



Education &  
Communities

# Uralla Central School

## Anti-bullying Plan



*Stand tall, Walk proud!*





# 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.

Representation from the whole school community in consultation for this plan has occurred through the use of data *Tell Them From Me*.

The plan has been developed with input from the Student Representative Council via the Head of Wellbeing and the *Schools of the Future* development team.

As part of analysing the school's development through our *Schools of the Future* development team, a new position was created out of our available Head Teacher allocation as Head of Wellbeing to increase the number, targeting and quality of initiatives for the wellbeing of all students, including anti-bullying.

All aspects of the school's Wellbeing Policy have been discussed with the Student Representative Council, including anti-bullying. Our parent and community information for informing our approach has come from *Tell Them From Me*.

To enable refinements for the new School Plan 2018-2020, the following actions will take place:

- The Parents and Citizens Committee will review the actions of this plan in Term 3-4, 2017.

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- The student perspective on the success of initiatives employed will be tested through a specific anonymous online survey, outlining student awareness and evaluation of each initiative.

Informal feedback is continually sought from students and staff after each whole school or targeted wellbeing activity.

## Statement of purpose

At Uralla Central School we believe all students should '**Stand Tall and Walk Proud**'. Our plan is prevent bullying as much as possible through a number of positive initiatives that help each student to realise character strengths about themselves and also to be empathetic towards others. Where peer conflict and bullying occur, we have a number of strategies in place to try to repair student relationships so that they can productive learners, followed lastly by discipline measures for continued bullying.

When it comes to student wellbeing we believe that 'a fence at the top of the cliff is better than an ambulance at the bottom' – we are focused on being preventative of bullying to enhance the overall student experience at our school.

## Protection

The school understands that bullying occurs in a range of contexts and forms. Forms can be verbal, physical, social and psychological. Contexts include going to and leaving school (including bus transport), on social media and email, in class and on the playground. The school is implementing the actions and strategies in this plan to deal with bullying behaviour.

The responsibility of students is not to engage in bullying behaviour and where they cannot resolve conflict independently to seek teacher help, peer mentor help, Wellbeing staff or school executives in that order. Through our current Wellbeing focus on using the VIA Character Strengths, we encourage students to look for the best in each other and themselves by focusing on what is great in themselves and each other.

The responsibility of parents and caregivers is to notify the school when they become aware of an instance of bullying in our school. We can only act when we are aware of an issue and sadly students sometimes do not disclose bullying to teachers for fear of reprisal from bullies. Parents and caregivers are also responsible to not become involved in inappropriate comments on social media, particularly attacking online other students of our school as this perpetuates conflict rather than resolving it. Parents and caregivers can positively support students online to ensure they receive counteracting opinions to those of the bullies and model appropriate online behaviour.

Teachers are responsible for the effective management of their classes to deal with student communication, record instances of bullying behaviour in Sentral by selecting those involved, witnesses, victims and ticking the 'Bullying' checkbox on any incident with bullying.

Positive relationships are being established through students learning to respect everyone regardless of a range of background factors that are part of students' lives. As a school proud of its significant percentage of indigenous students, we have an emphasis on NAIDOC week celebrations including a specific school social for this event managed by the SRC. We also celebrate events such as 'Harmony Day' and 'Wear it Purple' with dress up days to raise funds for causes supporting student diversity in a range of areas.

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## Prevention

Anti-bullying measures are delivered through school assemblies where appropriate by the Principal, Deputy Principal and Head of Wellbeing. All students have been provided with the 5 areas of Learning Power we are focusing on as a school in HOW2Learn, and special merits are awarded in every year for students who demonstrate 'Reciprocity' as a Learning Power. Students in the Middle school will be recording their use of 'Reciprocity' in their Learning Power Journals in 2017. Students in Stage 5 will receive an accelerated version of the VIA character strengths through the Academy Preparation class to increase resilience in this stage group.

The use of materials from 'ReachOut.com' are being used in coordination with the school's PDHPE program and a Wellbeing calendar has been established in 2017 to link these activities including anti-bullying measures to community days such as 'White Ribbon Day' with these messages reinforced in other subjects on a rotational basis.

The use of 'Bullying.NoWay!' is to be introduced into the school's Wellbeing programme in Term 3 and 4, 2017 and delivered as specific lessons to stage groups based on wellbeing data analysis in Term 2, 2017.

## Early Intervention

Early intervention strategies at Uralla Central School include peer mediation by students trained in conflict resolution. Where a peer conflict can be resolved between students without punishing the parties involved this is also engaged by Wellbeing staff and classroom teachers.

Students who are identified as at risk are attached to a suitable 'buddy' in their classes on enrolment to guide their transition into Uralla Central School. Students who possess disabilities with social aspects are accommodated through their learning support plans and allocation of safe spaces in environments near to staff rooms.

Early intervention for new students also involves parent contact where required by Heads of School and the Head of Wellbeing as we monitor new student integration in peer groups with new enrolments in the first fortnight of enrolment.

## Response

Students are encouraged to positively support the victims of bullying as opposed to getting into conflict with the antagonist(s), particularly through positive comments in social media. Students are encouraged when in person to support students through moving them away from a situation where the bullying is occurring and to notify staff immediately. As part of the school's **'Be Brave'** campaign for 2017 students have been specifically instructed to stand up for what they believe in, including the reporting of bullying and supporting other students positively through presentations at school assemblies so parents and community members can also share in this vision.

In situations where bullying occurs in more than one instance, specific seating plans or playground restrictions are put into place to provide a safe space for students. Where a student wishes to move class to avoid further confrontation this is negotiated through the Head of School. Specific discipline actions including detention, isolation (in-school suspension) and suspension are enacted where students who commit bullying refuse to modify their behaviour.

