunity to provide feedback in a written comment form or independently run focus group meetings.

The staff and parent representatives will take this feedback into account when reviewing the existing document.

Necessary changes will be made based on the current DEC policy, new information about how to effectively deal with bullying issues and feedback from parents and students.

Additional Information

Police Youth Liaison Officer (YLO)
School Liaison Police officer (SLP)

Kids Helpline: 008 073 008
Parent line: 1300 1300 52

Principal’s comment

Being a small school we are aware of the background and support needed to be proactive in promoting supportive and respectful relationships in our school

Dorothy Cass principal
Irene Burden class teacher
Garry Goward class teacher
Sharon Erwin class teacher
Danielle Boyer class teacher
Allison Connell  class teacher
Naomi McGhee  class teacher

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