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 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.

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.

Conflict or fights between equals or single incidents are not defined as bullying.
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**

At Bexhill Public School we sought the opinions of our school community in relation to bullying and ways to be pro-active in preventing bullying. Students, teachers and a cross-section of parents were surveyed. Feedback was used to review and strengthen our current Anti-Bullying Policy. The Anti-Bullying Plan will be adopted and implemented by our whole school community. We will evaluate the effectiveness of our Plan through data analyses. The plan will be reviewed every second year as part of our cyclical evaluations within the Annual School Report process.

**Protection**

At Bexhill Public School we believe that everyone has the right to feel valued and safe, and that school must be a place where individual differences are appreciated, understood and accepted. Every student has the right to enjoy his or her time at school. Our school community promotes respect for self & others. There is no acceptable reason for bullying in our school.

The school has a four-point approach to anti-bullying:

- Primary Prevention
- Early Intervention
- Intervention
- Post Intervention

**Primary Intervention**

- Professional development for staff related to bullying and the strategies to counteract it.
- Community awareness and input relating to anti-bullying, its characteristics and the schools' programs and response. (e.g. weekly newsletter, parent forums)
- Provide learning experiences through our social skills program ‘You Can Do It!’ (YCDI), including Personal Development and Health units of work as outlined in our school scope and sequence. Resilience, confidence, organization, persistence and getting along with others (YCDI key learning skills), child protection, Interrelate programs and conflict resolution.
- Provide elective and structured activities at some recess and lunch breaks (e.g., dance, SRC activities, sports equipment)
- Staff supervision of set area in playground.
- Ensure students know and understand what behaviour is acceptable in the school. (i.e. consistent classroom/school rules displayed in the school)
- Open communication between staff, students and parents to help solve problems which arise regarding bully and the victim.

**Early Intervention**

- Students are to be encouraged to report bullying incidents involving themselves or others.
- Teachers to regularly remind students to report incidents. Reporting is not dobbing.
- Parents are encouraged to contact the school if they become aware of a problem.
- Students are recognised for positive behaviours at assemblies and in newsletters.
- Teachers to notify Principal through the ‘Bullying Notification’ Form if an incident of alleged bullying occurs which they are aware of.
Intervention

- Once identified, the bully, victim and witnesses are spoken with. All incidents or allegations of bullying will be fully investigated in line with our Student Wellbeing policy processes.
- Consideration as to why the bullying occurred will be investigated. (e.g. The bigger picture or contributing factors)
- Both bully and victim will be supported and monitored (social skills program; outside school resources through counselling may be utilised if deemed necessary)
- Parents will be contacted and asked to be part of the support and intervention plan.
- The incident/s will be taken to the Learning Support Team meeting for discussion and consideration.
- Recommendations from the LST will be implemented.

Students are encouraged to –

- Use the ‘De-Bug 5 Step System’ which all students and staff are familiar with. Decide to ignore
  - Exit or move away
  - Be friendly; use friendly words
  - Use firm words
  - Get adult help
- Seek help. Talk about the experience to someone who is trustworthy (teacher, school counsellor, parent, peer).
- Report the bullying to a member of staff and feel confident that any incident will be resolved satisfactorily.

Other ‘self-protective’ strategies that might be suggested include:

- Staying away from the bully, or places where bullying occurs.
- Be with friendly, supportive friends.

ADVICE TO BE GIVEN TO STUDENTS WHO KNOW SOMEONE ELSE IS BEING BULLIED

- The important role ‘Bystander’ behaviour plays is discussed regularly in class discussions.
- If possible, intervene by telling the bully to stop. This is very useful if the onlooking student has influence with the bully.
- Refuse to join in with the bullying.
- Support students who are being bullied – just standing by them can be enough.
- Tell an adult if you are concerned about the bullying.
- It is every student’s right and responsibility to report bullying whether it happens to oneself or to someone else.

THE ROLE OF PARENTS

The following suggestions are made to parents through print materials and at Parent Information meetings.

