



# Anti-Bullying and Cyber Bullying Policy & Procedures

## INTRODUCTION:

The Brunswick North Primary School Anti-Bullying & Cyber Bullying Policy has been developed in accordance with the DET documents: Building Respectful and Safe Schools: A resource for school communities (<https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/stuman/wellbeing/respectfulsafe.pdf>) and VRQA: *Guide to the minimum standards and other requirements for school registration*.

## RATIONALE:

Students at BNPS have the right to be and feel safe at school. The School maintains and applies this anti-bullying policy to promote a safe and respectful school environment for all students.

There is growing awareness, both in Australia and overseas, of the harmful effects of bullying on all members of the school community. Students who are bullied are more likely to dislike school, have lower attendance and completion rates, and thus poorer academic outcomes, and are also more likely to have low self-esteem and to experience feelings of loneliness and isolation, depression and anxiety.

Due to the serious adverse effects of bullying, BNPS is committed to taking all forms of bullying seriously. BNPS adopts a whole school approach that requires all students, teachers, and parents and carers to work together to ensure that everyone understands that bullying is not acceptable and will not be tolerated.

By engaging with both the victim and perpetrator of bullying incidents, the School (working with students and parents and carers) aims to minimise incidents of bullying and the extent of their harmful effects.

## WHAT THIS POLICY COVERS – WHAT IS BULLYING?

Sometimes it is clear, and therefore easy to identify and agree, when bullying has occurred. But sometimes it is not. Not all distressing or upsetting incidents that occur at School between students involve bullying. The table below provides some guidance on identifying when it is likely that bullying has (or has not) occurred. In some cases, further clarification may be needed from teachers or the principal. This section also provides some examples of common types of bullying.

Bullying is a clear form of harassment. It may be expressed physically, verbally, by gestures, extortion or exclusion. People who use the internet, email, social networking sites, intranets, phones or similar technologies to bully others are engaging in cyber bullying.

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## What is bullying

To be considered 'bullying', the incident must generally comprise four key elements. It must include behaviour that:

- a) Is of a ***repeated nature***
- b) Involves ***physical, verbal, social and psychological aggressive behaviour or cyber-bullying by a person or group***
- c) Is directed ***towards a less powerful person or group***
- d) Intends to cause ***harm, distress or fear.***

## What is not bullying?

Some behaviours, and situations, are distressing or unpleasant but are not generally considered to be bullying. Bullying is not:

- a) Mutual conflict — involving a disagreement, but not an imbalance of power. However, unresolved conflict can escalate to bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly.
- b) Single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression, or single episodes of aggression directed toward many different people.
- c) Social rejection or dislike — unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, or to exclude or to create dislike of one person or a group by others.

## TYPES OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR:

Repeated incidents of:

1. Physical bullying: e.g. hitting poking, tripping, inappropriate touching, pushing, damaging or stealing someone else's belongings.
2. Verbal or written abuse: e.g. name-calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.
3. Social (covert) bullying: e.g. lying, spreading rumours, playing a nasty joke, mimicking, deliberately excluding someone.
4. Psychological bullying e.g. threatening, manipulative and stalking behaviour.
5. Cyber-bullying: Using technology (e.g. email, electronic devices such as mobile phones, chat rooms, social networking sites) to bully another person in the ways outlined above.



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## HOW DOES THE SCHOOL ADDRESS BULLYING?

BNPS's whole-school approach to preventing and addressing bullying comprises three elements:

- a) **Prevention** — predominantly education and awareness-raising efforts — to stop bullying incidents from occurring;
- b) **Strategies that support and empower students** to deal assertively with behaviour and incidents that might escalate to bullying;
- c) **A formal reporting mechanism**, and associated actions, to address incidents of bullying that have not been satisfactorily resolved or addressed through the other elements outlined above.

### a) **Prevention**

The School believes that many incidents of bullying can be prevented through the School community by developing clear and common understandings around the issue of bullying. As a result, the key focus of BNPS's anti-bullying policy is to deliver programs and initiatives that aim to educate all members of the School community about:

- what constitutes bullying, its causes and how to recognise it;
- why bullying is not acceptable and that it will not be tolerated;
- what to do about suspected incidents of bullying.

