

# Friendly Schools: Policy and Practice

*Preventing and Responding to Bullying in Wadalba Primary and Support Unit*

## Vision Statement

Friendly School, Supportive Community

## Guiding Principals

Our School:

- Affirms the right of all school community members to feel safe and supported in a school environment where diversity is valued and everyone is treated with respect, fairness and dignity
- Promotes a clear, well-defined, definition of bullying, and an agreed understanding that bullying/ cyberbullying is not acceptable behaviour
- Ensures that the roles and responsibilities of all members of the school community outlined in the policy are explicit and clearly understood, and the actions associated with these roles are consistently implemented
- Focuses on evidence-based intervention and management strategies and incorporates procedures and programs which are restorative and solution focused
- Implements universal, whole-school prevention and intervention programs including formal and informal activities in the curriculum, and wider school environment.
- Encourages active participation of staff, students, families and the whole-school community to plan, implement and evaluate school policies, procedures and practice

## Context

Friendly Schools connects to the following **whole-school policies and practices**

- Everybody Matters
- Behaviour Expectations document
- Student Welfare procedures

Friendly Schools connects to the following **NSW Department of Education policies**

- Behaviour Code of Students
- Students Discipline in Government Schools Policy
- Bullying of Students- Prevention and Response Policy

Friendly Schools connects to the following **Australian Government Department of Education policies and guidelines:**

- The Australian Student Wellbeing Framework
- The National Safe Schools Framework Guiding Principles

## Whole-School Community Agreement

This policy has been developed with the clear intention to take bullying involving any member of the school community very seriously and respond to it effectively. 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. It outlines the shared responsibility between all school community members to prevent bullying and actively work together to resolve incidents of bullying behaviour when they occur.

This community agreement has been developed in consultation with staff, students and the families of Wadalba Community School and **is to be reviewed in 2023.**

## Statement of Purpose

Our school is committed to working actively to build a culture based around a belief that everybody matters. 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. We believe this needs a proactive approach from adults and young people working together.

### **This plan supports:**

- actively working together to resolve incidents of bullying behaviour when they occur
- raising awareness, including the role of the bystander, and promoting positive relationships that respect and accept individual differences within the whole school community
- building a positive environment which fosters optimism and community.

## Definitions

### Bullying and Cyberbullying

Bullying is a repeated behaviour that may be physical, verbal, written and/ or psychological; where there is intent to cause fear, distress or harm to another; conducted by a more powerful individual or group; against a less powerful individual or group of individuals who is/ are unable to stop this from happening.

**Power:** A person who engages in bullying may display power through various means: physical size and strength, status within a peer group and recruitment within the peer group so as to exclude others.

**Frequency:** Bullying is not a random act - it is characterised by being repetitive. Students who are bullied not only have to endure the humiliation of the bullying, but many live in fear of its reoccurrence.

**Intent to harm:** People who engage in bullying and cyberbullying behaviour usually deny any intent to harm others and may not always be fully conscious of the harm they cause. Causing physical and emotional harm, however, is usually a deliberate act. It puts the person who is bullied in a position of oppression by the person who is engaging in the bullying.

**Cyberbullying** is when, over a period of time, an individual or a group use information and communication technologies to intentionally harm a person, who finds it hard to stop this bullying from continuing.

### Bystanders to bullying and cyberbullying

A bystander is someone who sees the bullying or knows that it is happening. Bystanders can be identified in the following categories:

**Supporters** - support the person bullying, either by helping them to bully the other person or by encouraging the person bullying

**Spectators** - gather or deliberately stay to watch the incident (sometimes from concern and sometimes for enjoyment)

**Witnesses** - are aware that the incident is occurring (know about the bullying or see it from a distance)

**Defenders** - support the person being bullied, either directly, or indirectly.

It is expected that all students in the school would take some positive action to support the person being bullied directly (for example, by inviting the person being bullied to join their group, or letting them know what happened was wrong) or indirectly (for example, by asking an adult for help).

