Anti-bullying Plan

Statement of Purpose:

Ambarvale Public School is an inclusive environment, where diversity is affirmed and individual differences are respected. Bullying is not tolerated in NSW government schools and is not acceptable in any form. Bullying is taken seriously at Ambarvale Public School. Students have the right to expect that they will spend the school day free from the fear of bullying, harassment and anti-social behaviour in a secure, ordered and supportive environment.

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.

(Reference: NSW Department of Education and Training: Bullying: Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying in Schools Policy, 2011; Bullying: Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying in Schools Guidelines and Cyberbullying: Information for Staff in Schools.)

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 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.

Shared Responsibilities for Preventing and Responding to Bullying Behaviour

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 department staff, students, parents, caregivers and 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, and
- 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, and
• respond to incidents of bullying according to the school’s 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, and
• 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, and
• work collaboratively with the school to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur.

Strategies for Protecting, Preventing (including Early Intervention), and Responding to Student Bullying

Ambarvale Public School’s plan supports a protection, prevention and early intervention approach in relation to student bullying. It recognises that the best outcomes are achieved by school communities working together to help prevent bullying from occurring, acting early to prevent bullying and responding in a timely and appropriate way to bullying incidents if they occur. Appropriate support is provided to the victim/s of bullying and the perpetrators of bullying. Consequences at the school level will apply when instances of bullying are determined. (Reference: NSW Department of Education and Training: Bullying: Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying in Schools Policy, and Guidelines).

Protection strategies include:
• developing a shared understanding of bullying behaviour that captures all forms of bullying including cyberbullying (Reference: Appendix 1: Key Information: Cyberbullying.)
• developing a statement of purpose that outlines individual and shared responsibilities of students, parents, caregivers and staff for preventing and responding to bullying behaviour.
• maintaining a positive climate of respectful relationships where bullying is less likely to occur.
• reminding students that:
  ➢ they have the right to come to school and feel happy, safe and confident in their learning and play.
  ➢ no one has the right to make them or another person feel upset, unsafe, uncomfortable or worried.
  ➢ if someone is making them feel upset, unsafe, uncomfortable or worried, then they must tell someone about it. (Bullying flourishes in a culture of silence)
  ➢ reporting bullying is not “dobbing”; it is asserting their right to feel safe and happy while at school and while travelling to and from school and when using the Internet.
• providing an appropriate curriculum, based on Board of Studies requirements, to meet the needs of each student.
• providing programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict
resolution and problem solving as part of the Personal Development key learning area.
• supporting children to achieve success in all areas of learning at individual levels of need.

Prevention strategies include:
• informing all members of the community, regularly in written and verbal communication, about
the school’s expectations in relation to student behaviour and anti-bullying.
• sharing the Anti-bullying Plan with all members of the community at the start of each year and
throughout the year.
• maintaining a small number of easily understood rules which are fair, clear and consistently
applied. Regularly clarifying these rules through weekly reminders (rule of the week) and social
skills lessons.
• teaching students strategies to employ if they find themselves as bystanders or observers when
bullying occurs.
• modelling positive, respectful relationships and ways of resolving conflict, e.g. working co-
operatively within the classroom/playground.
• providing recognition and reward for positive achievements and behaviour through a merit
award system.
• implementing a strategy to support students to deal with a problem with other peers at school.
The ‘3 Step Program’ and ‘2 Step Program’ will be taught explicitly throughout each year to
students. These programs involve:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3 Step Program</th>
<th>2 Step Program (If someone physically hurts you)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Step 1: Say “Stop, I don’t like it.”</td>
<td><em>It is not OK to retaliate.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2: Ignore and move away</td>
<td>Step 1: Say “Stop!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3: Report to a teacher</td>
<td>Step 2: Report to a teacher</td>
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• supporting the development of appropriate social skills through weekly social skills lessons that
are implemented using the interactive whiteboard. One lesson per term has a specific focus on
anti-bullying strategies.
• identifying designated calm spaces in the playground (e.g. library) and classroom (nominated
desk and floor space) that students can attend if they require a calm, quite environment.
• executive regularly review RISC contacts. Each term, the PBIS leaders present a report to the
PBIS committee, who in conjunction with executive, determine if support or additional resources
are needed in regard to specific behaviours identified, including bullying.
• empowering the whole school community to recognise and respond appropriately to bullying
and harassment. (Reference: Appendix 2– Possible Advice to Students and Parents Regarding
Bullying)
• providing ‘cool down’ boxes (containing a variety of tactile resources) in all classrooms and
executive office for students to access if required.

