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

Our school Anti-bullying 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.

This Plan was written in consultation with school executive, teaching staff, students and the community of Concord West PS. All staff, students and community members will be informed of the plan with the expectation that all stakeholders will be involved in the implementation. The plan will be implemented in conjunction with the school’s current behavior code and the Student Welfare Policy.

Statement of purpose

Students attend school to participate in quality education that will help them to become self-directed life-long learners who can create a positive future for themselves in the wider community. At Concord West Public School, we have a learning community based on values. Each person is recognised as a unique individual bringing special qualities and gifts to share. We all have a right to be respected and a responsibility to respect each other.

At Concord West PS we aim to create a safe and happy school environment, free from bullying of all forms, including cyber bullying.

Information sources and communication technologies (e.g. email, blogs, sms, mms, chat programs, social networking etc) are widely used to maintain contact with friends and enable another forum in which to seek and create new friendships. Whilst most interactions are positive, these technologies can be used to harass and intimidate others. This is known as cyber bullying.

We do not tolerate bullying or harassment in any form. All members of our community are committed to ensuring a safe and supportive environment which promotes personal growth and fosters positive self-esteem for all. We aim to maintain a setting in which everyone feels valued and respected and where individual differences are appreciated, understood and accepted.

Protection

Bullying:
• is repeated and unjustifiable behaviour;
• is intended to cause fear, distress and/or harm to another;
• may be physical, verbal or indirect/relational;
• is conducted by a more powerful individual or group;
• is against a less powerful individual who is unable to effectively resist;
• is intentional, aggressive act/s, repeated over a period of time.
Cyber bullying:
when someone is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another student/s using the Internet, interactive and digital technologies or mobile phones.

Harassment:
- is any unwanted, unwelcome or uninvited behaviour which makes a person feel humiliated or offended;
- can be seen as one form of bullying;
- the terms “harassment” and “bullying” are often used interchangeably.

Teachers, students, parents/caregivers and members of the Concord West wider community have a responsibility to work together to address bullying and harassment. Our school rules remind our learning community to:
- be responsible;
- be respectful;
- be safe; and
- be a learner.

Bullying and harassment will not be tolerated at Concord West Public School. Any incidence of bullying, be it physical, non-physical or non-verbal, direct or indirect will be investigated within the framework of the School Management Policy.

The objectives of our whole-school bullying policy are:
- to raise awareness among staff, students and parents about bullying, including cyber bullying;
- to actively counter bullying at the school;
- to provide strategies to resolve conflict and respect differences;
- to create a school environment where all students, staff and parents feel safe and welcome;
- to create a climate where it is okay to talk about bullying and ask for help; and
- to promote positive mental health

RIGHTS:
- Every person has the right to feel safe. Any person who bullies another is denying them that right. This means we have to think about others (not just ourselves) in the classroom and in the playground. The right to feel safe means we have a responsibility to consider how we speak and act towards others. Bullying takes away a person’s sense of security. The right to safety means that any bullying of any kind is unacceptable.

- Every person has the right to be treated with respect and fairness. This means we show respect to other people and their property, in the class and in the playground. The right to receive respect and fair treatment requires from us the responsibility to show manners and courtesy towards each other.
• Every person has the right to learn. This means we do not adversely affect the learning of another student.

At Concord West Public School, it is everyone's responsibility to take the necessary steps to stop bullying behaviour. The school will not tolerate any action that undermines a person's right to feel safe, respected and to learn.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

Students, staff, parents/carers and community members have a shared responsibility to promote positive relationships that respect difference and diversity. There is also an obligation to support our Anti-bullying Plan and procedures and work actively to resolve incidents of bullying. Students should expect that the school community will respond to their concerns and appropriate support will be given.

Staff, student and parents have the following responsibilities:

Leadership Team will:

Support, promote, enact, maintain and review the anti-bullying policy and procedures.

All staff will:

• Receive and be familiar with the school's Anti-bullying plan and procedures;

• Proactively implement the school's Anti-bullying plan and procedures.

Teachers will:

• Teach and encourage cooperative behaviour;

• Be models of caring and tolerant behaviour;

• Listen to reports of bullying;

• Act upon these;

• Inform the Principal;

• Protect the person being bullied from further harm;

• Act to stop the behaviour recurring; and

• Record identified bullying incidents on Playground duty forms or Class Time Out sheets.

