



# Anti-bullying Plan

## Rationale

At James Meehan High School we aim to foster a safe and caring school which will enhance student learning and self-esteem.

As a school we value respect for others, cooperation and responsibility. Everyone has the right to experience positive relationships based on these qualities. Bullying will not be tolerated at James Meehan High School.

Students attend school to participate in quality education that will help them to become self directed, lifelong learners who can create a positive future for themselves and the wider community.

Any inappropriate behaviour that gets in the way of teaching and learning at the school and interferes with the wellbeing of students cannot be accepted.

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

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## Rights and Responsibilities of School Community Members

MEMBERS	RIGHTS	RESPONSIBILITIES
All students, teachers, parents, wider school community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are safe and supported in the school environment; and</li> <li>• are treated with respect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish positive relationships; and</li> <li>• respect and accept individual differences.</li> </ul>
Administrators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are supported in developing and implementing the school's plan to prevent and effectively manage bullying.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide leadership in resourcing the school's prevention and effective management of bullying;</li> <li>• implement the school plan;</li> <li>• ensure parents are informed of the school plan; and</li> <li>• support staff to implement the school's plan.</li> </ul>
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feel safe and supported in the workplace;</li> <li>• access to curriculum resources suitable for supporting students in building positive relationships, resiliency, safety and bullying prevention;</li> <li>• are informed of the school's plan on bullying;</li> <li>• are treated with respect in the workplace; and</li> <li>• access to professional learning in preventing and effectively managing bullying.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote and model positive relationships;</li> <li>• participate in implementing the school plan to counter bullying;</li> <li>• identify and respond to bullying incidents;</li> <li>• teach students how to treat others with care and respect;</li> <li>• teach students how to respond effectively to bullying;</li> <li>• promote social problem solving with students; and</li> <li>• respect and accept individual differences.</li> </ul>
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to curriculum that supports the building of resiliency;</li> <li>• are informed of the school's plan on bullying; and</li> <li>• if involved, are provided with support to stop bullying.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treat others with care and respect; and</li> <li>• identify and respond effectively to bullying.</li> </ul>
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expect children to be safe and provided with a supportive school environment and treated with respect; and</li> <li>• are provided with access to information on the prevention and response strategies related to bullying.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support and encourage children to treat others with respect and act in accordance with the school plan if they observe bullying;</li> <li>• encourage children to report bullying incidents; and</li> <li>• are aware of school plans and support school in effectively managing bullying.</li> </ul>
Wider community: including other professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic inclusion in prevention and bullying incident management.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide support and input into the school's approach to preventing and managing bullying.</li> </ul>

## Common Understandings about Bullying

### Definition of Bullying

Bullying is when an individual or group misuses power to target another individual or group to intentionally threaten or harm them on more than one occasion. This may involve verbal, physical, relational and psychological forms of bullying.

### Types of Bullying

Bullying takes many forms and can include:

#### Verbal Bullying

The repeated use of words to hurt or humiliate another individual or group. Verbal bullying includes using put-downs, insulting language, name-calling, swearing, nasty notes and homophobic, racist or sexist comments.

#### Psychological Bullying

Includes repeated stalking, threats or implied threats, unwanted email or text messaging, abusive websites, threatening gestures, manipulation, emotional blackmail, and threats to an individual's reputation and sense of safety.

#### Relational (Social) Bullying

Usually involves repeatedly ostracising others by leaving them out or convincing others to exclude or reject another individual or group from their social connections, making up or spreading rumours and sharing or threatening to share another's personal information.

#### Physical Bullying

Includes repetitive low level hitting, kicking, pinching, pushing, tripping, 'ganging up', unwanted physical or sexual touching, and damage to personal property.

#### Cyber Bullying

Involves the use of information and communication technologies such as e-mail, text messages, instant messaging and websites to engage in the bullying of other individuals or groups. This technology provides an alternative means for verbal, relational and psychological forms of bullying.

