



WAYS Secondary Safe and Supportive Environment: Anti-Bullying Policy

NESA Manual Section: B8.2 Student Welfare

Policy

At WAYS Secondary (WAYS) we seek to provide a safe secure inclusive learning and work environment in which bullying and harassment in any form is unacceptable. All students and members of the school community have the right to a learning and work environment that promotes safety and security and that it is free from bullying, harassment, intimidation, humiliation and hurt. We believe that preventing bullying and harassment is a shared responsibility of students, staff and parent(s)/caregiver(s).

The value and significance of each student is acknowledged, individual differences are catered for and respected. Student mental, physical and emotional wellbeing are central to the educational program at WAYS. Each student is encouraged to take responsibility for fostering, promoting and restoring right? relationships and feel safe to speak up if they are being victimised or see it happening to others.

This policy is based on the four (4) components of the NSW Anti-Bullying Framework that underpin a successful whole school approach to addressing bullying. The *WAYS Secondary Anti-bully Policy* provides strategies and clear procedures that the school implements to prevent, identify, report and respond to bullying including cyberbullying and harassment.

The WAYS Secondary Anti-Bullying Policy is available on the school website.

1. What is bullying?

In the WAYS Secondary policy bullying is defined as repeated, hostile and unjustifiable behaviour which causes fear, distress or harm to another. It can be perpetrated by an individual or group towards another individual who is unable to effectively resist. Bullying has occurred regardless of whether harm to the victimised student was intentional or unintentional.

Harassment is any unwelcomed, unsolicited behaviour that humiliates or intimidates a person and creates a hostile environment. It includes actions such as verbal, physical, or online harassment that are unreasonable and typically directed at an individual's personal attributes like race, gender, or disability. Bullying and harassment can have long term impacts on the victims mental and physical wellbeing.

Bullying and harassment can be illegal when intimidation, stalking, physical violence, threats of violence or damaging property are involved. Students and staff should refer to the *WAYS Secondary Appropriate Use of ICT Policy* to gain an understanding the seriousness and consequences of the misuse of technology.

1.1 Forms of Bullying

- a) Physical - hitting, punching, choking, pushing, tripping, kicking, holding down, spitting
- b) Verbal - teasing, using offensive names, ridiculing.
- c) Social - lying, spreading rumours, humiliation, playing a nasty joke, repeatedly mimicking someone, deliberate exclusion, rude gestures
- d) Psychological - repeatedly using words or actions which cause another person psychological harm. Stand manipulating people and stalking a person.
- e) Cyberbullying - is the misuse of power within a relationship to repeatedly threaten or harm another person using technology. Cyberbullying behaviour may include:
 - abusive texts and emails
 - hurtful messages, images or videos
 - imitating others online
 - excluding others online
 - humiliating others online
 - spreading nasty rumours online

Cyberbullying can occur on internet services, social media and electronic services that enable communication including, but not limited to, instant messaging, chat services, email communications, online games, SMS and MMS. It can be verbal or written and can includes images, videos and/or audio. These behaviours can also be an indicator of child abuse and other harm.

1.2 Signs of Bullying

A child who is being bullied may:

- Develop feelings of negative self-worth
- Develop feelings of helplessness
- Feel frightened for his or her safety
- Feel embarrassed, angry or unfairly treated
- Disconnect socially from peers and become more withdrawn
- Project anger onto others
- Have difficulties with concentration, schoolwork or sleep
- Want to avoid going to school
- Develop mood difficulties

1.3. What bullying is not

The following negative social behaviours can be confused for, but are not necessarily, bullying:

- a) Mutual Conflict Situations which arise where there is disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Mutual conflict situations need to be closely monitored as they may evolve into a bullying situation.
- b) One-Off Acts (of aggression or meanness) including single incidents of loss of temper, shouting or swearing do not normally constitute bullying.

1.4 Bullying prevention strategies

At WAYS we focus on promoting a supportive environment that encourages the development of positive relationships, acceptance of student differences and communication between staff, students and parent(s)/caregiver(s). There is ongoing education of staff and students about what constitutes bullying, including cyberbully, and ways it can be identified, prevented and handled.

The school education program explicitly incorporates in PDHPE and as appropriate in other courses, teaching learning experiences relevant to contemporary social issues relating to bullying, racism and hate speech.

