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.
LENNOX HEAD PUBLIC 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.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Lennox Head Public School will implement an Anti-Bullying plan of proactive strategies to ensure that bullying and anti-social behaviour is not tolerated. Students will be taught how to work and play positively in the classroom and in the playground. Teachers will have a framework that is positive and consistent in dealing with bullying behaviour. Students, staff and parents will be empowered to deal with harassment, intimidation and bullying. Our school aims to provide a safe and happy learning environment to ensure that all students have the right to a quality education free from fear of bullying, intimidation and harassment. Our school will work with our school community to address and eliminate all forms of bullying behaviour through our school policy and plan.

PROTECTION

Whole School Strategies:
* A school Anti-bullying plan will be developed in consultation with the school community to clearly outline specific strategies for reporting, procedures, interventions and support.
* A school policy will outline interventions for children who display bullying behaviours via the Schools Student Welfare and Discipline Policy.
* Positive and acceptable behaviours that promote respectful relationships as well as inappropriate bullying incidents will be a focus at whole school assemblies.
* Social skills programs (Friendly Schools and Families), SRC, peer support, peer mediation and restorative practice are highly effective forums for promoting anti-bullying programs.

Classroom Strategies:
* Specific stage appropriate welfare programs will focus on learning experiences (skills and understandings) and strategies relating to ‘social skills’, ‘how to play’, ‘positive relationships’, ‘anti-bullying’ and ‘conflict resolution and mediation’.
* Teaching programs will enable students to be more aware of appropriate ways to deal with incidents of bullying, intimidation or harassment and how to resolve conflicts.
* Positive and consistent classroom and playground strategies will be taught about reporting incidents, accessing support and developing positive relationships.
* Discussions, role-play, games and ‘hands-on’ activities will be strategies used to promote this school’s anti-bullying policy.
* Students will be surveyed to gather information about any bullying behaviours.
* Student designed poster display will be used to promote our Anti-Bullying program.

Playground Strategies:
* Strategies will be taught as part of the classroom teaching program and reinforced during stage and whole school assemblies.
* Students are to report bullying incidents to the duty teacher rostered for playground duty. A welfare report of the incident is documented and given to the Assistant Principal for filing and reference. Also, the incident is verbally reported as soon as possible to an executive member of staff for referral and investigation.

IMPLEMENTATION

Students, teachers, parents and the community will be aware of the school’s position on bullying which is zero tolerance.

The school will also adopt a four-point plan to anti-bullying, which includes:

- Primary Prevention
- Early Intervention
- Intervention
- Post Intervention

Primary Prevention
- Professional development for staff related to bullying and the strategies to counteract it.
• Community awareness and input relating to anti-bullying, its characteristics and the schools’ programs and response. (e.g. weekly newsletter, parent forums)
• Provide programs that promote resilience, life skills and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and communication skills. LHPS is a proud participant in the Friendly Schools and Families Program.
• Provide elective and structured activities at some recess and lunch breaks (e.g., Library, Computer Rm, SRC activities, sports equipment)
• Staff supervision of set area in playground.
• Ensure students know and understand what behaviour is acceptable in the school. (i.e. consistent classroom/school rules displayed in the school)
• Maintain class meetings to help solve problems which arise regarding bully and the victim.
• Implementation of school Values of: RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY and INTEGRITY

Early Intervention
• Students are to be encouraged to report bullying incidents involving themselves or others.
• Teachers to regularly remind students to report incidents. Reporting is not dobbing.
• Parents are encouraged to contact the school if they become aware of a problem.
• Students are recognised for positive behaviours
• Teachers use a class and playground management plan if an incident of bullying occurs.

Intervention
• Once identified, the bully, victim and witnesses are spoken with. All incidents or allegations of bullying will be fully investigated.
• Consideration as to why the bullying occurred will be investigated. (e.g. The bigger picture or contributing factors)
• Both bully and victim are to be offered basic assistance and support (i.e. outside school resources through counselling may be utilised if deemed necessary)
• A meeting of relevant persons is to be convened following identification of on-going bullying behaviour. (Principal, class teacher, parents, students, other) All issues relevant to the behaviour of the student are considered.

Post Intervention
Follow up communication will occur on a daily basis initially and centre around progress being made, as a result of the bullying behaviour. Communication will taper off, depending on the situation.
Should the situation not improve or if there is a repetition of the incident, Lennox Head’s Student Welfare and Discipline Policy outlines appropriate procedures of the consequences for inappropriate behaviour in the classroom and in the playground.
Possible consequences may involve:
- Warning
- Removal to the class supervisor or principal
- Parental contact
- Negotiated contract
- On-going monitoring
- Timeout from the class/ playground
- Mediation sessions with the victim to reconcile differences
- Referral to external agencies
- Class/group changes
- Behaviour guidance programs (e.g. anger management, social skills)
- Detention
- Suspension (in extreme cases)

ADVICE TO BE GIVEN 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, parent, peer).