Early Intervention strategies include:
• identifying students at enrolment (check of student records/contact with previous school) who
have experienced bullying or engaged in bullying behaviour.
• regularly monitoring students who are identified as having experienced bullying or engaged in
bullying behaviour. If indicators of concerns arise, additional support/intervention will be applied
at the earliest opportunity. Strategies may include: contact with parent/carer; counsellor
intervention; providing support person for student; check-in opportunities with supervisor;
alerting classroom teacher and/or learning support team.
• communicating weekly with staff about student welfare matters to identify any concerns and
alerting staff to recommended strategies to support identified students.
Response strategies include:

- empowering the whole school community to recognise and respond appropriately to bullying, harassment and victimisation, and behave as responsible bystanders.
- developing and publicising clear procedures for reporting incidents of bullying to the school.
- responding to incidents of bullying that have been reported to the school quickly and effectively.
- matching a planned combination of interventions to the particular incident of bullying.
- providing support to any student, who has been affected by, engaged in or witnessed bullying behaviour.
- providing regular updates, within the bounds of the legislation, to parents/caregivers about the management of incidents.
- identifying patterns of bullying and responding to such patterns.
- monitoring the effectiveness of the Anti-bullying Plan.
- reporting annually to the school community on the effectiveness of the Anti-bullying Plan.

School Procedures When Bullying Incidents Occur:

One-off bullying incidents are managed by all staff as per school procedures, outlined in Student Welfare Policy under ‘Consequences for Negative Behaviours’ section.

All reported incidents of bullying are recorded on the school’s computer data base (RISC).

Executive staff monitor all student behaviour by regularly reviewing ‘contacts’ on the school’s computer database (RISC). Students who have ‘contacts’ on RISC that indicate they are the victim or perpetrator of bullying, are identified, supported and monitored. Following ongoing monitoring, if these inappropriate bullying behaviours are repeated, whether they are verbal, physical, social or psychological, then additional strategies come into action.

Additional Strategies When Bullying is Observed, Reported or Identified

1. Once an issue related to bullying has been identified, each alleged bully, victim and witness will be spoken with, and all incidents or allegations of bullying will be fully investigated and documented.

Once bullying has been determined:

2. Both bully/bullies and victims will be offered support and counselling with parent permission.
3. Classroom teacher, in collaboration with supervisor and parent/carer (where possible), will determine additional support strategies to be implemented. This may involve recommending to parents/carers that additional support from appropriate external agencies would be of benefit.
4. Strategies to be implemented are to be communicated to all relevant personnel, including the student/s.
5. Follow-up with bullies and victims will occur. Daily follow-up should initially be carried out, and then tapered off as positive results are deemed sufficiently evident. This should involve staff questioning the bully/bullies individually on how they have followed through with agreed actions to help the victim and stop bullying behaviours. The victim will also be questioned on how they are progressing, whether or not there have been any further negative incidents or if any further support is required.
6. Parents/Carers will be contacted to update them on the progress of their child and the success of actions undertaken.
7. If student bullying persists, consequences will be implemented, consistent with the school’s Student Welfare and Discipline Policy under the ‘Consequence for Negative Behaviours’ section. Ongoing counselling and support from the school will continue. At this stage, support from appropriate external agencies for both the bully and victim should continue if in place, or again be recommended if deemed appropriate.
Reporting Bullying Procedures:

Individual reporting procedures (students):
Bullying behaviour must be reported. It may be reported in the following ways:
• Students should report the incident of bullying to any member of staff as soon as possible after it has occurred. This may be reported to their classroom teacher, school counsellor, Assistant Principal or Principal.
• Parents/Carers should contact the school to report the incident to their child’s classroom teacher, executive or Principal.
• Bystanders or witnesses should report any known bullying behaviour to any member of staff.
• Staff should report concerning bullying behaviour to the executive/Principal.

Individual reporting procedures (staff/parents/carers):
Bullying behaviour reported to have occurred by staff or by parents/carers should be reported to the Principal. The Principal will take action in response to the alleged bullying, adhering to DEC policies and obligations under the Work, Health and Safety Act (2011). In determining the action to take, the Principal may seek advice or assistance from one or more of the following directorates or personnel: The Employee, Performance and Conduct Unit (EPAC), School Safety and Security Unit, Legal Services, the regional Injury Management Advisor, the regional Occupation and Safety Advisor, School Education Director and/or Student Welfare Consultant.

School’s reporting procedures:
It is important to note that Principals must report such incidents that involve assaults, threats, weapons, illegal drugs and criminal activity to the School Safety and Response Unit. Principals are required to report inappropriate behaviour that includes: possession/use of weapons, fights or threats, reports of serious cyberbullying, or threats made over other telecommunication devices. Where the behaviour exists out of school hours and is deemed as possibly having a harmful effect on staff and students, the principal must notify police and take appropriate disciplinary action, including notifying the School Safety and Response Directorate.