Take an active interest

- in your child’s social life
- in what is happening at school

Encourage your child

- to bring friends home
- to accept and tolerate differences in others

Build your child’s self-confidence

- by recognising and affirming his/her positive qualities
- by valuing him/her for who he/she is

Discuss with your child

- the school’s expectations about behaviour
- ways to respond if his or her rights are infringed

Bexhill Public School - Anti-Bullying Plan as reviewed and updated - 2012
Encourage constructive responses
- physical bullying or persistent teasing should be reported
- hitting back or retaliating with name-calling won’t solve the problem

Set an example
- be firm, but not aggressive in setting behaviour limits
- be positive in things you say and do

Be alert for signs of distress
- unwillingness to attend school
- dropping off in academic performance
- damaged clothing and frequent loss of personal property
- loss of confidence and uncharacteristic mood changes
- withdrawal from social activities.

ACT
- If your child is being bullied at school, report it to a teacher, or the Principal. Your report will be followed up.

Prevention
Through our School Wellbeing Policy and Procedures and our social skills program ‘You Can Do It’, we are constantly focusing on the keys to success. These keys are modelled at morning assemblies and then explicitly taught during the week by teachers. Our YCDI lessons are a way of developing a culture of mutual respect and responsibility within the school.

An ‘Anti-Bullying’ unit is taught as part of our Personal Development/Health scope and sequence. Socially acceptable ways of behaving are also taught, discussed and role-played. ‘Bystander’ behaviour is explained and the power of ‘speaking up’ is reinforced.

RESPONSE
Identifying Patterns & Responding
Incidents of anti-social behaviour are recorded on our daily Playground and Classroom Monitoring books, and analysed during our weekly executive meeting ensuring early identification of anti-social patterns of behaviour.

Once a bully has been identified the following process is followed:

1. Bully is told that he/she has been identified as a bully and why.
2. Bully is told that bullying is unacceptable and that he/she will be monitored for the next 2 weeks. If any further incidents of bullying occur in that time he/she may be suspended.
3. Bully’s family is contacted, informed of situation, the steps we are taking to support their child and asked to support us.
4. Victim’s family is contacted, informed of situation, the steps we are taking to support their child and asked to support us.
5. The bully and the victim will be referred to the learning support team and school counsellor and supported through social skills development and counselling, if necessary. The situation is monitored.
6. Bully and victim are monitored and supported for 4 weeks.
7. After 3 weeks the situation is reviewed and action revised.
**CYBERBULLYING**

What is cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is an extension of the ‘traditional’ type of bullying. The key difference being that the ‘weapon’ used to bully involves technology such as websites, text messages, social networking sites and emails to embarrass, demean, harass, intimidate, or threaten other people.

Cyberbullying can range from situations such as arguments between friends that get out of control, to groups of young people deliberately targeting other young people, or masquerading as them or as fake friends.

How do we treat cyberbullying at Bexhill Public School?

Social media problems can be greatly lessened when the school and parents work together. Generally primary age students are not mature enough to cope with social media without guidance and regular monitoring.

Parents are made aware that it is illegal to have a ‘Facebook’ account under the age of thirteen. Our parents are strongly encouraged to monitor their children’s social media usage, e.g. SMS and email usage in order to promote being cybersmart and prevent cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying is treated in the same manner as any other form of bullying at Bexhill Public School when there is a direct link between the school and the offender. This relationship can be linked because the students attend the school. Action taken by the school includes:

* The offender / offenders will be treated in the same way as for other bullying interventions (see Response)
* Their parents are contacted and informed of the incident.
* Their school computer privileges are suspended for a period of time
* When the offense warrants it, the police liaison officer becomes involved.
* If the offense warrants it, school suspension may be issued.

**Code of Behaviour for preventing cyberbullying include:**

- Never post pictures or videos of someone without their permission.
- It is illegal to have a ‘Facebook’ account under the age of thirteen.
- Never communicate anything bad or negative about someone using the internet or mobile phone.
- If you discover others sharing nasty comments about someone online then keep a copy and show it to an adult or teacher to stop the bullying.
- Never join in.
- Be cybersmart.

Attached to this policy are tips for the students of Bexhill Public School to stay safe and cybersmart. These tips have been attained from They include information about:

- cyberbullying
- unwanted contact
- inappropriate content
- playing online
- your digital footprint—take care what you share
- staying legal
- netiquette
- online friends
- TH.I.N.K. strategy
- mobile phones

Resourced from: Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) Cybersmart http://cybersmart.gov.au/
Tips to stay safe and cybersmart

There are lots of different things you can do online. While most of the time it’s all great fun, sometimes things don’t go as well as you hoped and you don’t know why or what to do about it. This section has some really helpful tips to help you be cybersmart.