Staff Professional Learning includes in-house sessions and external workshops with authorised providers such as but not limited to: training and professional development of staff in bullying prevention and response strategies, training on trauma-informed responses. regular sharing and discussion of information about and managing incidents of bullying (including cyberbullying) and harassment at weekly staff meetings,.

Some examples of strategies WAYS has in place and implements to prevent bullying behaviour includes but are not limited to:

- Provision of regular information in communications to and workshops for parent(s)/caregiver(s) and students to:
 - raise awareness of bullying as a community issue.
 - equip them to recognise signs of bullying.
 - identify ways they can support the prevention of bullying.
 - provide them with clear guidelines and paths for raising any concerns they may have relating to bullying at WAYS.
- Student education about tolerance and positive behaviour expectations in the Student Code of Conduct
- Strategies for the early identification of and clear support plans for vulnerable students.
- Promoting responsible bystander behaviour amongst students, staff and parent(s)/caregiver(s).
- Establishing of multiple reporting channels to simplify reporting of alleged bullying by students, bystanders, parent(s)/caregiver(s) and staff.
- Providing coordinated support plans by teachers, support staff and wellness team members when students identify to staff including the Principal that they are being victimised, excluded or do not feel safe in the school environment.
- Undertaking regular risk assessments of bullying within WAYS by surveying students and/or parent(s)/caregiver(s) to identify bullying concerns that may go unnoticed by staff.
- Monitoring single incidents of conflict or fights between students, that do not ordinarily amount to bullying, for signs of ongoing behaviour, which may be an indicator of bullying.
- Maintaining accurate up-to-date records of reported bullying incidents to identify students who persistently intimidate or bully and/or students who are persistently bullied.
- Implementing as appropriate targeted prevention strategies based on analysis of evidence gathered from risk assessments conducted within the school.

2. Reporting bullying incidents

Students and their parent(s)/caregiver(s) are sometimes reluctant to pursue bullying incidents, for fear that reporting the behaviour will exacerbate or escalate or encourage further bullying and/or reprisals. When an incident is reported to staff and/or the Principal as well as providing support to students who experience bullying (and parent(s)/caregiver(s) assurance will be given that at WAYS:

- bullying is not tolerated.

- their concerns will be taken seriously.
- their confidentiality will be respected.
- there are clear procedures that will be applied to deal with bullying issues.

At WAYS students may report bullying anonymously in writing. Students and their parent(s)/caregiver(s) can also report bullying incidents verbally or in writing by informing any of the following:

- a) a trusted teacher or school support staff.
- b) a member of the WAYS wellness team.
- c) the Principal.

2.1 Complaints to the eSafety Commissioner about cyberbullying material targeted at a child

Where cyberbullying material is targeted at a child under the age of 18 years, a complaint can be made to:

a) the provider of a social media service, relevant electronic service, designated internet service (as defined in the Online Safety Act 2021 (Cth)) Refer to *eSafety Guide for Information about Providers*.

b) the eSafety Commissioner under section 30 of the Online Safety Act 2021 (Cth).

Complaints to the eSafety Commissioner can be made through the online portal by the child, their parent or guardian, or an adult authorised by the child to make the complaint.

The eSafety Commissioner has the power investigate the complaint and to issue a removal notice.

For the eSafety Commissioner to investigate cyberbullying, the harmful content must have first been reported to the service or platform used to send, post or share it at least 48 hours before it is reported to eSafety. <https://www.childsafety.gov.au/get-support/esafety>

Cyberbullying material that is provided on a social media service, relevant electronic service, designated internet service (as defined in the Online Safety Act 2021 (Cth)) can be the subject of complaint to the eSafety Commissioner under section 30 of the Online Safety Act when an ordinary reasonable person would conclude it is likely to:

- a) be intended to have an effect on a particular child; and
- b) have the direct or indirect effect on the child as seriously threatening, seriously intimidating, seriously harassing or seriously humiliating the child.

