

Anti-bullying Plan



Activity Statement

At Ebenezer Public School we value, respect and show tolerance of others in a safe and supportive environment. We foster positive relationships through strong welfare programs. As part of our school's Welfare and Discipline Policy, our Anti-Bullying Plan aims to deal effectively with, and prevent, incidences of bullying.

Statement of Purpose

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

Any inappropriate behaviour that gets in the way of teaching and learning at the school and interferes with the wellbeing of students cannot be accepted.

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

Students, teachers, parents, caregivers and members of the wider school community can expect:

- that students will be safe at school, free from fear of bullying, harassment, intimidation and victimisation.
- to know what is expected of them and others in relation to the Anti-bullying Plan.
- that all students will be provided with appropriate support when bullying occurs.

Students, teachers, parents, caregivers and members of the wider school community have a responsibility to:

- promote positive relationships that respect and accept individual differences and diversity within the whole school community.
- support the development of the Anti-bullying Plan and support the plan through words and actions.
- actively work together to resolve incidents of bullying behaviour when they occur.¹

¹ https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/student_serv/discipline/stu_discip_gov/anti_bul07.pdf

Definition of 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. Cyberbullying 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.

Bullying behaviour can be:

Physical	Emotional
Hitting Punching Kicking Scratching Tripping Spitting Chasing Biting Taking other's property Using standover tactics	Spreading rumours intentionally Dirty looks Hiding or damaging possessions Inappropriate notes, letters, phone messages, SMS, abusive emails, derogatory postings in chat rooms, threatening text messaging. Inappropriate use of camera phones Inappropriate use of the Internet in other people's names
Social	Verbal
Ignoring Excluding Making rude, crude or cruel gestures Excluding children from activities	Name calling Teasing Abuse Put down Sarcasm Insults Threats Bribing Daring-manipulating Racism

Bullying can happen anywhere: at school, travelling to and from school, in sporting teams, between neighbours or in the workplace.

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.

Conflict or fights between equals and single incidents are not defined as bullying. Bullying behaviour is not:

- children not getting along well
- a situation of mutual conflict
- single episodes of nastiness or random acts of aggression or intimidation.

Teachers at Ebenezer build student resilience and identify potential bullying problems early by teaching social and emotional lessons throughout the term. We always focus on respectful talk, the impact of words and actions on emotions and developing protective networks. Bounce Back, Peer Support, Child Protection, Light Bright and Polite (Stage 3 Social Media Awareness Training) and the Personal Development Curriculum all provide a sound basis to teach positive social behaviour and non-violence. We integrate social and emotional lessons into everything we do. As a staff we hold high expectations of ourselves to model this behaviour to the students.

Behind this structure lies a strong and linear Anti-Bullying procedure based on evidence-based research. See further in the newsletter for a copy of the Flowchart we use when dealing with possible bullying at Ebenezer PS.

The Method of Shared Concern

One of the processes available to us ensure student safety remains integral to what we do at Ebenezer is the Method of Shared Concern. The process requires several meetings with the students involved in the bullying, first as individuals, then in a group over a two week period. Convicting students of bullying and administering 'consequences' in the form of sanctions or punishments is often seen as quicker. But unfortunately when this is done the bullying often continues in covert and damaging ways. The cases then need further attention and this can ultimately prove to be very time-consuming. It is claimed that the method of Shared Concern can produce enduring solutions.

The evidence for the effectiveness of this method is strong, with over 90% success reported in a number of reported studies. Importantly, cases suitable for this method should be carefully chosen. The Method should not be used when violent or criminal behaviour occurs, nor in low level cases of teasing. In some cases other methods may be more appropriate. As a staff and school community we have a responsibility to take positive and consistent actions to deal effectively with bullying.

Student responsibilities:

- To show respect, consideration and support of others.
- Behave appropriately, respecting individual differences and diversity.
- To "tell" if they are being bullied or if they see someone being bullied – both at school and on the way to and from school.
- To attempt to use learnt strategies to deal with bullying incidents.
- Follow the school anti-bullying plan.
- Respond to incidents of bullying according to the Anti-bullying Plan.

Staff Responsibilities:

- To model appropriate behaviour at all times.
- Ensure students feel
 - safe and valued in the classroom
 - are listened to
- Be observant of signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying.
- Encourage students to ask for help when needed.
- Implement school programs, which promote positive relationships and incorporate strategies to deal with bullying.
- To communicate bullying incidents with parents when needed.
- To monitor and track incidences of bullying (Edupro) and take appropriate action.

The teacher who initially deals with an incident **MUST** be the one to resolve the issue and enter appropriate data. Support from the assistant principal or principal to follow a 'Method of Shared Concern' approach may be sought.