#### **The School will aim to achieve this in the following ways:**

- Implement the Child Safe Standards to ensure BNPS is a safe environment with effective procedures and systems of supervision and that staff fulfil their Duty of Care. [PROTECT Child Safe Standards - Home - Department of Education](#)
- Implement a Social and Emotional Learning Program (the Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships learning materials) across all year levels to develop students' personal and social capabilities <https://fuse.education.vic.gov.au/Resource/LandingPage?ObjectId=893b7ed8-1f0a-4b6b-a2d0-c4a037ea0216> Establish class Codes of Behaviour at the start of the school year where students' work together with class and specialist teachers to define a list of agreed class rules and responsibilities for classrooms and specialist areas.
- Implement a Buddies Program (the Alannah and Madeline Foundation's Better Buddies Program) that is designed to create friendly and caring Primary School Communities where bullying is reduced.

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- Implementing an effective Transition Pathways through the school as schools with an effective Transition Program for students' joining them have less bullying.
- Building a positive community as outlined in The KidsMatter Framework where staff and parents/carers work together to provide a safe place with a sense of belonging where students feel people will care about them, where their needs for support, respect and friendship will be met, and where they will be able to get help to work out problems.  
<http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/health-and-community/about-kidsmatter/kidsmatter-framework>.
- Establishing a culture of inclusion and respect that welcomes all students.
- Provide cyber-bullying education to all students each year through the ICT program and agreeing to the 'Acceptable Use Agreement'.
- Implement safe online learning environment education to help students interact positively online.
- Implement strategies and processes outlined in the Building Respectful and Safe Schools Program  
<http://fuse.education.vic.gov.au/ResourcePackage/ByPin?pin=2JZX4R> and ensure teachers and staff model and promote positive and respectful relationships.
- Establish a Student Wellbeing team to oversee matters related to student wellbeing.
- Implement a day devoted to anti-bullying activities on the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence that occurs each year on the third Friday of March – including taking the Bully Stoppers Pledge.
- Annually celebrate Harmony Day and promote inclusiveness.

## **b) Supporting and empowering students**

Training students to respond assertively to bullying involves supporting and empowering them to deal with distressing or upsetting situations, including bullying. This may be useful for preventing minor or isolated incidents from escalating into more serious cases of bullying. Students are also expected and assisted when necessary to use appropriate and pro-social behaviours.

### **Strategies involve:**



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<b>Students</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reporting Bullying incidents to teachers/parents/carers</li><li>• Developing social skills, such as being assertive; telling the bully to stop and seeking help</li><li>• Developing strategies to confidently challenge bullying and unacceptable behaviours</li><li>• Trying to understand the impact of behaviour on others by taking the perspective of the other party e.g. 'how would you feel if ...?'</li></ul>
<b>Teachers</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Monitoring school behaviour and responding quickly to incidents of unsafe or disrespectful behaviour.</li><li>• Being observant to signs of distress, or suspected incidents of bullying.</li><li>• Listening and providing support to students who are experiencing bullying, and to those engaging in bullying.</li><li>• Trying to understand the reasons for the behaviour and seeking ways to address these issues.</li><li>• Implementing Emotional and Social Learning Skills programs to support students' assertiveness and how to stand up for others in a safe way</li><li>• Using Circle time/Class Meetings to provide a forum for students to talk about school related issues and help students feel safe and supported.</li><li>• Developing Behaviour Support Plans for those students involved in bullying that require intensive support.</li><li>• Helping students understand the impact of their behaviour on others by encouraging students to take the perspective of the other party e.g. 'how would you feel if ...?'</li><li>• <i>Completing PD to support skills for addressing bullying incidents</i></li></ul>
<b>Parents/ Carers</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Being observant to signs of distress, or suspected incidents of bullying</li><li>• Listening and providing support to students who are experiencing</li><li>•</li></ul>

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- bullying, and to those engaging in bullying
- Encouraging and supporting students to report distressing incidents to a teacher (and reporting incidents yourself if necessary.)
- Not directly approaching other families or students
- Helping students understand the impact of their behaviour on others by encouraging students to take the perspective of the other party e.g. 'how would you feel if ...?'

## **c) Formal reporting of specific bullying incidents**

Despite the School community's efforts to prevent bullying, some incidents of bullying cannot be satisfactorily addressed through prevention programs alone. In these cases, students and their parents or carers should make a formal report of an incident of bullying to any teacher, or the Principal. Informing the teacher or Principal either verbally or in writing is considered a formal report. All reports will be taken seriously and dealt with in a sensitive and timely manner.