RESPECT-RESPONSIBILITY-INTEGRITY
• 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 BE GIVEN TO STUDENTS WHO KNOW SOMEONE ELSE 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 possible, intervene as the bullying occurs by telling the bully to stop. This is very useful if the onlooking student has influence with the bully.
• Refuse to join in with the bullying.
• Support students who are being bullied – just standing by them can be enough.
• Tell 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.

Additional Information:
Child Well-Being Unit Contact Details

Intranet > Student Welfare Directorate > Child Wellbeing Unit

The Child Wellbeing Unit can be contacted by telephone on 02 9269 9400 (local call cost) from 8am to 5.30pm Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays).

4. Straun Presgrave - Police Youth Liaison Officer
Phone: 66260575    Fax: 6626 0566
Email: pres1str@police.nsw.gov.au

Kids helpline    1800 55 1800


Complaints Handling Policy

Intranet > Policy & procedures - Complaints Handling Policy and Guidelines.

Principal’s comment
The Lennox Head Public School Anti Bullying Policy and Procedures was developed over a number of staff meetings and a school development day and was presented at a Parents and Citizens meeting for ratification.

Ron Ritchie           Principal
Deb Langfield        Assistant Principal
Lesley Warren        Assistant Principal
Alyson McIntyre     Assistant Principal
Bryan Lyndon         Classroom Teacher

School contact information
Lennox Head Public School
25 Byron St
Lennox Head   2478   NSW

Ph:    02 6687 7230
Fax:    02 6687 7082
Email: lennoxhead-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au
Web: www.lennoxhead-p.schools.nsw.edu.au
An incident is broadly defined in the Department’s Incident Reporting Policy as an event which:

- causes disruption to an organisation, or
- creates danger or risk that could significantly affect individuals within the organisation, or
- impacts on the effective operation of the workplace, or
- attracts negative media attention or a negative public profile for the workplace or the Department of Education and Training, or
- Workcover describes as a “serious incident” which must be reported by law.

Such incidents that involve assaults, threats, weapons, illegal drugs and criminal activity must be reported to the School Safety and Response Hotline on 1300 363 778.

The vast majority of students attending public schools maintain high standards of behaviour. Occasionally, the behaviour of students at school, while travelling to and from school, or at school related activities, is inappropriate and impacts on safety. Behaviour in other circumstances, including at home, can also impact on the school.

The Incident Reporting Procedures set out the Department’s incident reporting requirements for principals. The policy and procedures can be found at:


Under these procedures, incidents must be reported as soon as possible, but within 24 hours. This ensures appropriate advice can be provided to the principal by Safety and Security officers including whether police must be notified. It also allows support to be provided to assist the principal with the management of the incident.

The immediate reporting of incidents under the Incident Reporting Procedures does not require the principal to complete any forms, fax details or enter the incident on a database as all details will be taken over the phone. An incident report will be issued to relevant officers by email after the details are recorded. Other records may need to be kept by the principal such as accident reports or mandatory risk of harm reports.

If a student is injured in the course of an assault at school, or while travelling to or from school if the incident is connected to the school, it is the responsibility of the principal to notify police. Police are to be notified regardless of whether parents, carers or students indicate that they do not want police involvement. It is not the responsibility of parents or carers to report school related incidents to police, although they also may choose to do so.

Principals need to consider whether school disciplinary action should be taken when they receive reports of inappropriate behaviour which occurred off school premises and outside of school hours. Behaviours which need to be considered include possession/use of weapons, fights or threats made while students are travelling to or from school, reports of serious cyberbullying, or threats made over other telecommunication devices. Where the behaviour is capable of 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 hotline.

Principals must ensure that every deputy principal and assistant principal at their schools is familiar with the Department’s incident reporting requirements and that each is able to implement those procedures in their absence.

It is impossible to identify and specify every possible scenario and there may be times when it is difficult to make a decision about whether to contact the police or not. If a principal has any doubt about whether an incident should be reported to the police, they should contact the School Safety and Response Unit and seek advice.

A list of considerations to assist principals in making decisions about whether to
Factors for consideration for principals

The following factors should be considered when deciding whether an incident involving assault, threats, harassment or intimidation is serious enough to warrant reporting to police. Where one of the factors is at a significant level or more than one of the factors applies to the incident, the principal should seriously consider making a report. This is not a checklist or an exhaustive list. Principals are encouraged to seek further advice from the School Safety and Response Unit if they are still uncertain about whether to report the incident to police.

- Did the assault or incident result in a visible injury such as bruised face, split lip, or swelling?
- Did the incident result in a participant complaining of pain or discomfort?
- Was the incident premeditated or planned?
- Was the incident recorded on a mobile phone or camera and then posted on a social networking site or broadcast to others?
- Was external assistance eg an ambulance required to attend to one of the participants?
- Did the incident occur in the context of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, stalking or intimidation?
- Will the incident have a sustained impact on the school or its community eg school will need to access outside support services such as EAPS to recover from the incident?
- Did the incident significantly affect school routines or operations for a period?
- Is there a history of aggression by one or more of the participants, or is there a history of this conflict in the community?
- Has a staff member, parent or carer requested that you notify police regardless of your intention?
- Were weapons involved? (If so, there is no discretion and the incident must be reported.)