Parent/Guardian responsibilities:

- Support their children in all aspects of their learning
- To support the school's Anti-bullying Plan.
- To take an active role in their child's school life and watch for signs that their child may be being bullied.
- To encourage their child to adopt learnt strategies to deal with bullying.
- To instruct their child to "tell" if they are bullied.
- To inform the school if any bullying is suspected.
- Support all students of the school to deal effectively with bullying.
- Support activities and initiatives of the school to minimise bullying and teasing.

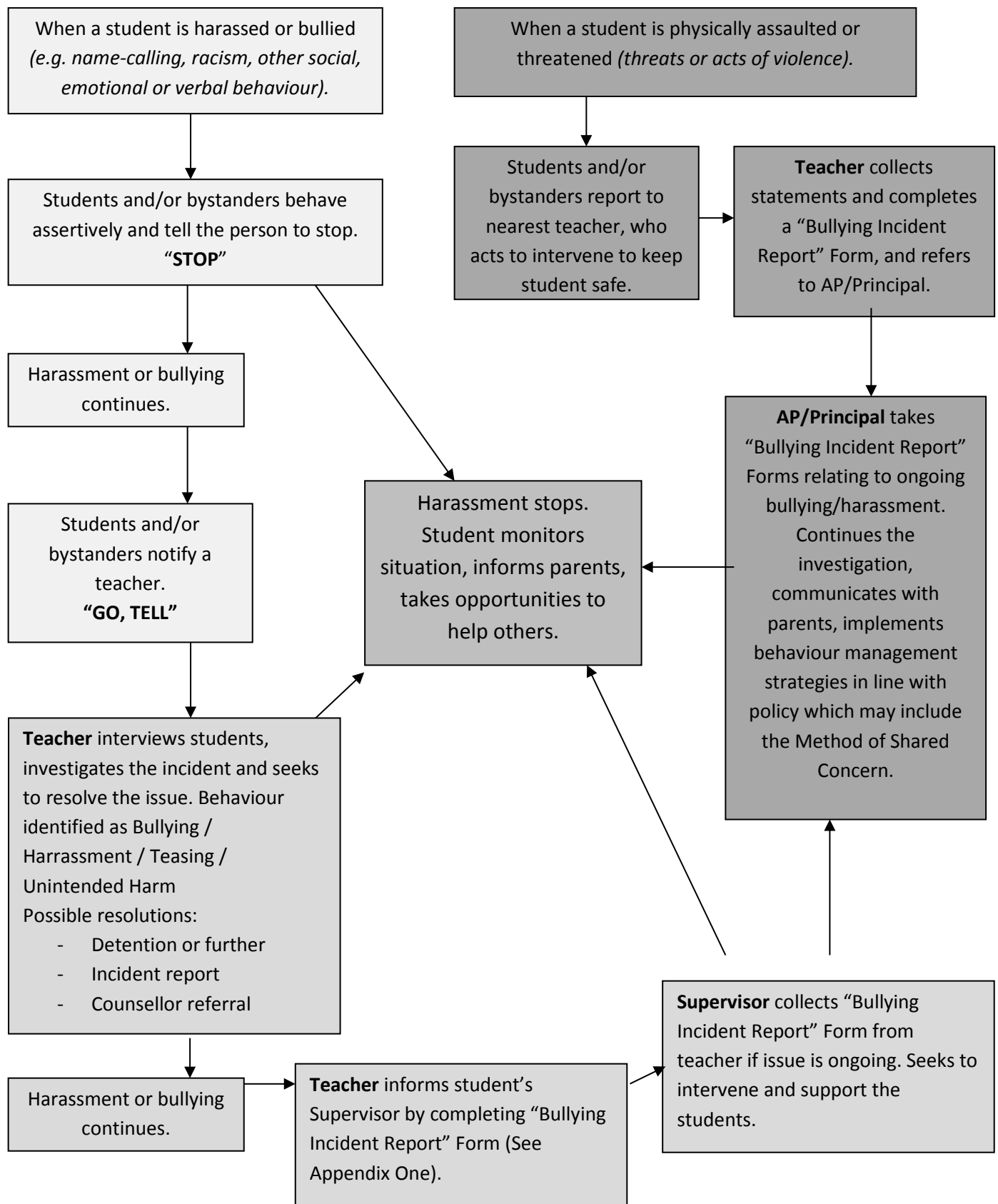
Strategies for students: How to deal with bullying behaviours

- Be firm and strong even if you don't feel it.
- Look them straight in the eye and stand up tall.
- Tell them to leave you alone and walk away.
- Ignore them; pretend you didn't hear the comment.
- Find a friend to play with. Play with friendly children.
- If in the playground, go and tell the teacher on duty. If in the classroom, go and tell the teacher.
- Don't fight back physically; it will get you in trouble too.