Students will:

• Play safely;

• Cooperate with other students and all staff;

• Report all bullying incidents, grievances or concerns using appropriate channels;
• Refrain from bullying behaviour of any kind or giving support to those bullying;

• Work cooperatively with parents and teachers to reach a resolution to bullying incidents.

Students who are bullied need to communicate the incident to:
• A teacher or staff member of trust, giving full details of the event and/or their parents give full details of the event, plus;

• Write or recount a detailed account of the event;

• Work cooperatively with teachers and all parties involved to reach a resolution.

Student witnesses to bullying should:
• Speak out about any bullying incidence;

• Seek teacher assistance;

• Be limited to verbal intervention; and

• Document the incident if requested.

Parents should:
• Listen sympathetically to reports of bullying;

• Speak to relevant school personnel (not the alleged student/s or family concerned);

• Work with the school in seeking a resolution.

Parent witnesses should:
• Be limited to verbal intervention;
• Seek teacher assistance; and

• Document the incident if requested by school staff.

Management of Bullying Incidents

All parties are expected to treat each other with respect and dignity and ensure the confidentiality of any issues that may arise.

TEACHERS’ RESPONSIBILITIES:

• Teachers to be familiar with the school’s Anti-bullying plan and procedures;

• Teachers to be models of caring and tolerant behaviour;

• In the first weeks of each school year, the non-acceptance of bullying is to be discussed in class and revisited each semester;

• Teachers to make student aware of their responsibilities with regard to the Anti-bullying plan;

• Implement lessons to develop resilience and anti-bullying behaviour in appropriate lessons K-6, throughout the year;

• Teach relevant strategies;

• Attend to reported instances of bullying behaviour; and

• Treat information regarding bullying confidentially.

ACTION:

• Protect the bullied child from further harm.

• Write down name/s of the bullied child, who reported the incident and the bystander/s.

• Interview the bullied child to find out what happened.

• Suggest strategies/support structures that the bullied student might use to avoid being bullied in the future.

• Individually interview bystander/s. Discuss strategies these students might use to avoid bullying in the future.

• Report the bullying information to the Assistant Principals

• Assistant Principal to record what happened in the Momentum Welfare file.

• Monitor the situation over the following few days/weeks.

• Where necessary, speak to class without using specific names, about the incident.

• Where appropriate and using discretion, work with parents of the bullied child to assist their child to avoid being bullied in the future. Keep them informed about progress and the measures taken.
• If necessary, where appropriate and using discretion, inform the parents of the child exhibiting bullying behaviours and work with them to establish joint strategies for behaviour modification.

RESPONSES TO BULLYING INCIDENTS:
CHALLENGING INCIDENTS – PHYSICAL VIOLENCE OR INTIMIDATION:
• Immediate notification for assistance from colleagues, follow School Management policy & use ‘Assistance Required’ card;
• Move student onlookers away;
• Separate students with minimal physical contact;
• Apply CWPS Levels of Behaviour guidelines;
• Apply shared concern – students involved in the incident are questioned separately;
• Report of the incident to be written up and placed in child’s Momentum welfare file.

CHALLENGING STUDENTS:
• Collaborative case management of students with persistent aggression or continued victimisation. Develop a collaborative action plan with specified outcomes (school counsellor, Learning Support Team, District Support (Student Services Officers, Student Welfare Consultants);
• Use of sanctions in School Student Welfare Policy and/or NSW DEC Student Welfare and Fair Discipline and Suspension Policies for violent incidents.

Prevention

Our strategy has two aspects: prevention and management. Prevention strategies assist students to become resilient. The management strategy we apply is the Student Support and Shared Concern approach. Although this approach is not based on sanctions or punishments, the school has a range of such measures available, up to and including suspension or exclusion which may be used in response to bullying.

PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Whole-school approach:
• Promote and implement anti-bullying and proactive positive behaviour lessons.
• Implement the Getting Connected Program in Term 1.
• Discuss the issue of bullying at staff and team meetings and provide training to all staff.
• All staff informed of relevant issues of bullying, student attitudes, the need to take action and of their role in implementing the policy.
- Anti-bullying material included in the appropriate learning area.
- Classes focus on behaviour as a range of skills, strategies and choices that can be taught.
- Self-protective behaviours – ignoring verbal put downs, enlisting adult or peer support, learning assertive responses, saying “no” and walking away, helping others being bullied.

