



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.

Consultation will be undertaken with the school executive, the P&C and the SRC in regards to this bullying plan.

Statement of purpose

Coomealla High School is an inclusive environment. The school openly celebrates diversity and individual student differences are respected and valued. Coomealla High School actively seeks to ensure all students receive an education which caters to their individual student learning needs in a highly supported and safe environment.

It is the aim of Coomealla High School to be a happy and safe school with harmonious relationships between all members of the school community to promote student and staff wellbeing. All members of the school community are expected to show respect and tolerance for individual differences and diversity and behave as responsible bystanders and digital citizens, supporting the school's anti-bullying plan through words and actions.

Bullying can take many forms including:

Cyber bullying via Facebook, texts, phone and other social media.

Physical bullying and violence, threats, harassment and intimidation

Emotional bullying - teasing, put downs or ignoring/exclusion

Bullying is a serious matter that can result in the victim of bullying experiencing social, psychological and learning difficulties.

Protection

Bullying is not the same thing as a disagreement between two people.

Bullying is the misuse of power, position or privilege. It is done to intimidate, coerce, create fear, control, embarrass, exclude, or cause pain or discomfort.

School Anti-bullying Plan – NSW Department of Education and Communities

Bullying at Coomealla High School is unacceptable in all forms. Even if students are completing actions outside of school grounds and outside of school time the school still is able to intervene with assistance from the Police Youth Liaison officer and peer mediation and restitution provided by the welfare team or school counsellor.

Bullying is taken very seriously and will not be tolerated in any format. It is a difficult problem that only gets worse when it is ignored. Research has found that bystanders play a significant role in bullying.

- Bystanders are present most of the time, where adults are rarely present.
- Bullying behaviour is reinforced where people watch but do nothing.
- When bystanders do intervene, the bullying is more likely to stop quickly most of the time.

Any proven bullying incident will be entered onto a student's record and the Coomealla High School Student Discipline Policy will be followed, which can include Warning of Suspension, Suspension and removal of school privileges. Please see a copy of the Coomealla High School Student Discipline Policy.

RESPONSIBILITIES

STUDENTS

- All students have a responsibility to allow others to work without being distracted or otherwise disturbed.
- All students have a responsibility to contribute to the creation of a happy and safe school environment for others. This means being thoughtful, respectful and courteous.

PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

- To support the school to utterly eliminate bullying at this school.
- To actively participate in their child's academic learning as well as their social development.
- To participate in all reviews and evaluation of Anti-Bullying Policy.
- To accept a shared responsibility for the development of appropriate social behaviour in their children.
- To abide by the P&C-sanctioned Code of Conduct when conducting business with the school.

- To support the school with the development and implementation of all student welfare policies designed to assist their children to develop pro-social skills and academic competencies.

TEACHERS AND SCHOOL COMMUNITY

To ensure that student rights are met wherever possible. Anti-Bullying interventions should be proactive. Interventions require the ongoing education of students to develop skills and strategies to allow them to identify, cope and address all parties involved, that is the bully, victim, and bystander. Teachers must respond effectively to reports of bullying, and teach appropriate prevention strategies. Proactive strategies might include, but are not limited to:

- Model non aggressive approaches to behaviour management.
- Remove opportunities for bullying to occur - arrive on time and provide positive reinforcement.
- Classroom organisation - provide space to move around, access to resources.
- Classroom presentation and assignments on bullying.
- Talk about bullying - definitions, myths.
- Give clear messages about what behaviours are accepted.
- Encourage reporting, encourage empathy.
- Welcome new students, engage all students in conversation.

Prevention

- The school's established values and expectations are articulated by staff to students at the beginning of each year and/or class rotation.
- Safe respectful behaviour is followed in all lessons in all years.
- Anti-bullying lessons are taught every year in Year 7-10.
- Anti-bullying information is communicated to parents.
- The school's initiatives are augmented by programs run by external agencies, including the NSW Police.

Early Intervention

- Transition programs for students going from Year 6 to Year 7.

The Anti-Bullying Plan – NSW Department of Education and Communities

- Students who are identified at being at risk of experiencing or engaging in bullying behaviour are referred for one on one support with the school counsellor.
- All new students are provided with support by the year advisor and learning support staff to assist in settling in periods and connection with school services as required.
- Targeted programs are provided as required for those who are in need of support with managing behaviour.
- Risk management plans are developed to support and manage students at risk.

Reporting Incidents

1. Student reports the incident to any staff member.
2. Once assessed by staff a report is entered on to the student management database as soon as possible and referred to the relevant year head teacher and year advisor.
3. The year advisor investigates incidents and complaints, initiating and updating a bully tracker, and interviewing those who were experiencing or engaging in bullying behaviour. Contact is made with the carers of all students involved.
4. Notes are entered on the student management database as required.
5. Subsequent actions will depend on the nature of the incident, and may include, but will not be limited to the following:
 - Escalation of report to deputy principal if there are multiple offences on file or if the offence is deemed moderate to severe in regards to Department of Education Suspension and Expulsion of Students Procedures. Serious incidents will be managed in accordance with departmental policies.
 - Referral to the school counsellor, welfare team, learning support team or wellbeing teacher.
 - Referral to the school liaison police officer, youth liaison officer or local police.
 - Mediation with involved students.

All students who are affected by, engaged in or who witness bullying behaviour will be supported by the wellbeing team, year advisor and counsellor to assist with changes in behaviour in social situations.

Guidelines on mandatory reporting will be followed and the department's Child Wellbeing Unit or Department of Family and Community Services may need to be contacted in regards to bullying or information found through investigation of bullying incidents. The school will act in accordance with the department's Protecting and Supporting Children and Young People Policy and associated procedures.

The Department of Education has a complaints handling policy which is available on its website and a link to this site is available on the school website.

Bullying will be monitored by the student wellbeing and learning support teams and data from the student management systems used to identify patterns in regards to groups, including (but not limited to) year groups, gender and family groups and develop programs and interventions to address these. Possible interventions may include small group mediation, education and capacity building (eg resilience building, managing emotions and anger management) and interviews with parents and or caregivers.

Evaluation of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy will be conducted every 12 months to review the relevance and efficacy of the school's practices, policies and teaching and learning programs. It will include discussion about the implementation of this policy and any further identified needs. In terms of this policy the following questions are examples of how the evaluation process will be structured.

- Is the policy clearly understood by all members of the school community?
- Is the policy meeting the needs of students and managing and addressing bullying behaviour?
- Does this policy reflect current departmental education policies?
- How positive and effective are the relationships between staff, parents and staff, and students and staff?
- Has staff development been sufficient to meet the needs and requirements of this policy?

Additional Information

Other assistance can be gained from:

- Kids Helpline 1800551800
- Lifeline 131114
- www.bullyingnoway.com.au

Principal's comment

Consultation completed with:

- Kathryn Steward - Executive Principal
- Della Philp - Head Teacher Wellbeing
- Wellbeing and Student Support Team

School contact information

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