**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.

Statement of purpose

Students have a right to attend school and participate in a quality education in a safe and supportive learning and teaching environment.

All members of the school community are expected to respect the following rights:

- The rights of all people to be treated with respect and dignity
- The rights of all students to learn
- The rights of teachers to teach
- The rights of all to be safe

At Belmore South Public School, we aim to provide a supportive learning community that promotes student wellbeing. We believe student behaviour is closely linked to the quality of the learning experience including quality teaching and positive student teacher relationships. Successful student behaviour change and management is enhanced through effective student, school, family and community partnerships.

At Belmore South Public School, our purpose is to build an inclusive learning community built on respect, responsibility, guidance and care.

To achieve this we…

- Promote learning together – from, with and beside each other
- Implement meaningful learning activities which ensure success
- Build positive staff, parent, student and community relationships
- Promote inclusiveness for all

- Uphold the school behavioural agreements:
  - Be a learner
  - Be respectful
  - Be safe

We believe in a whole school approach to managing student behaviour that is built on Relative Choice Theory.

Relative Choice Theory is an explanation of how and why people behave. Its basis is the idea that we are all driven by five needs: survival, love, power, fun and freedom. All behaviour is an attempt to satisfy one or more of these basic needs and all conscious behaviours are chosen.

Effective responsible behaviour means learning to control our actions and thoughts in a way that satisfies our needs without depriving someone else of satisfying their needs.

At Belmore South Public School, we aim to create a safe and productive teaching and learning environment, free from bullying of all forms.

Bullying can be defined as intentional, repeated behaviour by an individual or group of individuals that uses distress, hurt or undue pressure. It involves the abuse of power in relationships. Bullying can involve all forms of harassment (including sex, race, disability, homosexuality or transgender), humiliation, domination and intimidation of others. It can occur in contexts of the playground, classroom, cyber space and mobile phones.

Bullying must be taken seriously and is not acceptable in any form. Students have the right to expect that they will spend the school day free from the fear of bullying, harassment and intimidation. Bullying:

- devalues, isolates and frightens
- affects an individual’s ability to achieve
- has long-term effects on those engaging in bullying behaviour, those who are the subjects of bullying behaviour and the onlookers or bystanders.
Bullying:
- is repeated and unjustifiable behaviour;
- is intended to cause fear, distress and/or harm to another;
- may be physical, verbal or indirect/relational;
- is conducted by a more powerful individual or group;
- is against a less powerful individual who is unable to effectively resist;
- is intentional, aggressive act/s, repeated over a period of time.

Cyber bullying:
- is when someone is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another student/s using the Internet, interactive and digital technologies or mobile phones.

Harassment:
- is any unwanted, unwelcome or uninvited behaviour which makes a person feel humiliated or offended;
- can be seen as one form of bullying;
- the terms ‘harassment’ and ‘bullying’ are often used interchangeably.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of bullying:</th>
<th>Direct</th>
<th>Indirect</th>
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| Physical          | • Hitting, slapping, punching  
|                   | • Kicking  
|                   | • Pushing, strangling  
|                   | • Spitting, biting  
|                   | • Pinching, scratching  
|                   | • Throwing things e.g. stones  
| Non-Physical      | • Mean and hurtful name-calling  
|                   | • Hurtful teasing  
|                   | • Demanding money or possessions  
|                   | • Forcing another to do homework or commit offences such as stealing  
|                   | • Enablers- those instigating issues then walking away  
| Non-Verbal        | • Threatening and/or obscene gestures  
|                   | • Spreading nasty rumours  
|                   | • Trying to get other students to not like someone  
|                   | • Deliberate exclusion from a group or activity  
|                   | • Removing and hiding and/or damaging others’ belongings  
|                   | • Non reporting of bullying (physically watching the bullying without reporting)  

The Anti-Bullying Plan – NSW Department of Education and Communities
Rights

- Every person has the right to feel safe. Any person who bullies another is denying them that right. This means we have to think about others (not just ourselves) in the classroom and in the playground. The right to feel safe means we have a responsibility to consider how we speak and act towards others. Bullying takes away a person’s sense of security. The right to safety means that any bullying of any kind is unacceptable.
- Every person has the right to be treated with respect and fairness. This means we show respect to other people and their property, in the class and in the playground. The right to receive respect and fair treatment requires from us the responsibility to show manners and courtesy towards each other.
- Every person has the right to learn. This means we do not adversely affect the learning of another student.