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Support programmes to raise the resilience and social skills of both victims and perpetrators of bullying are used to ameliorate the sources of bullying and empower all students in their self-worth and self-understanding. Behaviour management plans are also used to intervene with and monitor individual students whose behaviour management issues lead to negative interactions with their peers and staff, including bullying.

Specific peer integration counselling occurs where an ongoing conflict is occurring and this is conducted by a member of the school executive. Where resolutions cannot be achieved separate playground areas and classes are established where possible.

In the Junior School, structured play is also used in the playground areas supervised by the Head of Wellbeing, Head of Junior School or staff as directed to enable children to learn the right responses to playground disagreements and learn to share areas, friends and play equipment appropriately.

School counselling services also exist for students who have suffered bullying or are referred to as part of the return to school from suspension. Appointments can be made through the Head of Wellbeing.

Incidents of bullying are initially reported to the classroom teacher on duty in class or the playground at the time the incident occurs. These incidents may warrant immediate attention of a Head of School (Junior, Middle or Senior) or intervention by the Head of Wellbeing. These procedures are conveyed to the school community through our Welfare and Discipline Policy on the school website and regularly through the school newsletter.

When an incident of bullying is reported it will be investigated within 24 hours, preferably on the day it is reported. Incidents are initially managed by the Head

of Junior, Middle or Senior School for classroom issues or the Head Teacher on Duty for playground issues. The executive investigating the issue will make parent contact where appropriate to inform parents of these issues and the school's resolution. The investigation will include the taking of student statements verbally or written as appropriate and informing the students of the outcomes of the investigation, including any consequences.

The interventions used to address an incident of bullying are used to try to understand the source of the conflict and ameliorate the source of conflict where possible and focus on restoring a positive peer relationship where possible. Where this is not possible, alternative arrangements are put in place to enforce the separation of the students involved.

Strategies to address bullying for both victims and students engaged in bullying include involvement in targeted programs including the Resourceful Adolescent Program (RAP) that assist to students to build personal resilience by learning to examine their own thoughts, feelings and actions. Specific girls programs also run in the school based on identified need each semester and include discussion of positive use of social media and body image.

Class, year or stage group meetings are also held when it is necessary to address a continuing issue of student mistreatment or a pattern of bullying. This will be conducted using appropriate Wellbeing advisers as well as our Boys and Girls Advisers, Heads of School and other executive where appropriate to the issue being addressed.

Proper bystander behaviour and bystander power in the face of bullying is also reinforced with the students as part of the school ongoing wellbeing program that occurs on Assembly days every three weeks.

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Where regular incidents (as measured in the school's Wellbeing data) occur in the school relating to maladaptive social behaviour with increased frequency, including bullying, specific newsletter articles are created to deal with these issues and inform parents. This includes websites or online groups where we are aware of student wellbeing concerns.

Where a specific bullying issue has occurred, parents are informed by the school executive dealing with the investigation and resolution of that issue. School executives explain to students and parents that they have the right to report threats and acts of violence to the police in addition to any measures the school takes in relation to bullying behaviour as part of our investigation and resolution procedures. School executives also encourage parents and students to report to police issues threats, intimidation or harassment that occurs on social media sites.

The school will contact the Child Wellbeing Unit or Community Services where appropriate in managing an incident of bullying. This will be completed by the school executive investigating the incident in question for the Child Wellbeing Unit and the Principal for Community Services. Where a student or parent expresses that they are unsatisfied with the resolution of a bullying incident after all avenues within the school have been exhausted, they will be provided with a copy of or link to the Complaints Handling Policy for them to take further action if they wish to do so.

The school will identify patterns of bullying behaviour through the use of its Wellbeing data management system, Sentral and also through consultation in executive meetings. Reports are regularly generated on a number of Wellbeing issues, with bullying being able to be identified as an aspect of any Negative Incident. The school will respond to such patterns by changing the character

strengths to be explored in the next Wellbeing activity or by creating or employing a specific programme to target a student group to bring about a desired change the target behaviour.

This Anti-Bullying Plan will be available to parents as a downloadable document within the Parent Portal of Sentral. It will also be added to the school's website. Promotion of the Anti-Bullying Plan will include parent and community education regarding cybersafety that occurs at the same time as education for the students using 'Safe on Social'.

## Monitoring and Evaluating the Plan

The monitoring process engaged will be to track the number and type of incidents identified as bullying recorded in our Wellbeing database (Sentral). Looking at the patterns in these incidents, we will target specific Wellbeing activities to these bullying behaviours and then check the progress on these events as part of our school executive meetings.

## Annual Reporting

To enable refinements for the new School Plan 2018-2020, the following actions will take place:

- The Parents and Citizens Committee will review the actions of this plan in Term 3, 2017.
- The student perspective on the success of initiatives employed will be tested through a specific anonymous online survey, outlining student awareness and evaluation of each initiative.

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Informal feedback is continually sought from students and staff after each whole school or targeted wellbeing activity.

## Additional Information

Police Youth Liaison Officer: Robyn Hannaford 0427 524 619

Kids Helpline: 1800331859

[reachout.com](http://reachout.com)

[thinkyouknow.com](http://thinkyouknow.com)

## Principal's comment

As a school we are proud of the steps, processes and initiatives that we are putting in place to address all aspects of bullying that can occur in our school. We are very conscious of the fact that sadly, all too often the complete eradication of bullying has to remain an aspirational goal. Nonetheless, we firmly believe as a school that if students, teachers, parents and carers work together in a timely fashion the worst aspects of bullying can be addressed with positive outcomes for all.

In that sense 'Being Brave' and always 'Standing tall, Walking Proud' are more than just words for our school community. They are rather a way of living.

Thanks to the staff listed below who assisted in the development of this plan.

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