Preventative support systems – support of peers to assist in making the school safer by reporting incidents and assisting students who may be targets of bullying. Teach bystander students to challenge bullying. Provide safe places such as passive play where the play is more structured and the teacher is always close by to provide social assistance. The Community Support Coordinator and School Learning and Support Officers may provide assistance in the playground by structuring games and activities for participating groups.

- Communication with parents is proactive. The Community Support Coordinator may work with individuals or small groups of students who have bullied (conflict resolution, anger management) as well as students who have been bullied (assertiveness training and self-protective behaviours).
- Teachers to be assisted in difficult cases by the Assistant Principals, Community Support Coordinator and School Counsellor.

Students at Concord West PS are encouraged to interact positively at all times and to resolve conflict peacefully. A supportive environment where children can develop in confidence and security is essential when providing quality education.

The school has been proactive in creating a supportive learning environment by implementing effective programs, policies and procedures that:

- outline School Rules and Expected Standards of Behaviour;
- reinforce appropriate behaviour at all times linked to school motto Peace & Harmony;
- acknowledge desirable attributes through positive reward system;
- utilise school newsletter to inform parents and carers and encourage support for school programs;
- cater for the individual needs of every student in class and support programs including IEPs;
- facilitate student input into school decision making through the SRC;
- develop skills and understanding involving interpersonal relationships through ongoing learning programs;
- deal with breaches of the School Rules according to guidelines set out in the School Management Policy 2013; and
- inform students about opportunities for incidents to be reported confidentially in a verbal or written form to staff and/or the Principal.

Creating a Positive School Environment

Rewarding positive action and appropriate behaviour:
Playground strategies:

- give students a variety of playground areas to choose from;
- more proactive play direction – ideas given for games;
- teachers reinforce positive behaviours through rewarding
- teachers on duty ensure all students are in class lines before returning to their class. Class teachers to return to their classroom promptly on the bell and
- Consistently follow the School Management Policy guidelines.

INDUCTION OF NEW STUDENTS AND/OR STAFF:

- Class teachers to introduce new students to the school rules and responsibilities and prevention strategies;
- Relevant Stage Coordinator and/or Principal to discuss policy with new staff.
Early Intervention

Students identified as being at risk of developing long-term difficulties with social relationships are targeted through stage meetings and learning support team meetings. These students are encouraged to participate in the many school programs offered during recess and lunch to engage students in positive activities to develop the social skills required to engage in the school community independently.

Students identified as previously experiencing bullying or engaging in bullying behaviour will be monitored by school staff and engage in regular debriefing sessions with the school executive team, school counsellor or community support coordinator.

Social stories are created for students with ongoing classroom and playground social issues to assist them in engaging appropriately with their peers. These social stories are provided to the class teacher, the student, the stage supervisor and the parent/caregiver for frequent reference.

Debriefing sessions are used by the executive team to speak with students reported or observed to have bullying behaviours or experiencing bullying behaviour. The debriefing sessions include the student observed with bullying behaviours, the student experiencing the bullying behaviours and the witnesses to the bullying behaviours. These debriefing sessions occur across a timeframe until the issue is resolved.

The school management plan has a strong emphasis on developing resilience in all students. This is explicitly taught through the social skills programs at the start of every year and revisited in Child Protection and Personal Development lessons. Resilience is defined and discussed with the community at Meet the Teacher Night and Kindergarten Orientation meetings.

Response

Working with Students

All reports of bullying behaviour are recorded by teachers on the playground or class time out forms and forwarded to the stage supervisor. Stage supervisors are responsive to reports within a day of being informed. The stage supervisor debriefs with all students involved and determines the action that will be taken by implementing the School Management policy and Anti-bullying plan. The actions (student placed on a level and participate in a debriefing session) are recorded on the school electronic welfare records. Parents are informed of the actions taken by the school in written or verbal communication from the stage supervisor. Parents are encouraged to discuss the actions with the stage supervisor.

The school’s management policy outlines in detail the student behaviour level system and the descriptors for each level. These consequences are consistent across the school and clearly reported to staff, students and parents.