Responsibilities

Students, staff, parents/carers and members of the Belmore South wider community have a shared responsibility to promote positive relationships that respect difference and diversity. At Belmore South Public School, it is everyone’s responsibility to take the necessary steps to stop bullying behaviour. The school will not tolerate any action that undermines a person’s right to feel safe, respected and to learn.

Responsibilities held by staff, students and community include:

Executive Team
- Support, promote, enact, maintain, and review the anti-bullying plan;
- Induct new staff to the anti-bullying plan.

All staff
- Familiarise themselves with the school’s anti-bullying plan and procedures;
- Proactively implement the school’s anti-bullying plan and procedures;
- Reinforce the schools behaviour code;

All students
- Follow the schools behaviour code;
- Report all bullying incidents, grievances or concerns using appropriate channels;
- Refrain from bullying behaviour of any kind or giving support to those bullying;
- Work cooperatively with parents and teachers to reach a resolution to bullying incidents.

Students who are bullied need to communicate the incident to:
- A teacher/staff member of trust, and/or a parent/caregiver giving full details of the event, plus;
- Write a reflection of the event;
- Work cooperatively with teachers and all parties involved to reach a resolution.

Student witnesses to bullying should:
- Report any bullying incidence witnessed to a teacher, staff member and/or parent/caregiver immediately;
- Seek adult assistance;
- Be limited to verbal intervention; and
- Document the incident if requested.

Parents will:
- Report any incidences of harassment or concerns they may have to relevant school personnel;
- Support their children in all aspects of their learning;
- Encourage cooperative behaviour and independence in their children;
- Encourage positive responses to incidents of bullying;
- Discourage retaliation of any kind;
- Support the school's anti-bullying plan; and
Work cooperatively with all school personnel and students to reach a resolution to any incidence/s of bullying.

Parents should:
• Listen sympathetically to reports of bullying;
• Speak to relevant school personnel (not the alleged student/s or family concerned); and
• Work with the school in seeking a resolution.

In the moment the parent witnesses should:
• Be limited to verbal intervention;
• Seek school personnel assistance; and
• Document the incident if requested by school staff.

Prevention
At Belmore South PS we aim to create a positive learning community to prevent bullying by promoting inclusion and belonging. Research shows that children’s sense of belonging at school promotes mental health and wellbeing.

We aim to prevent bullying by implementing a social and emotional skills program across all year levels. It involves learning to recognise and manage emotions, promote caring and concern for others, make responsible decisions, establish and maintain positive relationships, and handle challenging situations effectively.

Students who have social and emotional competencies and skills find it easier to manage themselves, relate to others, resolve conflict, and feel positive about themselves and the world around them.

The social and emotional competencies and skills are implemented through Gemstone Learning Teams and Circle Time. Gemstone Learning Teams (GLTs) provide opportunities to practice group skills of active participation, co-operation, organisation, leadership and to re-inforce social skills in an across stage peer supported environment.

Circle Time is a daily teaching opportunity to increase students’ emotional intelligence, self-esteem and confidence using awareness raising, skills training and goal achievement. We aim to empower students’ by providing them with opportunities to practice self-control, decision making and positive actions.

We aim to create a positive school community through the following:

