



# Anti-Bullying Procedures at Moss Vale Public School



Moss Vale Public School

Department of Education

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# Contents

	Page
Rationale	3
Policy statement responsibilities and delegations	3
Whole school approach	4
Audience and applicability	4
Context	4
Definition of bullying	4
Behaviour Code for Students	5
Bullying behavior	5
Approach to bullying at Moss Vale Public School	7
Strategies and programs for bullying prevention	8
Responsibilities and delegations	8
Shared approach to dealing with bullying	8
Staff	8
Teachers	9
Students	9
Parents and caregivers	9
School community members	9
Monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements	10

## Rationale

The NSW Department of Education and Communities rejects all forms of bullying including online (or cyber) bullying. No student, employee, parent, caregiver or community member should experience bullying within the learning or working environments of the department.

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 secure. 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 Moss Vale Public School is that students will not participate in violence, discrimination, harassment or intimidation.

## Policy statement responsibilities and delegations

### 1.1

Moss Vale Public School aims to provide clear definitions for understanding bullying behaviour, and the processes for preventing and responding to bullying. The purpose of this policy is to outline the provision of a safe and respectful learning environment for Moss Vale Public School students, where bullying is not accepted and bullying prevention is paramount.

### 1.2

The Moss Vale Public School community believes that a safe and respectful school community, where all students have the opportunity to learn to their potential, is founded on positive relationships, where bullying is not accepted.

This document is founded on the principle that all members of our school community have a responsibility to:

- be aware of what constitutes bullying behaviour
- prevent bullying by promoting positive relationships and anti-bullying messages
- report bullying when it occurs
- respond to bullying appropriately

## 1.3

Moss Vale Public School will provide a positive culture where bullying is not accepted. In alignment with our Positive Behaviour for Learning framework, all members of the school community will have the right of respect from others, the right to learn or teach, and the right to feel safe and secure in the school environment.

## 1.4 Whole school approach

At Moss Vale Public School we take a whole-school approach to anti-bullying, and are focused on developing a supportive school culture that includes effective behaviour management plans and programs, and a positive learning environment that encourages diversity and empowers students to be active in their pursuit of justice for themselves and others.

## Audience and applicability

### 2.1

This policy applies to all students, staff and the community at Moss Vale Public School.

## Context

### 3.1

This policy is informed by evidence based research, [Anti-bullying interventions in schools – what works?](#) and 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.

## 3.2 Definition of bullying

A clear understanding of what bullying is can help both adults and students deal with the situation more effectively.

Bullying behaviour has 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. Cyberbullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies.

Conflict or fights between equals or single incidents are not defined as bullying.

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.

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, malicious SMS and email messages, inappropriate use of camera phones.

### 3.3

Moss Vale Public School works to provide safe, inclusive, and respectful learning communities that promote student wellbeing.

### 3.4 Behaviour Code for Students

The department's **Behaviour Code for Students** requires students to be inclusive and respect other students, their teachers, school staff, and community members, and to not bully, harass, intimidate, or discriminate against anyone in our schools.

### 3.5 Bullying behaviour

A person is bullied when one or more other people expose them regularly and over time to negative or harmful actions. Bullies are people who deliberately set out to intimidate, exclude, threaten, and/or hurt others repeatedly.

#### 3.5.1

Bullying is a clear form of harassment. Harassment is behaviour that is intended to disturb or upset, and it is characteristically repetitive. Repetitive behaviour is defined as behaviour that occurs more than once.

#### 3.5.2

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. Cyberbullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies.

### 3.5.3

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.

### 3.5.4 Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies, using, but not limited to, SMS, pictures, sounds, video, emails, instant messaging, chat, and other forms of social media, such as Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter and Instagram.

### 3.5.6 Bullying behavior

Bullying behaviour can be:

- **verbal** - eg name calling, teasing, abuse, put-downs, sarcasm, insults, threats
- **physical** - eg touching, hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting
- **social** - eg ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating, making inappropriate gestures
- **psychological** - eg spreading rumours, dirty looks, hiding, interfering with or damaging possessions, threatening or extorting in relation to money, school work, possessions or safety
- **technological** - eg abuse on social media, malicious SMS, email, or chat messages, taking and sharing photos of others without their permission

### 3.5.7 Effect of bullying behaviour

The effect of bullying is such that it:

- Devalues, isolates and frightens
- Affects an individual's ability to achieve
- Has negative mental health and wellbeing impacts on individuals engaging in bullying behaviour, individuals who are the subjects of bullying behaviour, and onlookers or bystanders.
- Can lead to anxiety, depression, and suicide

Conflict or fights between equals or single incidents are not defined as bullying. These incidents will be dealt with according to the Wellbeing Procedures at Moss Vale Public School.