## Types and examples of bullying and cyberbullying

### **Physical bullying - repeatedly and deliberately:**

- bumping, pulling, shoving or tripping someone
- throwing things at someone to hurt, annoy or upset them
- hitting, punching or slapping, kicking, pinching, biting or scratching someone
- physically restricting access into or out of spaces (eg classrooms, toilets)
- touching someone who doesn't want to be touched

### **Verbal bullying - repeatedly and deliberately:**

- calling people names or offensive nicknames
- making racial comments about someone and their family
- rude comments or jokes about someone's religion
- teasing someone or being sarcastic in a way that is hurtful and upsetting
- comments about the way someone may look or behave that are hurtful
- nasty comments about someone's sexual orientation, perceived or otherwise

### **Threatening - repeatedly and deliberately:**

- making someone feel afraid that they are going to be hurt
- pressuring someone to do things they don't want to do
- aggressive gestures or looks that make someone afraid
- forcing students to do hurtful or embarrassing things
- forcing someone to give you money, food or belongings

### **Property abuse - repeatedly and deliberately:**

- damaging someone's belongings
- stealing someone's money
- taking things away from someone
- taking or hiding someone's belongings

### **Emotional bullying - repeatedly and deliberately:**

- ignoring someone or keeping them out of group conversations (known as exclusion)
- leaving someone out by encouraging others not to have anything to do with them
- spreading lies or stories about someone to try to get others to dislike someone
- making things up to get someone into trouble
- stalking someone, by continually following them or giving unwanted attention, e.g. staring

### **Cyberbullying - repeatedly and deliberately:**

- ignoring someone or sending nasty messages through social media such as Facebook
- sharing electronic images of people without their permission
- sending harassing, abusive or offensive messages online, e.g. through social media or by phone
- making silent or abusive phone calls
- spreading rumours online, e.g. through social media or by phone

## Rights

Everyone within our school community has the right to be free of bullying. This includes students, staff, families and community members.

## Responsibilities

### **Our school has a responsibility to:**

- Provide families and students with clear information about strategies that promote appropriate behaviour and the consequences for inappropriate behaviour
- Provide students with strategies to respond assertively (not aggressively) to incidents of bullying behaviour, including responsibilities as bystanders to bullying situations
- Communicate to families the important role they play in encouraging prosocial behaviours and resolving incidents of bullying behaviour involving their children

### **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 an appropriate, timely and consistent manner to incidents of bullying by recording and following up incidents of bullying in accordance with the school's procedures
- Provide curriculum and pedagogy that supports students to develop an understanding of bullying and its impact on individuals and the broader community.
- Support families to be open in their discussions about bullying in the school, supporting their children in developing positive responses to incidents of bullying consistent with the school's expectations

### **Students have a responsibility to:**

- Behave appropriately, respecting individual differences and diversity
- Behave as responsible digital citizens
- Behave as responsible bystanders
- Report incidents of bullying

### **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's Friendly Schools' Plan and assist their children in understanding bullying behaviour
- Support their children in developing positive responses to incidents of bullying consistent with this plan
- Report incidents of school related bullying to the school
- Work collaboratively with the school to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur

### **All members of the school community have a shared responsibility to:**

- Promote positive relationships that respect individual differences in the school community
- Acknowledge their responsibility as role models of positive, caring and respectful behaviour
- Be familiar with the school's expected behaviour policy and procedures
- Be observant of signs and symptoms of bullying
- Report incidents of bullying
- Actively work together to resolve incidents of bullying behaviour when they occur

## Preventing Bullying and Cyberbullying

### **Whole-school ethos**

The school has an ethos that enables safety, care, support and respect for all school community members.

### **Behaviour Expectations Document**

A Behaviour Expectations document is developed and implemented to encourage the promotion of positive social behaviour and the prevention and establishment of effective responses to bullying and cyberbullying.

### **Staff professional learning**

All school staff members have a consistent understanding about bullying and cyberbullying and how to respond to situations.

### **Enrolment/ Orientation**

The Behaviour Expectations document is promoted during the orientation and provided to all new students, parents, staff, relief staff and other school community members.

### **Classroom**

The classroom environment and curriculum is used to establish common understandings about bullying and cyberbullying and how to respond effectively, while building positive social skills, online and offline, with students.

### **Peer support**

The peer group is encouraged to provide support for students being bullied and fosters positive peer group influence to discourage bullying and cyberbullying.