• belonging and inclusion for all school community members
• a welcoming and family-friendly school environment
• Collaborative involvement of students, staff, family and community
• listening to, respecting and acknowledging students
• using positive behavioural reinforceers such as praise, tokens, stickers, contact with parents, merit certificates and bronze awards and star pins
• providing a stimulating learning atmosphere
• establishing clear expectations for behaviour (shine guide) and learning by continuously explicitly teaching the school behaviour code
• reinforcing school agreements by acknowledging students who demonstrate them
• arranging classroom furniture, resources and materials for optimum access and organisation
• providing leadership opportunities such as; SRC, school/house captains, library, technology, creative arts and sport monitors
• providing special interest break time activities such as library, chess, film club, dance, gardening, debating, sport, choir
• Implementing a social and emotional skills curriculum for all students
• Teaching the core emotional competencies of self awareness, social awareness, self management, relationship skills and responsible decision making
• Inform the parents and community of the school behaviour code and Anti-Bullying Plan at Meet the Teacher Night, Kindergarten Orientation and enrolment meetings setting school expectations.
• Having Anti-Bullying Plan and school behavior code available on school website
• Promote and implement anti-bullying and proactive positive behaviour lessons through circle time and GLTs
• Identify students at risk at stage, whole school and executive and learning support meetings and discuss the issues, concerns and management of the behaviours
• Provide training to all staff in the school behaviour code and anti-bullying plan.
• Induct all new staff to the school behaviour code and anti-bullying plan.
• Provide Lunch Club for students to access in a safe and closely monitored environment to support vulnerable students
• Engage Kindergarten and Stage 3 in the Buddies program to assist the transition from home/pre-school/day care to Primary School.
• Engage Year 6 in a transition program to high school supported by the local high schools and engage all stages in a transition program
• Explicitly teach all relevant PDHPE units to all students as well as external Anti bullying workshops
• Provide a consistent approach to tracking bullying behaviours and a consistent language of behaviour expectations (shine guide) across staff, students and community (BSPS Playground and Classroom tracking sheets).
• Engage Stage 2 and Stage 3 students in discussions led by the local police school liaison officer in cyber-bullying at the commencement of each year.
• Collaboratively construct technology agreements with Stage 2 and Stage 3 to sign at the commencement of each year, explicitly identifying behaviours using technology that are acceptable and not acceptable by users of technology.
• Provide parenting workshops to the community targeting cyber-bullying, positive parenting, bullying prevention and strategies to support their child when bullying behaviours are experienced as well as links to these on the school website.

**Early Intervention**

Students identified as being at risk of developing long-term difficulties with social relationships are targeted through stage meetings and learning support team meetings. These students are encouraged to participate in the many school programs offered during recess and lunch to engage students in positive activities to develop the social skills required to engage in the school community independently.

Students identified as previously experiencing bullying or engaging in bullying behaviour will be monitored by school staff and engage in regular debriefing sessions with the school executive team or school counsellor.

Social stories, visual reinforcers and monitoring sheets are created for students with ongoing classroom and playground social issues to assist them in engaging appropriately with their peers. These resources are created by the class teacher, the student, the stage supervisor and the parent/caregiver for frequent reference.

Debriefing sessions are used by the executive team to speak with students reported or observed to have bullying behaviours or experiencing bullying behaviour. The debriefing sessions include the student observed with bullying behaviours, the student experiencing the bullying behaviours and the witnesses to the bullying behaviours. These debriefing sessions are negotiated with the students involved and occur across a timeframe until the issue is resolved.

The school behaviour code has a strong emphasis on developing respect for all students. This is explicitly taught through the social skills programs of GLTs and Circle Time and the Shine Guide.

Parents of the identified students are invited to discuss with the school executive team or school counsellor to identify the issues and the management strategies implemented by the school.

**Response**

**Working with Students**
All reports of bullying behaviour are recorded by the teacher on the school playground and classroom tracking sheet and forwarded to the principal. The principal and stage supervisors are responsive to all reports within a day of being informed. The principal and stage supervisor debriefs with all students involved and determines the action that will be taken by implementing the school’s Student Welfare and Discipline policy and Anti-Bullying plan. If the bullying incident is a major offence, the student is referred to the planning room. If a minor bullying incident by the same student is recorded three times, the student is also referred to the planning room. Parents are informed of the actions taken by the school in written or verbal communication from the principal or stage supervisor. Parents are encouraged to discuss the actions with the principal or stage supervisor.

The planning room is a social and emotional learning environment set up during recess led by two teacher. Students progress through a behaviour training program specific to their needs. Students work collaboratively with the teachers to create a behavior goal and develop strategies to achieve this. Once they display success in achieving their goal, they are given an exit pass and allowed back onto the playground. All incidents and management strategies are reported by the principal and stage supervisor at the weekly executive meetings and shared with the whole staff weekly. All staff are empowered with strategies to assist these students in the classroom or playground.

The school’s Student Welfare and Discipline policy outlines in detail the discipline level system and the descriptors for each level. These consequences are consistent across the school and clearly reported to staff, students and parents.

In the event that an incident has a racist tone the incident is also referred to the school Anti-Racism Contact Officer (ARCO) by the stage supervisor. Policy is followed to reach a resolution for the students involved.