In the event that an incident has a racist tone the incident is also referred to the school Anti-Racism Contact Officer (ARCO) by the stage supervisor. Policy is followed to reach a resolution for the students involved.

Working staff or community

Concerning reports from staff or community members are reported directly to the Principal or the school delegate. The Principal or school delegate investigates the concern through discussions with the staff or community member and the identified students. The School management policy in conjunction with the Anti-bullying plan are implemented to reach a resolution to the issues raised.

Ongoing debriefing sessions with the stage supervisor or school counsellor are provided to students who require further support. These students are also targeted by stage supervisors to engage in supported games programs, run by the School Learning and support Officer or Community Support Coordinator, during recess and lunch to develop self-esteem, resilience and social skills to interact with their peers.

If the bullying behaviour involves possible criminal conduct of any kind (assaults, threats, intimidation or harassment), the principal or school delegate will contact the police. If a staff member is implicated, EPAC is also to be contacted with advice to the school education director, regional
director, or other relevant state office director. Advice is available from Legal Services directorate, on (02) 9561 8538, if in doubt about whether the alleged behaviour may be a crime.

In the event where a child is at risk of serious harm the Principal or school delegate will contact the Child Wellbeing Unit or Community Services where appropriate, as per the Department of Education and Communities guidelines in mandatory reporting under the Keep them Safe policy.

The NSW Department of Education and Communities (DEC) and Concord West PS seeks to resolve difficulties, grievances and complaints in a prompt, impartial and just manner.

The DEC Complaints Handling Policy identifies a structured process for dealing with complaints. Complaints are assessed by the Principal and the appropriate course of action is decided. The complaint is managed by the Principal providing support and monitoring the well-being of all involved. An informal resolution to the complaint can be established for minor complaints. A more formal process is undertaken for serious complaints including:

- Remedy and Systems Improvement Procedure
- Negotiation Procedure
- Investigation Procedure

**Monitoring**

Class teachers and stage supervisors monitor behaviour interventions through stage meetings, time out sheets, playground forms and letters to parents. Students regularly referred to the stage supervisor with a demonstrated pattern of behaviour will be identified by the executive and referred to the learning support team. Parents will be informed of the behaviour concerns and together will implement strategies to assist the student in modifying the behaviour.

**Informing**

The school will publish the Anti-bullying plan on the school website. It will be closely linked with the School Management plan. The Anti-bullying plan will be discussed on Meet the Teacher night and Kindergarten Orientation events. Staff will have access to the Anti-bullying plan on the school server.

The school will report to parents about the effectiveness of the Anti-bullying plan through the Annual School Report. The school will also engage the community in regular updates through the school weekly newsletter and website.

The plan will be evaluated at the end of 2014 with parents, staff and student surveys to measure the impact the plan has had on bullying behaviours evident in the school and community. A review of the plan will be completed in 2015 using the information acquired from the surveys.

This cycle will continue with the plan reviewed every three years.
Additional Information

- DEC Intranet – Anti-bullying
- Bullying: Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying in Schools Policy
- Parent information DEC handout
- Safe Schools – The national safe schools framework
- Cyber-bullying – Advice for parents DEC handout
- Anti-bullying – How to encourage your child to be an effective bystander DEC parent handout
- Promoting positive bystander behaviour – DEC program
- Cybersmart school gateway
- Cyber-bullying – Information for staff in schools
- Cyber-bullying presentation for staff in schools
- Peer Mediation
- Peer Mediation – resource for parents
- Anti-bullying and related websites
- Digital citizenship – information for teachers, students and parents
- Kids Help Line 1800 55 1800
- Bullying among young children – A guide for parents
  http://www.ag.gov.au/agd/WWW/rgpattach.nsf/VAP/(1E76C1D5D1A37992F0B0C1C4DB87942E)~Bullying+Parents.pdf/$file/Bullying+Parents.pdf
- Flemington Local Area Command 9646 8699
- DEC Complaints handling policy
- DEC Complaint Handling Policy Guidelines
- Legal Issues Bulletin No. 27
Principal’s comment

Every student deserves to be happy and safe at school. Homebush West prides itself on offering strong student well-being practices that nurture, value and respects every child and ensures that students have the best opportunity and environment to learn and grow. We are committed to implementing policies, procedures and practices that respond to current research, best practices and the changing needs of a 21st century learning.

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