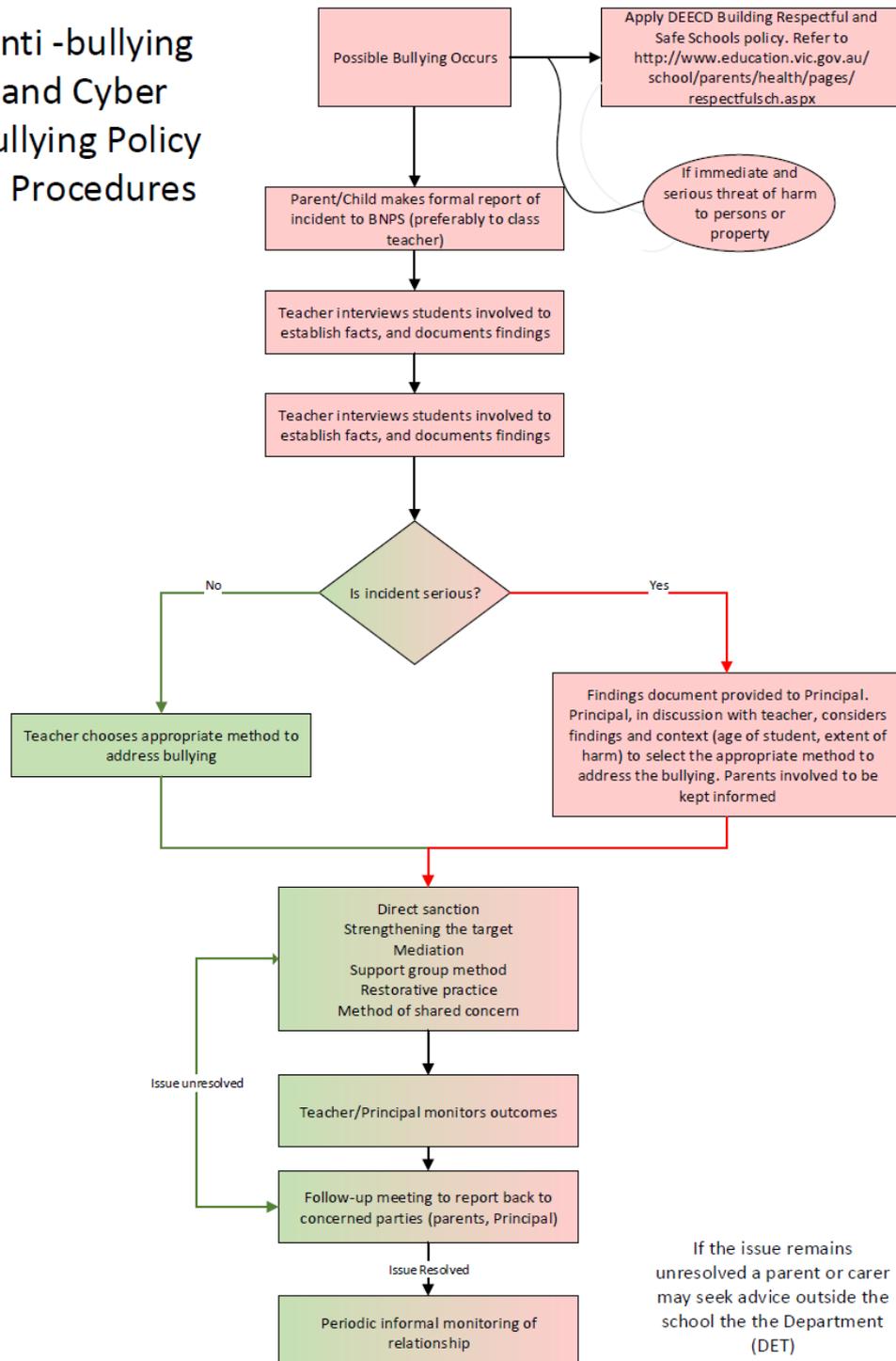
When a bullying incident is reported to the School, the following process will take place:

- Incident of bullying reported to a teacher or Principal
- Staff member will interview alleged perpetrator/s, victim/s and any bystanders to establish facts and will document the findings
- Based on the findings, and factors such as the age of the students involved and the specific circumstances of the incident including frequency and severity, one of the following approaches (outlined in Appendix A) will be selected on a case-by-case basis to address the bullying incident. These approaches are based on the work of Professor Ken Rigby and are endorsed on the Department website: [Click Here](#)
  - Direct Sanctions (also called The Traditional Disciplinary Approach)
  - Strengthening the Target
  - Mediation
  - Support Group Method
  - Restorative Practice
  - The Method of Shared Concern
- This process is summarised in Figure A — Steps to be followed upon formal report of bullying.