#### Bystanders to Bullying

Bullying also involves the concept of 'bystanders'. A bystander may be someone who sees bullying or knows about it but he or she is not usually directly involved. Everyone at the school can have a role in supporting those who are being bullied. All members of the whole school community at James Meehan High School need to be aware of their role in supporting those who are being bullied and their responsibility to discourage bullying behaviours when they observe them. Any member of the school community can be a bystander and can act successfully to prevent or stop bullying. Sometimes it is difficult to act at the time of the bullying incident but reporting bullying behaviour is also important. Bystanders are encouraged to report to someone who can help, such as a member of the school staff.

### Results of bullying

The results of bullying can be serious and ongoing for both students who bully and those who are bullied. For the bullied student it may result in stress, lower academic results, truancy, anger, poor self-esteem, sleeplessness, nightmares, depression and even suicide.

For students who bully, their behaviour may lead to a belief that inappropriate and bullying behaviour is acceptable and consequently lead to failure to develop skills of cooperation and conflict resolution. Bullying may result in suspension or exclusion, and may lead to problems with the law.

## Terminology

The terms 'bullies' and 'victims' are not recommended as appropriate terminology to use when identifying, reporting, recording and responding to bullying incidents. More appropriate terms to use may include 'bullied students', 'students who are bullied', 'victimised students', 'students who bully', 'students who engage in bullying behaviour' and 'students who bully others'. This will ensure that the unacceptable behaviours are separated from the students involved. This allows the behaviours to be addressed in a manner that remains respectful of the individuals.

## School Strategies to Prevent and Manage Bullying

### Whole-School Prevention Strategies

- Ensure values education is included in every curriculum
- Promote the value of Choosing Respect across the whole school through staff professional learning and explicit teaching in classes
- Use MindMatters and other curriculum resources to teach empathy, problem solving and positive action across the curriculum, and particularly in PDHPE, Drama, English and Visual Arts
- Use student and staff mentors to support students who are affected by bullying activities
- Implement Peer Support strategies throughout the school
- Encourage positive and co-operative behaviour through school reports and school merit system
- Ensure playground supervision is highly visible, active and responsive to high-risk situations
- Offer a range of organised activities during break times, and provide safe places for students with different needs eg Library
- Encourage referrals to the school counsellor
- Refer issues to the Anti Racism Contact Officers and the Anti Bullying Coordinator
- Explain and discussion this policy with students, parents and staff through professional learning activities, year and whole school assemblies, information bulletins and the community newsletter.

### Targeted Early Intervention Strategies

- Observe students inside and outside the classroom to identify early signs of relationship issues within each year group and across the school
- Proactively teach positive social behaviour to all students through Productive Living Skills curriculum
- Monitor individual classes or cohorts of students
- Year Advisers use roll-call as an opportunity to identify issues within year groups and promote positive relationships between students
- Refer identified students to appropriate support staff and external agencies eg Plan-It Youth, Burnside, PCYC, AEA, counsellors, year advisers, trusted staff
- Set up buddy systems and use targeted programs such as Peer Support
- Collect of relevant data from the welfare database
- Distribute relevant information through Welfare and Learning Support reports

- Professional learning activities for staff on strategies for dealing with bullying and the management of student behaviour
- Use [Bullying. No Way!](#) resources for staff professional learning about bullying issues
- Encourage positive bystander behaviour through the curriculum
- Provide positive activities and safe places for students during breaks
- Promote positive relationships through artworks, posters, and external drama performances
- Identify relevant sites on the internet and make them easily available to students
- Use the Community Newsletter to provide information to parents

Teachers should strive to create a positive classroom environment:

- Attend to how students learn as well as what they learn, build in cooperative tasks, enforce no put-downs rule, promote inclusion and participation
- Develop rapport (smile, greet, talk to individuals as well as groups)
- Don't take it personally when students misbehave
- Know you can engage common sense (be helpful, firm and consistent)
- Practise effective discipline (use classroom rules which protect students' rights to learn)
- Resist labelling your students

### **Intervention for Bullying Students**

- Intervention in response to bullying should be focused on finding solutions which help to restore relationships.
- Staff should identify incidents of bullying and where possible deal with them in a positive and effective manner as soon as they occur.
- Serious or repeated incidents should be reported directly to the Head Teacher, Year Adviser or Deputy Principal. If appropriate, the matter can be referred to the Welfare Team as well.
- Ensure details of incidents are recorded and entered into the school welfare database.
- If appropriate, negative consequences should be issued and enforced.
- Head Teachers, Year Advisers and Deputy Principals will share information and develop strategies to address the needs of students who bully.

