



How it Works: Responding to Violence, Bullying and Harassment

Purpose

These procedures support teachers, students and families in the effective follow up of reported bullying, violence and harassment and outline how further incidents are minimised to restore a positive learning environment for all students.

For the most part Macquarie Primary School students enjoy classroom and playground environments that are relatively free from planned or habitual negative actions between students. To ensure maintenance of a safe social environment the Macquarie values of persistence, integrity and excellence are used to reinforce positive behaviours.

As part of our Positive Behaviours for Learning approach the school has identified the following expectations;

We are safe
We are respectful
We are learners

The behaviours that match these expectations are explicitly taught, modelled, reinforced and acknowledged across the school.

Explicit teaching about how to be safe in the community are conducted each year through the ACT Policing Kenny Koala program, how to be safe online through ThinkUKnow, and the e-safety commissioner and acceptance of difference is highlighted through whole school participation in Bullying No Way, Purple day in addition to weekly social and emotional learning using the MindUp Curriculum.

Definitions

Violence: is the use of force, threatened or actual, against another person(s) that results in actual or apprehended physical harm or property damage. Violence may involve provoked or unprovoked acts, multiple incidents, or a pattern of behaviour which creates a context for separate incidents. It may involve a random or a deliberate act. Threatened or actual conduct involving weapons or implements used as weapons is considered to be a serious act of violence.

The national definition of **bullying** for Australian schools is:

Bullying is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening.

Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records).

Bullying of any form or for any reason can have immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.

Harassment is behaviour that targets an individual or group due to their:

- identity, race, culture or ethnic origin
- religion
- physical characteristics
- gender
- sexual orientation
- marital, parenting or economic status
- age
- ability or disability.

It offends, humiliates, intimidates or creates a hostile environment. It may be:

- an ongoing pattern of behaviour or a single act
- directed randomly or towards the same person(s)
- intentional or unintentional.

Respect, Equity and Diversity Coordinator (REDCo): A staff member who has undergone training to support respect, equity and diversity within the workplace.

Safe and Supportive Schools Coordinator (SASSCo): A male and a female staff member who have undergone training to support the implementation of safe practices across the school, including heightening the school's awareness of racism, promoting social and emotional learning, and responding to reports of bullying and harassment in addition to executive staff.

Related Policy

Safe & Supportive Schools Policy (2016)

Related Legislation

Education Act 2004 (ACT), Discrimination Act 1991 (ACT), Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (CTH), Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (CTH), Sex Discrimination Act 1984

Procedure

If a staff member witnesses' violence, bullying or harassment, or if it is reported to them by a student, parent or community member it is important to act as soon as possible. When reported incidents have occurred the following steps will be followed:

- When witnessed or reported the staff member will intervene immediately to reduce impact
- An assigned staff member will gather and record information about the incident, seeking to hear from everyone involved (not just the person whose behaviour is being challenged). In gathering information, a staff member may make use of the restorative questions listed below.
- Staff involved informs classroom teacher and executive staff
- Classroom teacher and executive ensures that all stakeholders are well informed of incident. This includes parents/carers of all parties involved
- Where appropriate classroom teacher works with executive teacher, Respect, Equity and Diversity Coordinator (REDCo) and/or Safe and Supportive Schools Coordinator (SASSCo) with all parties to restore and/or resolve the situation, this may require consent and ongoing communication with parent/carers

- Where necessary classroom teacher and relevant stakeholders (Network Student Engagement Team (NSET), School Psychologist, parents, student) work with executive to develop appropriate interventions to reduce risk of reoccurrence
 - These may include playground and classroom modifications; changing the environment, increasing or changing teacher supervision, assigning areas of the playground to be in.
 - Positive behaviour support plans, which articulate ways of behaving, how to respond, how to get support.
 - Additional support and/or family engagement e.g. external services or school psychologist involvement for any/all parties as required.
- The assigned staff member will review with all parties regularly within 6-8 weeks and adjust plans where necessary.

**Note: Actions undertaken are not necessarily linear depending on the situation*

Restorative questions

When challenging behaviour:	To help those affected:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What happened? • What were you thinking of at the time? • What have you thought about since? • Who has been affected by what you have done? • In what way have they been affected? • What do you think you need to do to make things right? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did you think when you realized what had happened? • What impact has this incident had on you and others? • What has been the hardest thing for you? • What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

International Institute for Restorative Practices. 2012. "Time to Think: Using Restorative Questions", online at <https://www.iirp.edu/news/time-to-think-using-restorative-questions>.

Follow up

If the steps outlined above have not resolved the issue satisfactorily parents are encouraged to contact the school in the first instance to revise the interventions put in place and plan an alternative way forward.

Related Resources

Bullying No Way!

<https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/RespondingToBullying/HowAustralianSchoolsRespond>

Positive Behaviours for Learning NSW <https://pbl.schools.nsw.gov.au/>

Mind Up Social and Emotional Learning <https://mindup.org/>

eSafety Commissioner - <https://www.esafety.gov.au/>

ThinkUKnow - <https://www.thinkuknow.org.au/>