They include information about:

- cyberbullying
- unwanted contact
- inappropriate content
- playing online
- your digital footprint—take care what you share
- staying legal
- netiquette
- online friends
- TH.I.N.K. strategy

Cyberbullying

The same rules apply online as in the ‘real world’ about how to treat other people. Unfortunately, people don’t always treat each other well online, and you, or a friend, may find that you are the target of cyberbullying. You might be teased or have rumours spread about you online, receive nasty messages or even threats. It can happen in school, or out of it, any hour of the day, from people you know, and sometimes people you don’t know. It can leave you feeling unsafe and alone.

No-one has the right to bully another person. At its most serious, cyberbullying is illegal and can be investigated by the police.

Tips

If you are being cyberbullied

- **Ignore it.** Don’t respond to the bully. If they don’t get a response they may get bored and go away.
- **Block** the person. This will stop you seeing messages or texts from a particular person.
- **Tell someone.** Tell your mum or dad, or another adult you trust. Or you can call Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800, visit their website or contact the Cybersmart Online Helpline service.
- **Keep the evidence.** This can be useful in tracking the bully down. Save texts, emails, online conversations or voicemails as proof.
- **Report it to:**
  - your school
  - your ISP and/or phone provider or the website administrator—there are actions they can take to help.
  - the police—if there is a threat to your safety the police will help. Call Triple Zero (000) or Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.

If a friend is being cyberbullied

It can be hard to know if your friends are being cyberbullied. They might keep it to themselves. If they are being cyberbullied, you might notice that they may not chat with you online as much, suddenly receive lots of SMS messages or are unhappy after they have been on the computer or checked their phone messages. They may stop hanging around with friends or have lost interest in school or social activities.

Help stop cyberbullying

- **Stand up and speak out!** If you see or know about cyberbullying happening to a friend, **support them and report the bullying**. You’d want them to do the same for you.
• **Don’t forward** on messages or pictures that may hurt or be upsetting to someone. Even though you may not have started it, you will be seen to be part of the cyberbullying cycle.

• **Remember to treat others as you would like to be treated** when communicating online.

**Unwanted contact**

Sometimes you can meet someone or see something online that is unpleasant or makes you feel uncomfortable. This could be communication from someone you met online who starts asking personal questions or sends you photos or material that are upsetting or that you don’t like. It can sometimes be from someone you know.

What should you do?

**Tips**

- **Tell someone.** Tell your mum, dad, an older brother or sister, or another adult you trust.
- **Don’t respond** to messages and leave the site or chat session immediately.
- **Block** the contact using your ‘ignore’ list or with filtering software.
- **Keep the evidence.** This can be useful in tracking the person posting unsuitable material or asking you questions.
- **Report it.** Ask your parents to contact your ISP and/or phone provider or the website administrator, as there are actions they can take to help. You can also report it to the police if there is a threat to your safety.
- **Set your profile to ‘private’** so your personal details are kept secret and it’s harder for people you don’t know to contact you.
- **Don’t open messages** from people you don’t know. They could be nasty, contain viruses or be trying to sell you something.
- Remember, if you want to **talk about a problem** with unwanted contact, call Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800, visit their [website](http://www.kidshalpline.com) or contact the Cybersmart Online Helpline service.

**Offensive or illegal content**

When you’re surfing the web you may come across websites, photos, text or other material that makes you feel uncomfortable or upset. There are some easy ways to handle these situations.

**Tips**

- **Tell your parents** or another trusted adult if you come across material that upsets you. Or call Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800.
- **Know how to ‘escape’** from a website if an internet search takes you to an unpleasant or nasty website. Hit `control-alt-delete` if the site will not allow you to exit.
- If a website looks suspicious or has a warning page for people under 18 years, **leave immediately. Some sites are not meant for kids.**
- **Check** with your parents that your search engine is set to block material that is meant for adults.
- Ask your parents to **install internet filter software** to block bad sites.
- Ask your parents to help you **find safe and fun sites** to use and bookmark for later.