**Working staff or community**

Concerning reports from staff or community members are reported directly to the Principal or the school delegate. The Principal or school delegate investigates the concern through discussions with the staff or community member and the identified students. The Student Welfare and Discipline policy aligned with the Anti-Bullying plan are implemented to reach a resolution to the issues raised.

Ongoing debriefing sessions with the stage supervisor or school counsellor are provided to students who require further support. These students are also targeted by stage supervisors to engage in school programs during recess, lunch and fitness to develop self-esteem, resilience and social skills to interact with their peers.

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If the bullying behaviour involves possible criminal conduct of any kind (assaults, threats, intimidation or harassment), the principal or school delegate will contact the police. If a staff member is implicated, EPAC is also to be contacted with advice to the school education director, regional director, institute director or other relevant state office director. Parents and students can contact police at any time by calling 000.

Advice is available from Legal Services directorate, on (02) 9561 8538, if in doubt about whether the alleged behaviour may be a crime.

In the event where a child is at risk of serious harm the Principal or school delegate will contact the Child Wellbeing Unit or Community Services where appropriate, as per the Department of Education and Communities guidelines in mandatory reporting under the Keep them Safe policy.

The NSW Department of Education and Communities (DEC) and Belmore South PS seeks to resolve difficulties, grievances and complaints in a prompt, impartial and just manner.

The DEC Complaints Handling Policy identifies a structured process for dealing with complaints. Complaints are assessed by the Principal and the appropriate course of action is decided. The complaint is managed by the Principal providing support and monitoring the well-being of all involved. An informal resolution to the complaint can be established for minor complaints. A more formal process is undertaken for serious complaints including:

- Remedy and Systems Improvement Procedure
- Negotiation Procedure
- Investigation Procedure

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The Anti-Bullying Plan – NSW Department of Education and Communities
**Monitoring**

Class teachers and stage supervises monitor behaviour interventions through stage meetings, playground and classroom tracking sheets, reflection sheets and letters to parents. Students referred to the stage supervisor frequently and demonstrate a pattern of behaviour is identified with the executive and the learning support team. Parents are informed of the behaviour concerns and collegially the school and home implement strategies to assist the student in modifying the behaviour.

**Informing**

The school will publish the Anti-Bullying plan on the school website. It will be closely linked with the School Behaviour Code. The Anti-Bullying Plan will be discussed on Meet the Teacher night and Kindergarten Orientation events. Staff will have access to the Anti-Bullying Plan on the school server.

*The school will report to parents about the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Plan through the Annual School Report. The school will also engage the community in regular updates through the school weekly newsletter and website.*

The plan will be evaluated at the end of 2016 with a parent forum and staff and student surveys to measure the impact the plan has had on bullying behaviours evident in the school and community. A review of the plan will be completed in 2016 using the information acquired from the forum and surveys.

*This cycle will continue with the plan reviewed every three years.*
Additional Information

- DEC Intranet – Anti-bullying
- Bullying: Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying in Schools Policy
- Parent information DEC handout
- Safe Schools – The national safe schools framework
- Cyber-bullying – Advice for parents DEC handout
- Anti-bullying – How to encourage your child to be an effective bystander DEC parent handout
- Promoting positive bystander behaviour – DEC program
- Cybersmart school gateway
- Cyber-bullying – Information for staff in schools
- Cyber-bullying presentation for staff in schools
- Peer Mediation
- Peer Mediation – resource for parents
- Anti-bullying and related websites
- Digital citizenship – information for teachers, students and parents
- Kids Help Line 1800 55 1800
- Bullying among young children – A guide for parents
  http://www.ag.gov.au/agd/WWW/rwpattach.nsf/VAP/(1E76C1D5D1A37992F0B0C1C4DB87942E)~Bullying+Parents.pdf/$file/Bullying+Parents.pdf
- Flemington Local Area Command 9646 8699
- DEC Complaints handling policy
- DEC Complaint Handling Policy Guidelines
- Legal Issues Bulletin No. 27

The Anti-Bullying Plan – NSW Department of Education and Communities
Principal's comment

Karen Mortimer, Relieving Principal
Pina Fanggidae, Relieving Assistant Principal
Faye Papadis, Teacher, PDHPE Coordinator

School contact information

Belmore South Public School
Cnr Canterbury Rd and Nelson Ave
Belmore South, NSW 2192
Ph: 9759 4388
Fax: 9740 4323
Email: belmoresth-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au
Web: www.belmoresth-p.schools.nsw.edu.au