Anti-bullying Plan
8219 Hunter River High School
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.

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.

This policy has been written in consultation with all stakeholders within the extended community of Hunter River High School (HRHS) - staff, students, parents and community agencies. This policy is implemented through everyday interactions between students, staff and community.

Additionally, HRHS constantly reinforces the importance of, and implementation strategies for, this policy through regular staff meetings, year meetings with students, weekly student reviews by the school Learning Support Team and parent evenings and communication. The beliefs of this plan are continually reinforced through the school newsletter and teacher interaction with students.

This Anti Bullying policy will be evaluated annually.

Statement of purpose

Every individual, both staff and students, at Hunter River High School has a right to feel safe psychologically and physically. Any person who bullies another is denying them this right. In our school, we support the notion that individuals being bullied do not own the problem alone. Bullying damages everyone in our school community in one way or another.

Hunter River High School welfare policies and strategies focus on zero tolerance for harassment, discrimination or vilification. Our school does not tolerate bullying in any form, verbal or non-verbal. All members of the school community are committed to ensuring a safe and caring environment which promotes personal growth, achievement and positive relationships for everyone. We accept the collective ownership of the problem of bullying, and will act together to provide educational strategies and skills, and sanctions to respond positively to incidents of bullying behaviour.

The development of positive student/teacher relationships is paramount. The school is also concerned about the need for students to gain knowledge and understanding of the depth of digital footprints on their lives and their future.

Hunter River High School values education, friendship and community. Our school is an inclusive environment, where diversity is affirmed and individual differences are accepted. We respect the rights of all to be safe at all times within this environment. We believe that everyone has the capacity to grow and learn, individually and collectively, from one another.

In particular at Hunter River High School, our policies are built around:
1. Department of Education and Training policies;
2. The DET Core Rules and Values;
3. our core values of:
   • Harmony,
   • Respect,
   • Honesty, and
   • Success; and
4. The Method of Shared Concern, by Frank Pikas.

This plan is based on the DET anti-bullying policy (9/12/2004) that provides more information for interested school community members. All requirements of the DET policy are mandatory for all staff. This plan should be read in conjunction with the Hunter River High School Student Welfare and Discipline Handbook and the Staff Handbook of Policies and Procedures.
Protection

The school understands bullying behaviour to be:
- 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;
- personal or negative comments directed at an individual through information and communication technologies which are repeated or incite others to join in – cyberbullying; and
- 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.

At Hunter River High School bullying and harassment are not tolerated.

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

Students have a responsibility to:
- behave appropriately, respecting individual differences and diversity in accordance with the Hunter River High School Student Welfare and discipline policy;
- positively participate in all strategies that are part of the Hunter River High School Anti-bullying Plan; and
- respond to incidents of bullying according to the HRHS Anti-bullying Plan.

Parents and caregivers have a responsibility to:
- support their children in all aspects of their learning;
- 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 HRHS Anti-bullying Plan;
- support the school in implementing the HRHS Anti-bullying Plan; and
- support all students of the school to deal effectively with bullying through the strategies of the Anti-bullying Plan.

Teachers have a responsibility to:
- respect and support students in all aspects of their learning;
- model behaviour that promotes respectful relationships;
- respond in an appropriate and timely manner to incidents of bullying according to the HRHS Anti-bullying Plan.

In the You Can Do It program and school curriculum students learn about the laws relating to bullying, harassment, discrimination and vilification, the Department of Education stance on this and what happens at Hunter River High School in response to bullying and harassment. The aim is to have a school where students feel safe and happy to come to school without the fear of bullying and harassment.

If students believe they are suffering from bullying, harassment, discrimination or vilification then the steps to take are:
1. Tell the person to stop;
2. If they continue, tell them that it is harassment and you will submit a No H.D.V form;
3. If it continues – students pick up a form from their Year Adviser, photocopy room or Admin 2, complete it and submit it to their Year Adviser.
4. The Year Adviser will interview the other student(s) and
5. If it continues the Year Adviser or executive staff are advised so that further action can be taken.