**Playing online games**

Playing games online and using consoles or games on a computer can be great fun, but you need to be careful about how much you play and who you play with. Sometimes, if you are using a console, you can play games online with other people instead of going into game sites. It is important that if you chat with other gamers you protect your privacy and don’t share personal or private information. If you are unsure whether a game is suitable, ask your parents or a trusted adult to check its classification and reviews for you.

**Tips**

- If another player is behaving badly or making you uncomfortable, **block them** from your players list. You may also be able to report them to the game site operator.
• Limit your game play time so you can still do other things like homework, jobs around the house and hanging out with your friends.

• Keep personal details private.

• Remember to make time offline for your friends, your favourite sports and other activities.

Your digital footprint

It’s great to share things online with your friends. Part of the fun of sharing videos, images and other content, is that lots of people can view and respond. Remember that what you share with your friends may also be viewed by others who you don’t know. They may also be able to look at it for years to come. Everything you post adds up to make your digital footprint and, once it’s online, it could be there forever. So think before you post.

Tips

• Keep your personal details private. Use an appropriate nickname instead of your real name. Ask your parents before giving anyone on the internet your name, address, phone number or any other personal details.

• Don’t share your username or password with anyone.

• Think before you hit send or post. Once posted, it can be difficult to remove content.

• Don’t post anything you don’t want others to know or find out about—or that you wouldn’t say to them face to face.

• Remember that private images and videos you send to friends or post on a social networking site may be passed on to others and uploaded to public sites.

• Be respectful of other people’s content that you post or share. For example, a photo that your friend took is their property, not yours. You should post it online only if you have their permission and make a note about where you got it from.

Staying legal

The internet is a great place for sharing stuff, but you need to remember that you are responsible for what you share online. And that means there can be a very serious side to all the fun.

Tips

• Respect other people’s content. If you want to post content or images that aren’t yours, ask first. Check with your mum or dad before you pass on content that you find online to other people.

• Read the terms and conditions of any photo-sharing sites or other sites on which you can post information. Ask your mum or dad to run through the details so you’re clear about what’s expected of you as a user.

• Check any age limits on a website. If you’re not the right age, find another site to visit.

• Think before you hit send or post. Once posted, it can be online forever. Don’t post anything you don’t want others to know—or that you wouldn’t say to them face to face.

Netiquette

Sometimes it’s easy to forget that the other person you are chatting to on IM, playing a game with, or posting to their profile is a real person. It’s easier to say and do things online that you might not do in ‘real life’. This may hurt that person’s feelings or make them feel unsafe or embarrassed. It’s important to be kind and polite to others online—and to stop and think about how your behaviour will affect them.

Tips

• Treat other people the way you would like to be treated. Avoid using bad language and don’t say things to someone to make them feel bad.

• Learn about the ‘netiquette’ of being online. What’s considered okay to do and say and what isn’t? For example, if you type a message to someone in UPPER CASE they may think you are shouting at them.
• If someone says something rude or something that makes you feel uncomfortable, **don't respond**. Leave the chat room or forum straight away.

• **Tell your parents** or another adult you trust if you read upsetting language, or see nasty pictures or something scary.

**Online friends**

Chatting to friends using IM, in chat rooms and on social networking sites can be great ways to keep up to date. Meeting new friends online is also pretty fun, and you can meet people online that like the same movies or sports as you.

But while there are lots of good points about keeping in touch with online friends, there are also some risks with meeting people online—especially if you don’t know them in real life.

To help stay safe while you chat, remember some simple tips:

**Tips**

• **Be careful who you trust online.** A person can pretend to be someone they are not.

• **Choose your friends.** While it’s good to have a lot of friends, having too many makes it harder to keep an eye on who sees the stuff you post online. Don’t accept friend requests if you’re not sure about the person.

• **Keep your personal details private.** Use a nickname instead of your real name if you are in a site or game where there may be lots of people you don’t know. Ask your parents before giving anyone on the internet your name, address, phone number or any other personal details.

• **Set your profile to private,** or ask your parents to help you do this.

• **Always keep your password secret.** Don’t even share it with your friends.

• If you want to arrange to meet someone you’ve met online, **check with a parent first** and ask them to go with you. Always meet in a public place, preferably during the day.