Communicating Anti-bullying Plan and Procedures:
It is important that at least once each year, the whole school community is reminded of the school’s Anti-bullying Policy. This will be done through the school’s fortnightly newsletter. It is important to reemphasise at this time that students are expected to report if they are being bullied.

Professional learning regarding these procedures needs to be done every two years or when there is a significant change to staff in any one year. At these times it may be necessary to survey the students, staff and parents/carers to see how widespread bullying is at our school. The Anti-bullying Plan will be reviewed with the community every three years.
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Appendix 1: Key Information: Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying

The following is a summary of key information regarding school practices implemented to prevent and act on instances of cyberbullying. This information is summarised from the NSW Department of Education and Training: Cyberbullying: Information for staff in schools document.

• Cyberbullying is commonly defined as the use of information and communication technologies to support repeated and deliberate hostile behaviour intended to harm others.
• It is sometimes used as an extension to other forms of bullying, and can result in the target experiencing social, psychological and academic difficulties.
• The school’s Anti-bullying Plan will be used to prevent and act on instances of cyberbullying.
• To prevent and act on instances of cyberbullying Ambarvale Public School will:

  ➢ Implement the school’s Anti-bullying Plan.
  ➢ Teach students appropriate use of technology and digital citizenship, by developing and implementing a code of conduct for students when using technology.
  ➢ Inform and publish information about the school’s policy on using technology.
  ➢ Inform and publish information about preventing, reporting and managing bullying, including cyberbullying.
  ➢ Develop programs for students who require additional support in developing digital citizenship or social/relationship/communication skills.
  ➢ Teach students about the role they can play as bystanders to prevent cyberbullying.
  ➢ Respond to instances of cyberbullying, even if occurring out of school hours or on a private computer where the instance of bullying is affecting the student at school.
  ➢ Contact the Police and the School Safety and Response Unit where incidents of cyberbullying involve possible criminal behaviour.
  ➢ Report threats to the Police and School Safety and Response Unit.
  ➢ Keep accurate records of incidents and their management.
  ➢ Survey students to monitor bullying and cyberbullying rates.
  ➢ Promote anti-bullying messages throughout the community.
  ➢ Provide support to students (victims, perpetrators and bystanders).
  ➢ Provide information to staff on cyberbullying using the NSW Department of Education and Training: document: Cyberbullying Information for staff in schools.
  ➢ Provide brochures for parents/carers on cyberbullying.
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Appendix 2: Possible Advice to Students and Parents/Carers Regarding Bullying

Advice to students who are being bullied:
The student should be encouraged to –
• Tell the bully to stop - State quite clearly that the behaviour is unwelcome and offensive.
• Seek help - Talk about the experience to someone who is trustworthy (Student Counsellor, teacher, parent/carer, peer etc).
• Report the bullying to a member of staff and feel confident that any incident can be resolved satisfactorily.

Other ‘self protective’ strategies that might be suggested include:
• Staying away from the bully, or places where bullying occurs.
• Be with friendly, supportive friends.

Advice to students who know someone is being bullied:
Students should be made aware that early intervention can defuse conflict situations before bullying sets in or gets out of hand.
Therefore, the following suggestions should be made:
• If safe, intervene as the bullying occurs by telling the bully to stop. (Note: Students are to be reminded not to put themselves at risk of harm.)
• Refuse to join in with the bullying.
• Support students who are being bullied – just standing by them can be enough.
• Report to an adult if you are concerned about the bullying.
• It is every student’s right and responsibility to report bullying whether it happens to oneself or to someone else.

Advice for parents/carers:
The following suggestions are made to parents/carers through print materials and at parent/carer information meetings.

1. Take an active interest in your child’s social life and in what is happening at school.
2. Encourage your child to bring friends home and to accept and tolerate differences in others.
3. Build your child’s self-confidence by recognising and affirming his/her positive qualities and by valuing him/her.
4. Discuss with your child the school’s expectations about behaviour and ways to respond if his/her rights are infringed.
5. Encourage constructive responses: physical bullying or persistent teasing should be reported, hitting back or retaliating with name-calling won’t solve the problem or be tolerated.
6. Set an example: be firm, but not aggressive in setting behaviour limits, be positive in what you say and do.
7. Be alert for signs of distress. Indicators may include: unwillingness to attend school; dropping off in academic performance; damaged clothing and frequent loss of personal property; loss of confidence or uncharacteristic mood changes, and withdrawal from social activities.
8. Act if your child is being bullied at school, report it to a teacher, or the Principal.
9. Cooperate and work in partnership with the school by: reporting allegations or instances of bullying; working actively to resolve issues and supporting your child for success.