Guidelines and Strategies for Parents/Guardians

Signs your child may be being bullied	What you can do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Dislikes school · Lowered school performance · Gets into trouble more often at school · Wants to be taken to school even though it is close to home · Takes the long way home · Possessions are damaged or missing · Seems unhappy or depressed - cries easily or for no apparent reason · Unable to explain bruises or scratches · Complains of illness to avoid school · Asks for or steals money · Does not seem to have any friends · Has bad dreams or sleeps badly · Wets the bed · Gets angry with family members · Sudden mood swings or outbursts of temper · Uses put down language when speaking about others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Listen carefully to your child · Assure your child that it is not their fault · Stay calm · Get <u>accurate</u> details · Give you child some strategies to cope. Practise the strategies with your child · If your child is different in some way, help them to be proud of their differences · If the problem persists, seek assistance from the class teacher. · If the problem continues, seek support from Assistant Principal / Principal. · Encourage your child to seek help in the playground from the teacher on duty.
Signs your child may be bullying others	What you can do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Aggressive behaviour - both inside and outside the home (teasing, threatening, hurting others) · Difficult to manage · Oversensitive - feels everyone is out to get them · Unhappiness · Loses temper frequently · Quietness or depression · School work is suffering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Initially you will be defensive and unbelieving. This is natural. · Find out all the facts preferably from the school by communicating with the classroom teacher. · Talk to your child but do not blame. · Emphasise that bullying is not acceptable in your family · Role play alternative behaviours · Speak regularly with your child regarding school matters and focus on the positive aspects.

FLOW CHART of Anti-bullying procedures



Evaluation:

The Anti-bullying Plan must be reviewed on a regular basis, so that all members of the school community are aware of and remain committed to it. The Plan should reflect the current teaching and learning practices at the school. The review will provide opportunities for reflection and renewal.

Strategies to review the school Anti-bullying Plan include:

- gathering and analysing all relevant information on the nature and extent of bullying, harassment and victimisation, including data that highlights patterns and trends, such as suspension data
- evaluating the extent to which the school's Anti-bullying Plan has been effective in addressing bullying, harassment and victimisation and promoting a safe and secure environment.

Schools should develop and implement a revised Plan, if necessary, following a review. Schools should continue to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Plan on an ongoing basis.

At Ebenezer Public School, the review of will occur on an annual basis.

Bullying Reporting Form

Name: _____ Date: _____

Name/s of students: _____

Where: _____

When: _____

What happened: _____

How did it start: _____

What did you do: _____

How did you feel: _____

Returned to school on: _____

The Method of Shared Concern

The Method of Shared Concern is an approach to resolving bully/victim problems, originally suggested by Pikas (2002). It involves a series of meetings with students suspected of being involved in a case of bullying.

The process is described in detail in a forthcoming book by Ken Rigby (2011) *The Method of Shared Concern: a positive approach to school bullying*. Camberwell: ACER. The illustrations below are taken from that book.

The process can begin when several students suspected of engaging in bullying a targeted person are identified. They often form a quite heterogeneous group.

Each is interviewed in turn. The practitioner begins by sharing a concern with each of the suspected bullies over the plight of the target.

'It looks like Tom is having a hard time at school.'

The suspected bully is asked to say what he or she is prepared to do to improve the situation. The practitioner then arranges a further meeting to assess progress.

After each of the suspected bullies has been interviewed the practitioner meets with the targeted student. Typically this person has become very dejected and needs help.

At the interview it is explained that each of the suspected bullies has undertaken to help to improve matters. The practitioner expresses strong support. Nevertheless, the target is asked whether he or she may have contributed to the problem in some way.

'Tom, I wonder if there is anything you might be doing to cause them to treat you badly.'

In most cases the target is quite innocent but in about 20% of cases there has been some provocation.

After the practitioner has seen the suspected bullies again and ascertained that progress has been made, they are brought together for a meeting at which they are asked to decide among themselves what they are prepared to say to the target when he or she joins them.

'I would like us now to make a plan for when we meet with Tom.'

At the subsequent 'summit meeting' with the target present the suspected bullies make an agreed statement or proposal to resolve the problem. This may be an apology or a statement that they will not continue to harm the target.

'Don't worry mate. We'll make sure it doesn't happen again.'

When the target has behaved provocatively both sides may need to agree to adjust their behaviour and a solution must be negotiated, as in the following scenario with a group of girls.

'We are sorry, Joanne, but you haven't been very nice to us, you know.'

Finally, the practitioner discusses with them how they can sustain the improved relationship and offers to help if any further problems arise. Needless to say, the situation still needs to be monitored.

Notice that the above is a highly simplified account of the Method. The book examines in detail issues that may arise when the method is employed, how practitioners can be trained and how the Method can be introduced into schools

Evaluation

The process requires several meetings with the students involved in the bullying, first as individuals, then in a group over a two week period. Convicting students of bullying and administering 'consequences' in the form of sanctions or punishments is often seen as quicker. But unfortunately when this is done the bullying often continues in covert and damaging ways. The cases then need further attention and this can ultimately prove to be very time-consuming. It is claimed that the method of Shared Concern can produce enduring solutions.

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