• If someone writes something rude, scary or something you don’t like, **tell your parents** or another adult you trust.

**Kindergarten and Stage One**

Here’s a way to remember how to be cybersmart. THINK will help you to stop and think before you act.

![THINK](image)

**T**ell your Mum or Dad if you see something online that upsets you, or if someone makes you feel unhappy. You can also talk to a trusted adult like a teacher: they can help.

**H**ide your password. Only ever share it with your parents – never with your friends. Someone else could go online pretending to be you and do something that could get you into trouble.

**I**nteresting websites can be fun. Check with Mum or Dad if a site is okay to use before you visit. Sometimes they can set up a good list of sites just for you.

**N**ice to people you talk to on the internet or phone. Name calling or being mean is not cool. Look out for yourself and for others.

**K**eep your special personal information safe. Never give your real name, address or phone number to anyone you don’t know in the real world. Use a nickname in chat rooms or when you play games on the computer.
Mobile Phones

Mobile phones are great for keeping in touch with friends and family. But there are some things you should keep in mind.

For example, if you download ‘free’ ring tones or other offers that are sent to you by SMS, you may find yourself with a very high phone bill. Cyberbullying, people making inappropriate contact, or coming across websites and other materials that you didn’t want to see can be problems as well.

Your privacy is also important. In the same way you protect your privacy online it’s important that you don’t share private/ personal details or photos using your mobile phone. It’s easy to forward SMS messages and photos but you never know where they might end up.

Tips

- Only give out your mobile number to people you know and trust. Respect your friends’ privacy by not giving away their details without permission.
- Don’t tell anyone your personal details such as your name, address or school.
- Always check with your parents before sending private information to anyone using your mobile phone.
- Think before you send. The person who you send information, pictures or videos to may not be the only one who will see them—so if you don’t want them to go public, don’t send them.
- Don’t accept offers that sound too good to be true. They probably are, and you or your parents could end up with unexpectedly high phone bills. Check with your parents before accepting any offers.
- If your phone is lost or is stolen, ask your parents to notify your network carrier and the police immediately. If you can, tell them your IMEI number (generally found inside the battery compartment of your phone —your parents can help with this) and any other identifying features of the phone. The telephone carrier can use this number to block your phone from all networks in Australia once you report the phone lost or stolen, making it useless to any thief. More information is at: www.amta.org.au
- If you use Bluetooth, ask your parents to help you change the settings so that the phone is not ‘discoverable’. This means that it can’t be found or discovered by other Bluetooth-enabled devices searching for another one. Keeping your phone undiscoverable is a good protection against hackers.

Tips for dealing with unwanted SMS and voice messages

- Don’t respond.
- Save the message and the date, time and number of the call
- Let your parents know.

All incidents involving assaults, threats, intimidation or harassment will be reported to the Police.

If deemed necessary, behaviours or incidents that indicate a student is at risk of harm, will be reported to the Child Wellbeing Unit.

In instances where a complaint is received the ‘Complaints Handling Policy and Guidelines’ will be followed.

Sharing & Promotion of Anti-Bullying Plan

Our Anti-Bullying plan is available on our web site. Every classroom has a copy in their Class Folder which is kept in the room. This folder is available to Casual Teachers.

Aspects of the plan are shared regularly with the Parents through the school Newsletter.

Monitoring

We will monitor the effectiveness of our Anti- Bullying Plan through our weekly Playground Incident Monitoring sheet, learning support meetings and through cyclical reviews.
Reporting
The Anti-Bullying Plan, as part of Student Welfare Policy & Procedures, will be reported on to the parent body in the Annual School Report.

Review of Policy
A review of the Anti-Bullying Plan will be conducted as part of our School Improvement Process. The next review is due in 2014.

Additional Information
1. The Child Well-Being Unit Contact Details
   Intranet > Student Welfare Directorate > Child Wellbeing Unit
   The Child Wellbeing Unit can be contacted by telephone on 02 9269 9400 from 8am to 5.30pm Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays).

2. Police Youth Liaison Officer - Struan Presgrave
   Lismore Police Phone: 0266260575

3. Kids helpline 1800 55 1800

4. Complaints Handling Policy
   Intranet » Policy & procedures
   Complaints Handling Policy and Guidelines.

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