Note: If students have a problem in class, they should report responsibly to their teacher and the teacher will deal with it. The No H.D.V. is for harassment, not one off problems.
Prevention

The school will engage in positive strategies that promote respect, tolerance, patience and dignity in relationships. To this end, anti-bullying messages will be embedded regularly in the school’s routines, curriculum and communication where strong, ethical and affirming behaviours are modelled and expected.

HRHS believes that the most effective method for prevention of bullying is providing information to students and parents on what constitutes, and how to deal with, bullying, harassment, discrimination and vilification, and, as importantly, a quick response to all instances of bullying behaviour.

Prevention Strategies include:

- Year 7 Transition programs are led by Year 10 Jumpstart leaders who model expected behaviour and discuss anti-bullying strategies and procedures. These are reinforced at the Year 7 Camp and on Jump Start days.
- The school handbook provided to parents and students at enrolment meetings outlines the processes to respond to bullying, harassment, discrimination and vilification.
- Harmony, Respect, Honesty and Success special days and lessons occur for all years once per term and include anti-bullying messages.
- You Can Do It is a social skills program taught to all Year 7 classes for an hour each week by specifically selected staff.
- School Assemblies reinforce core values and school processes.
- Regular Year Meetings reinforce core values and school messages.
- The School Liaison Youth Police Officer addresses Year Groups each semester on bullying and cyber bullying prevention, identification and response strategies.
- Utilisation of a range of inter-agency and regional personnel to run workshops and forums for students, teachers and parents that guide preventative behaviours.
- Fab Friday workshops as part of the 20 minute weekly roll call include anti-bullying information, strategies and processes.
- The Head Teacher Welfare organises appropriate external performances and presentation to reinforce the school’s anti-bullying program.
- Curriculum content in the areas of English, Drama, Human Society and Its Environment, and Personal Development, Health and Physical Education support students in identifying, understanding and responding to bullying.
- An integrated Religious Education program in Year 7 complements the school’s core values and programs.
- Students are regularly familiarised with the support personnel in the school who are available to support students, including: Classroom teachers; Year Advisers; Anti-racism Coordinator; Aboriginal Education Officer; Head Teachers, especially the Head Teacher Welfare; School Counsellors, and Deputy Principals and Principal.
- Roll call is extended to 20 minutes daily to allow students regular contact with the same staff member who can support them in addressing issues around school organisation, bullying, harassment, discrimination and vilification.
- Staff are required to enter all incidents, allegations or responses to allegations of BHDV onto Millenium.

Early Intervention

The school will implement early intervention strategies and programs for students who are identified as being at risk of developing long-term difficulties with social relationships and those students who are identified at, or after, enrolment as having previously experienced bullying or engaged in bullying behaviour. These strategies include:

- Pre-enrolment meetings and school information sharing sheets contain requests for information on previous bullying;
- Using the expertise of the school’s counsellor to develop intervention strategies and provide opportunities for counselling sessions;
- Monitoring at-risk students using key personnel, for example, the Year Adviser or Head Teacher Welfare or Deputy Principals or a nominated person who can provide trust and support;
- Referring at-risk students appropriately to their Year Adviser, the Head Teacher Welfare, the Learning Support Team, or the School Counsellor;
• Ensuring students and parents know the school’s Anti-Bullying Action Plan so that appropriate action can be taken by the school to support all parties;
• Seeking external agency support to further encourage resilience and self-esteem as necessary;
• Utilising the expertise of regional personnel to provide advice, support and guidance;
• Promoting responsible reporting to children and staff to encourage reporting bullying incidents involving themselves or others;
• Reminding students and staff regularly to report incidents of bullying;
• Encouraging parents to contact school if they become aware of a problem;
• Publicly recognising and rewarding positive behaviour and resolution of problems as part of the schools level system and ‘Flipping the Coin’ strategy.