Strategies may include:

- Stress management, expressing frustrations, and allowing older students to help younger students to initiate understanding and self evaluation.
- Encourage students to identify their progress through monitoring cards which identify specific improvements in behaviour.
- Contact parents or caregivers to share information and develop a common approach to improving student behaviour.
- Sanctions such as suspension and expulsion may be considered only after other options have been exhausted or where the bullying is of such a serious nature that restorative processes alone are not sufficient.
- Ensure students, parents and caregivers understand Departmental appeal procedures in relation to sanctions which are imposed (included in Suspension Pack).

## **When bullying occurs:**

### **What should staff do?**

Staff should deal immediately with situations of bullying. Consequences should be issued if appropriate and the incident should be recorded through the welfare system.

Try to resolve minor incidents by listening and acknowledging the seriousness of the report. Be aware that mediation is a time consuming process and cannot be rushed or dismissed.

The excuse 'it was only a joke' is not acceptable if the other person has not taken it as a joke, and instead is upset by it.

Serious or repeated incidents should be reported directly to the Head Teacher, Year Adviser or Deputy Principal. If appropriate, the matter can be referred to the Welfare Team as well.

Staff should read Welfare and Learning Support team reports so that they are aware of issues relating to students' well being.

### **What should students do?**

It is right to report incidents of bullying, whether you have been bullied or have witnessed another student being bullied.

If you see someone being bullied

- Stand up for the student being bullied
- Take them away from the situation
- Try to change the subject
- Offer support and understanding
- Refuse to take part
- Ask them how they would like your help and support

If you have been bullied

- Do not retaliate
- Tell the person acting like a bully to stop
- If you can, walk away as soon as they start
- Act unimpressed
- If you can, make a funny comment without being offensive

### **What should parents do?**

Watch for signs that your child is being bullied. Some of the following may indicate bullying:

- wanting to miss school
- a pattern of headaches or stomach aches
- becoming withdrawn
- nightmares
- bruising
- disappearance of property or damaged clothing
- aggression towards others at home

If you think that your child is being bullied inform the year adviser immediately and ask for an interview to discuss the situation. Devise strategies with staff that will help support your child inside and outside the school.

Don't be swayed by your child's pleas not to interfere because of their fear of retaliation. For the student's sake, bullying needs to be addressed. This will be most effective when the school and family work together.

Encourage your child to develop strong, supportive friendships.

If your child is being bullied frequently by different students, seek school advice and counselling. Your child may be able to use strategies that will reduce the likelihood of being bullied.

Please do not advise your child to retaliate physically.

If bullying involves severe physical abuse, you may wish to consider police action.

## **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

James Meehan High School will monitor the effectiveness of the school's Anti-bullying strategies in promoting a safe and secure environment.

The school will gather and analyse all relevant information on the nature and extent of bullying and harassment, including data that highlights patterns and trends. Data to be analysed should include:

- Tracking individual students over time
- Suspension data
- Welfare database records
- Student, staff and parent surveys (MindMatters)

The school will evaluate the extent to which the school's Anti-bullying Plan has been effective in addressing bullying, harassment and victimisation and promoting a safe and secure environment. The effectiveness of the following should be considered:

- Promotion of respectful and positive school culture across the curriculum
- Staff professional learning in minimising, identifying and dealing with bullying
- Reporting and recording of incidents
- Communication between staff and clear understanding of responsibilities
- Individual programs and strategies
- Inclusion of parents in restorative programs

The school's Anti-bullying Plan should be reviewed annually. Following a review, the school will develop and implement a revised Plan if necessary. The Plan must be developed in consultation with all staff, parents, community members and students. The revised Plan must include specific strategies for:

- reporting (by students, parents, caregivers and teachers)
- intervening (by students, parents, caregivers, teachers and other school staff)
- accessing help and support (by students, parents and caregivers)
- communicating Departmental appeal procedures (for students, parents and caregivers)
- professional learning (for teachers and other school staff).



## **Acknowledgements**

NSW Department of Education and Training

<https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/antibullying/>

Kids Helpline

Queensland Department of Education and Training

MindMatters