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**Figure A: Formal Reporting**

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## APPENDIX A: FORMAL REPORTING – Overview of the Six Methods of Intervention Used

The six methods of intervention are based upon an analysis of the major alternative and supplementary strategies being used to address cases of bullying encountered in schools.

- Each has its own rationale and appropriate areas of application, depending on the nature of the case. This could vary widely, for instance in terms of severity, group involvement and whether there has been any provocation.
- Each has its unique strengths and limitations regarding its use in specific cases.
- It is important to recognise that the methods are NOT alternatives to taking considered proactive steps to prevent bullying from occurring, such as good classroom management, class discussions of bullying, social skills training, promoting positive bystander behaviour, developing peer support. Such steps can reduce the number of cases that occur.

Each method assumes a whole school approach and a well informed understanding of the reasons why each may be used in particular circumstances. The aim of the chosen method of intervention is to:

1. Ensure protection of the victim;
2. Change the behaviour of the bully—both for the sake of other future victims and for the sake of the bully's future; and
3. Deter or dissuade other students from engaging in bullying.

### Descriptions and Potential Applications

#### **Direct Sanctions (The Traditional Discipline Approach)**

This implies the use of direct sanctions as a punishment administered to students who have bullied someone and also as a general deterrent.

*Potential Application - In serious and/or criminal cases, repeated non-compliance*



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## **Strengthening the Target**

This involves systematically helping the victim to deal more effectively with the person or persons who seek to bully him or her.

*Potential Application - In cases of low level (usually verbal) harassment when it is believed the victim can be trained to cope by acquiring more appropriate social and verbal skills.*

## **Mediation**

This is a process in which students in conflict, including bully/victim conflicts, are invited to take part in a session with a mediator, a staff member or peer mediator, to help resolve their differences without any compulsion.

*Potential Application - When students in dispute both want help from a mediator.*

## **Support Group Method**

This is a process in which students who have offended against another attend a meeting together with the victim, at which the offender is required to reflect upon the harm that has been done, experience remorse and act restoratively towards the person or persons offended.

*Potential Application - In cases of bullying in which the perpetrators are prepared to cooperate at a meeting with a practitioner plus other students and assist in putting things right.*

## **Restorative Practice**

This is a non-punitive approach to dealing with offending behaviour that focuses on offenders taking responsibility for their behaviour and taking action to repair the harm they have caused. It does this by bringing about a sense of remorse and restorative action on the part of the offender and forgiveness by the victim. Restorative practice is used as a strategy for maintaining healthy relationships and repairing relationships that have been damaged.

*Potential Application - In cases in where the perpetrator can be induced to become sincerely remorseful and act restoratively.*



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## **The Method of Shared Concern**

This is a non-punitive multi-stage strategy used with groups of students who are suspected of bullying someone. Suspected bullies are first interviewed individually. The practitioner shares a concern for the bullied student and invites each of them to say what they will do to help. When it is clear that helpful actions have taken place, the suspected bullies meet as a group with the practitioner, plan what they propose to do next, and subsequently meet with the victim to finally resolve the problem.

*Potential Application - In cases of bullying by groups where the suspected perpetrators individually agree to help to reduce the distress of the victim and subsequently formulate and execute a plan at a meeting with the 'victim' to resolve the problem.*

## **Possible teacher questioning of bullying incidents may include using the following types of questions:**

- Can you explain what happened?
- How did it happen?
- How did you act in this situation?
- Who do you think has been affected by this?
- How were they affected?
- How were you affected?
- What needs to happen to make things right?
- If the same situation happens again, what could you do differently?

**Kids Helpline | Phone Counselling Service | 1800  
55 1800**

<https://kidshelpline.com.au/>



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**EVALUATION:**

- This policy will be formally reviewed by School Council every three (3) years.

This policy was ratified by School Council on \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / 2015.

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Signed by **Principal**

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Signed by **School Council President**