Response

The school feels it is important to note that conflict or fights between equals, single incidents, or even a collection of single incidents, are not necessarily defined as bullying. There is ample research to indicate that students need to experience some conflict to develop resolution skills and resilience for development as normal healthy social beings.

Punitive action has only a limited effect on reducing the incidence and insidiousness of bullying because it perpetuates a cycle of power, potentially prolonging the problem. Additionally, punitive responses deal only with known bullies.

It is also important to understand that the problem of bullying is not easily proven or resolved. Therefore the processes of addressing bullying and harassment may take time to have impact.

However, the schools firm commitment is that all allegations of bullying, harassment, discrimination and vilification will be investigated.

Once identified each bully, victim and witnesses will be interviewed.

Students and staff identified by others as bullies will be informed of allegations and interviewed.

Both bullies and victims will be offered counselling and support.

Serious physical assault or bullying will be referred to the relevant Deputy Principal. The Deputies will follow DEC and school policies and procedures, especially the Suspension and Expulsion of School Students, and may recommend to the Principal referrals to appropriate outside agencies e.g. police, child wellbeing unit, DOCS.

Resolution of discrimination or vilification will be referred to the Anti-Racism Contact Officer (ARCO) in the first instance. If appropriate the Aboriginal Education Officer will be informed and involved. Resolutions or unsuccessful interventions will be communicated to the appropriate Deputy Principal.

Resolution of bullying and harassment should start with the classroom teacher, or, if occurring in the playground, the duty Head Teacher. Staff should attempt to address single incidents of conflict by mediation and negotiation, and record the incidents and actions on Millenium.

Students reporting bullying or harassment should complete a ‘No BHDV’ form and liaise with their Year Adviser. The Year Adviser will: attempt to resolve the issues by taking statements from the target and the bully; counselling all parties; and/or mediating. Incidents of serious physical bullying will be referred immediately and directly to the Deputy Principal as above.

Year Advisers who find evidence of ongoing bullying and harassment may refer the matter to the Head Teacher Welfare, Learning Support Team or appropriate Deputy Principal for further investigation.

Deputy Principals will: interview and take statements from the target; inform, interview and take statements from the bully(s); interview and take statements from witnesses; and determine appropriate interventions.
At this level, appropriate interventions for the target may include: support by Year Adviser or Head Teacher Welfare; Parental contact; mediation with the bully(s); identification of a safe place or safety strategy; identification of a buddy; referral to Learning Support Team; referral to School Counsellor; referral to child wellbeing unit; referral to DOCS; referral to external agencies.

At this level, appropriate interventions for the bully(s) may include: Counseling by Deputy Principal; Parental contact; mediation with the target; levels system monitoring card; withdrawal of privileges; exclusion from class; exclusion from playground; transfer to DP roll call for daily monitoring; ongoing counselling from school counsellor or other appropriate agency for both victim and bully; referral to whole school detention; referral to Learning Support Team; school suspension.

If student bullying persists, parents will be contacted and consequences implemented consistent with the school's Student Welfare and Discipline policy, Anti-Bullying Plan and levels system.

If staff bullying persists the principal will commence formal disciplinary action consistent with the DEC Code of Conduct and Charter of Dignity and Respect. Consequences for staff will be individually based and may involve:
- counselling
- a period of monitoring
- a formal support group
- disciplinary actions

The senior executive staff are responsible for reporting incidents of assaults, threats, intimidation or harassment to police. They will take advice from the School Safety and Response Unit, the Police Youth Liaison Officer, the School Youth Liaison Police Officer, and / or the Student Welfare Consultant.