## 3.6 Approach to bullying at Moss Vale Public School

Bullying behaviour is not accepted at Moss Vale Public School. The school will adopt a four-phase approach to bullying:

### 3.6.1 Protection

Moss Vale Public School will maintain a clear Anti-Bullying Plan, developed in consultation with staff, students, and parents. All stakeholders have a shared responsibility in protecting students from bullying. Moss Vale Public School has a whole-school emphasis on developing a positive learning environment, characterised by respect, through the Positive Behaviour for Learning framework. Students are further supported, through welfare programs, to develop resilience and positive mental health and wellbeing.

### 3.6.2 Prevention

Moss Vale Public School provides programs to recognise the value of diversity, the importance of positive and respectful relationships, the negative impacts of violence and aggression, and the harmful impacts of bullying behaviour. Prevention programs are delivered as part of the curriculum across KLAs and to students through student welfare programs.

### 3.6.3 Early Intervention

Moss Vale Public School implements strategies and programs 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.

### 3.6.4 Response

Moss Vale Public School has a clear plan to respond to incidents of bullying. The Anti-Bullying Plan empowers the whole school community to recognise and respond appropriately to bullying, harassment and victimisation and behave as responsible bystanders. Welfare and discipline strategies are implemented as part of this plan.

### 3.7 Strategies and programs for bullying prevention

Moss Vale Public School will implement strategies to prevent bullying including;

- Anti-Bullying plan
- whole school preventative antibullying programs including the promotion of social awareness and relationship skills through social and emotional learning programs
- wellbeing team
- education programs that promote a culture of reporting bullying and upstander behaviour
- partnering with parents and carers
- teacher support and professional development in providing effective anti-bullying approaches

## Responsibilities and delegations

### 4.1 Shared approach to dealing with bullying

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.

All members of the school community contribute to the prevention of bullying by modelling and promoting appropriate behaviour and respectful relationships.

### 4.2 Staff

Staff have a responsibility to;

- respect and support students
- model and promote appropriate behaviour
- support students to become resilient
- have knowledge of school and departmental policies relating to bullying behaviour
- communicate the school policy and Anti-Bullying Plan to students, including definitions and repercussions of bullying
- respond in a timely manner to incidents of bullying according to the school's Anti-bullying Plan
- ensure open lines of communication between home and school to respond to bullying situations if they arise.

### 4.3 Teachers

In addition to the staff responsibilities, 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, including digital safety.
- be aware of where anti-bullying messages are taught in the curriculum
- identify signs of bullying in all school environments

### 4.4 Students

Students have a responsibility to;

- behave appropriately, respecting individual differences and diversity
- behave as responsible digital citizens – this means interacting with others online in a positive and respectful manner, and ensuring that comments, images, videos and other material shared online respects the privacy and reputation of all
- have a clear understanding of the different forms of bullying. i.e. psychological, cyber and physical
- follow the school Anti-Bullying Plan. This includes being aware of the consequences associated with bullying
- behave as responsible bystanders – bystanders are the most powerful participants in bullying incidents. It is imperative that bystanders make it clear to the bully that his/her behaviour is unacceptable, support the target of bullying, and report the bullying incident to the school
- report incidents of bullying according to the school Anti-Bullying Plan.

### 4.5 Parent and caregivers

Parents and caregivers have a responsibility to;

- support their children to become responsible citizens and to develop responsible on-line 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
- support their children to become resilient – confident to report bullying and overcome challenges they face
- report incidents of school-related bullying behaviour to the school
- work collaboratively with the school to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur.

## 4.6 School community members

Parents and caregivers 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

## Monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements

### 5.1

Principals, school executive and the Wellbeing Team supervise the implementation of the policy.

### 5.2

This policy will be presented to the school community for consultation and review every three years.

### 5.3

Each year the Welfare Team will review the data collected on bullying and will make recommendations to the executive on future improvements.