3. Responding to reports of bullying

In all circumstances at WAYS reported incidents of bullying are taken seriously. Bullying behaviours vary enormously in their extent and intent and, as a consequence, each incident needs to be dealt with on its facts. The following includes but is not limited to some approaches that may be applied in responding to reports of bullying at WAYS:

- Providing assurance to the student being bullied that they are not at fault and will be treated confidentially.
- Ensuring continued support for the student being bullied throughout the reporting process and the associated investigation and resolution processes is provided by teachers, support staff, WAYS wellness team
- Engaging the WAYS Wellness Centre, or similar provider, to instigate anti-bullying initiatives.
- Investigating the facts and taking time to understand any concerns of individuals involved in the reported incident(s) including discussions with the student being bullied, the student(s) involved in the bullying and any bystander(s).
- Keeping parent(s)/caregiver(s) of both the student who was bullied and the student(s) who did the bullying, informed of the situation as and when appropriate to do so.
- Applying the procedures of the WAYS *Secondary Student Behaviour Management and Discipline Policy* consistently to reinforce the seriousness of bullying and the consequences of failure to adhere to the school Codes of Conduct and behaviour expectation.
- Escalating the response to what/where? when dealing with students who persistently bully and/or for severe incidents, even if these are not necessarily repetitive.
- Maintaining accurate records of all reported bullying incidents and the responses that were implemented to manage the issues.

3.1 Procedures for responding, recording and investigating allegations of bullying

- As soon as possible after a teacher, school support staff or member of the WAYS wellness team observes or receives a report of alleged bullying or harassment they are to:
 - notify the Principal and contact the parent(s)/caregiver(s) to inform them of the incident and that the matter will be followed up.
 - gather all evidence in relation to the observed or alleged incident of bullying or harassment.
 - complete an Incident Form located in SharePoint in the WAYS Secondary Forms folder and forward it to the Principal.
 - put in place measures to enable the student who has reported and/or been the victim of bullying to feel safe at school.

- WAYS staff will ensure that students who are the victims of bullying or harassment have access to counselling to debrief after the incident if they wish and that they are able to contact their parent(s)/caregiver if needed.
- At a meeting with the Principal and/or staff member(s) after the incident the students are given an opportunity to respond to allegations and any evidence against them.
- The Principal or authorised delegate will seek to find a resolution to the bullying or harassment issue by interviewing all students, staff and bystanders involved and responding appropriately by applying the procedures in the *WAYS Secondary Student Behaviour Management and Discipline Policy*. (Refer *WAYS Secondary Student Behaviour Management and Discipline Policy*)
- The Principal will direct student(s) who are found to be responsible for the offending behaviour to attend counselling sessions with a WAYS psychologist to assist them to meaningfully reflect on the incident(s) and develop better strategies to reduce the likelihood of reoffending. A counselling referral must be acted upon within one week of the report and parent(s)/caregiver(s) informed of the action.
- The student who is victimised will be offered support by teaching and WAYS psychology staff immediately after the incident and on an ongoing basis if they require. The Student Support and Administration Coordinator will facilitate this process.
- The Principal will contact the parents / caregivers by phone one week, one month and one term after the incident to review the effectiveness of the response and ascertain whether further action needs to be taken.
- The Principal will give the completed Incident Form and any other records of the incident to the Student Support and Administration Coordinator to be retained securely in SharePoint in the Serious Incidents file.
- At the weekly staff meetings with the teaching and non-teaching support staff any issues relating to bullying and harassment incidents are raised and discussed with the Principal.
- As soon as practicable after the incident(s) involving bullying and/or harassing behaviours by students that are considered particularly serious by the Principal will be reported via phone call or email to the local Youth Liaison Officer—Bondi Beach Police, 153 Bronte Road Waverley 2024, NSW. Ph 93699899.
- The Principal will implement the procedures for mandatory reporting in the *WAYS Secondary Child Protection Policy* if the behaviour raises concerns that the student exhibiting the behaviour and/or the student being bullied may be at risk of significant harm including sexual abuse.
- At regular intervals the Principal in collaboration with teaching, support and wellness staff reviews the effectiveness of the WAYS whole school approach to preventing, identifying and responding to student bullying, including cyberbullying, and make changes and adjustments to strengthen the schools' processes and strategies.

Other policies

This policy relates to and should be read in conjunction with the following WAYS Secondary:

- Attendance Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Critical Incidents and Emergencies Policy
- Enrolment Policy
- Student Behaviour Management and Discipline Policy
- Student Welfare Policy

The policy will be reviewed not less frequently than once every two years.

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