All teaching staff are mandatory reporters of Child Protection issues and receive annual Child Protection training and are regularly reminded of their responsibilities and our procedures in relation to Keeping Them Safe and mandatory reporting requirements. Staff MUST report any concerns to the Head Teacher Welfare, Deputy Principal or Principal. The Principal has a responsibility to ensure that appropriate staff use the Mandatory Reporter Guide (MRG) and follow its recommendations in relation to school procedures, the Child Wellbeing Unit or the Department of Community Services.

Any appeal or complaint will be resolved in the first instance by reviewing strategies to support the student or staff member in an informal process or if unsuccessful or otherwise through the Department of Education and Communities Complaint Handling Policy.

The school has a number of strategies for identifying patterns of bullying behaviour:
- Year Advisers meet weekly with the Head Teacher Welfare to discuss student issues. The Principal and / or a Deputy Principal also attend these meetings whenever possible;
- Deputy Principals are allocated Year Groups to supervise and monitor;
- The Head Teacher Welfare and Deputy Principals sweep Millenium weekly, and identify any obvious trends in bullying to the Learning Support Team and / or School Executive;
- The School Learning Support Team meets weekly to review student needs and issues;
- The school executive meet weekly to review student and school meta-data;
- The school attendance team meets once per cycle to review attendance data and student and / or system issues;
- The school self-evaluation committee gathers data across terms 1 – 3 and identifies any patterns or trends to the appropriate personnel or group; and
- The Principal and Deputy Principals meet together three times per week to review student and school issues.

The school will review and respond to emerging data in line with the strategies outlined in this plan, relevant DEC policies and resources, and any other relevant resources.

The HRHS Anti-Bullying Plan will be promoted and publicised through existing school communication systems such as Staff Meetings, P&C Meetings, Student Year Meeting, School Assemblies and the School Newsletter. Additionally the plan will be added to our revised website in 2012.

Hunter River High School will report annually to the school community through the Annual School Report and the Annual General meetings of the P&C Association and School Council.
Hunter River High School will evaluate the HRHS Anti-Bullying plan every three years to update the plan in line with emerging trends, data and interventions and the new school strategic plan. This evaluation will occur through school self-evaluation processes which will include representation from students and student representative bodies, parents and community and parent representative bodies such as the P&C Association and the School Council, school staff and interagency representatives associated with our school community.

Additional Information

Contact information for relevant personnel:
Constable Leanne Mann, Police Youth Liaison Officer
Raymond Terrace Police
Phone: 4983 0599

Constable Rob Walsh, School Liaison Police Officer
Phone: 0437 778 812
Email: wals2rob@police.nsw.gov.au

Ray Wildman, Home School Liaison Officer
Phone: 0408 277 372

Additional Resources

M. Bernard You Can Do It! Education
BullyEd, Anti-Bullying Program
www.bullyingnoway.com.au

Child Wellbeing Unit
Department of Community Services
Andrew Fuller, From Thriving to Surviving
Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800
www.kidshelp.com.au

Lifeline 131 114
Mindmatters www.nbntv.com.au
www.netsafe.org.nz
F. Pikas The Method of Shared Concern
K. Rigby Stop the Bullying: A Handbook for Schools

Principal’s comment

This Anti-bullying plan should be read in conjunction with existing school policies and procedures, including Student Welfare and Discipline, and Anti-Racism.

The plan has been developed by the team below after considerable consultation and input from the School Council, the P&C Association, Year Advisers, Staff, the Student Representative Council and the Junior Aboriginal Education Consultative Group.

Graham Eather, Principal
Deb Dibley, Deputy Principal
Kylee Beasley, Head Teacher Welfare
Bronwyn Power, District Guidance Officer
Don Denham, Head Teacher HSIE, HRHS ARCO
Robert Carney, President, P&C Association
Brooke Roach, Aboriginal Education Officer

School contact information

Hunter River High School
Elkin Avenue, Heatherbrae. NSW 2324
Ph: 02 4987 2306
Fax: 02 4987 4076
Email: hunterriv-h.school@det.nsw.edu.au
Web: www.hunterriv-h.school.nsw.edu.au