HORNSBY NORTH PUBLIC SCHOOL

SCHOOL POLICY

ON

ADDRESSING BULLYING

May 2004
Revised October 2010
The Schools Position

At Hornsby North Public School all students have the right to learn in a happy and safe environment.

All staff, students and members of the broader school community have the right to work, play and interact within a safe and harmonious environment free from all forms of bullying and harassment.

We have the responsibility to say No!

What is Bullying?

Bullying is the intentional harming or hurting of any person or their belongings by another person/s. Bullying can be physical, verbal, psychological/ emotional, or social and can include the use of technology.

Two features can distinguish bullying

1. How the targeted person feels
2. An imbalance of power between 2 or more people.

Some examples of bullying:

Exclusion
• Leaving others out because someone says they don’t like them
• Telling others to go away

Verbal Harassment
• Name calling and family put downs
• Offensive language
• Teasing others about their appearance, race or religious beliefs

Physical Harassment
• Punching
• ‘Ganging up’ on a person/people
• Pushing/shoving/kicking/biting
• Fighting

Threats and Teasing
• Forcing others with threats
• Standover tactics
• Hiding people’s belongings
Sexual Harassment
- Teasing others about their body
- Calling people rude or sexual names

Visual Harassment
- Graffiti, notes or rude pictures
- Rude hand signs, facial expressions

Racial Harassment
- Standover tactics
- Humiliating people
- Jokes/name calling

Cyber Bullying
- The use the Internet, mobile phones or other technology to intentionally hurt another person or group of people, including;
  - **Flaming**: a hostile and insulting interaction between Internet users
  - **Harassing and threatening**: Text wars
  - **Denigration**: Sending nasty SMS, Blogging negative things
  - **Impersonation**: Using another person’s screen name or password
  - **Outing or trickery**: Sharing private personal information with others
  - **Happy Slapping**: Posting “set-up” images

**Bullying and the Law**

Under the NSW Crimes Act it is a criminal offence for any person to harass or intimidate a school student while the student is at school. This offence can be applied to traditional off-line bullying.

Further, as cyber-bullying can occur exclusively outside the school yard, the Commonwealth Criminal Code sets out an offence of using a carriage service, such as a mobile phone service or the internet, in a way that is menacing, harassing or offensive.

The maximum penalty for committing the offence is 3 years imprisonment. Any threat made may lead to a maximum of 7 years imprisonment.

**Departmental Requirements**

The support document *Student Welfare, Good Discipline and Effective Learning*, states that schools must incorporate responses to bullying in their discipline policies.
At Hornsby North we aim to:

- Encourage, respect, care and support others
- Raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour
- Provide a climate which encourages disclosure of bullying incidents
- Ensure adequate supervision and monitoring measures are in place
- Develop and implement procedures for dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour
- Provide preventative programs, which teach about positive relationships, personal safety, conflict resolution as well as bystander and parent education
- Demonstrate good practice when interacting with others and working with technology. Department policy states that parents should share responsibility for shaping their children’s understanding about acceptable behaviour. As such we aim to encourage parents to also demonstrate good practice when interacting with staff, students and other community members physically, verbally or electronically
- Ensure clarity among school community about the definition of and procedures for dealing with all forms of bullying and harassment
- Knowledge, understanding and safe use of technology including Internet privacy, protection and the NSW Department of Education and Training’s Internet and Email Services: Acceptable Usage for Schools policy.

**Procedures**

Immediate intervention by teachers has proven to be the most effective deterrent to ongoing harassment. An issue that might seem insignificant to a teacher may be highly significant to the student. Students should be counselled by the teacher and disciplined according to the school’s Discipline Policy.

Research indicates that schools with less supportive attitudes have a higher incidence of bullying. Also, refraining from intervening implies a silent condoning of bullying (Olweus, 1993).

**The Playground Record**

- To provide ongoing record with the purpose of tracking down the sources of bullying, to inform staff members, particularly the Executive.
- All playground incidents to be recorded, no matter how trivial.
- Record action taken, e.g. sat down, walked around with teacher, etc.
- Form located in playground duty bag and sent to relevant AP.
- In event of incidents requiring referral, complete the appropriate form on return to classroom and send to the AP responsible.
Referral Form

- To be used by teachers to record instances of unacceptable behaviour, especially bullying and harassment.
- Teachers are to ensure that incidents are recorded using exact language.
- Action is to be taken, then recorded.
- The Referral Form is to be sent to the appropriate AP for further action (if required) and entry into the School’s Student Welfare file.
- The Referral Form can be copied and sent to the Welfare personnel if needed (e.g. Counsellor, Anti-Racism or Anti-Discrimination Contact Officers).
- Contact is to be made with parents after 3 referrals.

Parents and/or Police may be contacted after any reported incident of bullying or harassment due to its nature and severity.

Police may be contacted if the situation involves an adult from the broader school community and Department procedures will be followed if the incident involves a teacher from the school.

Responsibilities

If bullying or harassment occurs, students, staff and the broader school community have the responsibility to say “No!” Beyond that all stakeholders have the following responsibilities:

- **STUDENTS**
  - Students have the responsibility to treat others with respect and follow school policies and procedures
  - Students have the responsibility to seek help from a teacher, even if they are only a witness to the bullying

- **STAFF**
  - Staff have the responsibility to treat others with respect and follow school policies, procedures and governing laws
  - Staff have the responsibility to continue their professional development in relation to the issues surrounding bullying and harassment and the strategies used to prevent and manage such issues
  - Staff have the responsibility to respond appropriately and use the referral form as a record of intervention
  - Staff have the responsibility to follow-up any reported incident and ensure that appropriate measures have been taken
  - Staff have the right to ask for assistance from the executive team
COMMUNITY MEMBERS
- School community members have the responsibility to treat others with respect and follow school policies, procedures and governing laws
- School community members are encouraged to watch for signs of their child being bullied off-line and online and meet with school staff to ask for assistance if needed in dealing with the situation
- School community members are encouraged to support the school in the handling of these incidents

At regular intervals every student receives the school pamphlet “Be A Great Mate – A Guide to Dealing With Bullying” and teachers continually reinforce school policy and procedures within their programs and practice.

Evaluation Strategy

This policy is monitored over a 12 month period, at the end of which it is evaluated using two sets of data:

- The qualitative data from contact officer/s and a random selection of participants from the interview process; relevant personnel re relationship to discipline Policy.
- The quantitative data from surveys and documentation regarding the monitoring of action plans and discipline actions.

Upon analysis of collected data, the policy is reviewed and appropriate changes made and communicated to all staff.

Resources

Departmental

A range of resources are available to assist schools. They include:

- The support document Student Welfare, Good Discipline and Effective Discipline – 1996
- Strategies for Safer Schools
- Resources for Teaching against Violence
- Procedures for Resolving Complaints and Discrimination Against Students
- Girls and Boys at School: Gender Equity Strategy 1996-2001
- The Aboriginal Education Policy
Other available resources

- Be a Great Mate – A Guide to Dealing With Bullying (HNPS student pamphlet)
- *Bullying in Schools: What to do about it* Ken Rigby 1996 ACER (Victoria)
- *No Fear Kit B Secondary* Addressing Gender Based Violence DEET 1995 DEET
- *No Fear Kit-Primary* Addressing Gender Based Violence DEET 1995 DEET
- *Working Towards Peace* Managing anger, resolving conflict and preventing violence *Lions-Quest* (Secondary program)
- *Working It Out – Tools for Everyday Peacemakers* *Lions-Quest* (Primary program)
- *Bullying – No Way* Queensland Department of Education 1998 (Primary and Secondary program)