### **School physical environment**

The school provides a safe, well supervised school environment with opportunities for positive social interaction, both online and offline, which promote support and respect.

### **Family links**

Families are actively involved in the school and its response to bullying.

### **Curriculum: Social and Emotional skills**

A developmentally appropriate, comprehensive, sequential and engaging social and emotional learning curriculum is taught across all year levels.

## Reporting Incidents of Bullying

Staff, parents and students are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying directly to the school.

Incidents are generally reported to the child's classroom teacher, but can reported to any member of staff including classroom teachers, Assistant Principals, Deputy Principal, Principal, administration staff and support staff. Students are also encouraged to seek assistance from any trusted adult in the school who can act as an advocate for them.

Staff, parents and students can report concerns via a range of methods including:

- In person
- Over the phone
- Via email
- Via Class Dojo

## Responding to Bullying and Cyberbullying Behaviour

The following seven-step response plan provides an outline of actions that need to be considered once a student/s have been identified as being involved in bullying.

Responding to a Bullying Incident		
Respect	1. Co-LATE model (appendix 3)	Listen to students involved to understand the situation and any history which may be relevant to the incident. Ensure notes are taken during this process and saved on Sentral (this must be the case for every stage). Discuss the situation with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• students directly involved</li> <li>• bystanders</li> <li>• staff involved</li> <li>• families (as necessary)</li> <li>• administration staff (depending upon harm or risk involved)</li> </ul>
	2. Assess Risk	Assess the level of risk or harm (consider the frequency, intensity, type and the duration of the bullying behaviour) associated with the incident and triage as high, moderate or low. See <b>Assessing Harm Guide (appendix 1)</b> below
Respond	3. Report	Determine who needs to be contacted, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principal and Executive Team</li> <li>• teachers of young people involved</li> <li>• families</li> <li>• external support agencies</li> <li>• District Office</li> <li>• school support services - Counsellor</li> </ul>
	4. Record	Collect, record and store all information related to each case on Sentral. Ensure each stage has been recorded on Sentral
Reconcile	5. Selection of restorative technique	Discuss restorative technique options with relevant staff, families and students. Determine which technique to use based on the <b>Triage Guide (appendix 2)</b> to determine technique, e.g. the <b>Co-LATE model (appendix 3)</b> , <b>Shared Concern method (appendix 4)</b> , <b>Support Group method (appendix 5)</b> , <b>Motivational interviewing (appendix 6)</b> , <b>Critical Thinking Line (appendix 7)</b> , Individual Behaviour Plans. Agree on the plan to be implemented.
	6. Implement plan	Implement the agreed plan of action. Reinforce positive behaviour. Ensure all vested parties (as determined in report phase including parents/ carers) have a copy of the agreed plan and are working together to reinforce positive behaviours.
	7. Additional support	Bullying incidences appear to resurface. Check in with all parties involved in the incident at regular predetermined interval. Offer additional support to those students who are experiencing difficulties adhering to the bounds of the agreed plan

### External Government Support

Where appropriate, the school also:

- works directly with the police (School Liaison Police officer and Local Area Command) or provides advice to parents
- contacts DoE Directorates including Safety and Security
- contacts Child Wellbeing Unit or Community Services using Mandatory Reporting Guide

## Consequences

Consequences for breaking school rules can be applied according to the severity of the situation. Consequences are most appropriate when closely linked to the action which invoked the consequence, for example, if the misdemeanour occurred when using technology. These may include:

- a formal apology
- loss of social privileges such as spending time with friends during break times
- school community service
- in-school exclusion, including case management
- separate meetings with staff, families and students involved in the bullying situation
- accurate summaries/ descriptions of all discussions are recorded and placed in student files on Sentral.

## Case management

Case management is provided to students who have a history of being involved in bullying or who need support to maintain their role in a safe and supportive school environment. A clear case management plan may include:

- a problem-solving approach for those involved in the incident
- follow-up to ensure the longer-term safety of the student who is bullied and the occurrence of change
- procedures to inform and involve families when appropriate
- clear recording of incidents on Sentral
- referring students to other support services, such as psychologists external to the school, when necessary.

## Review & Distribution

The development of this policy includes an ongoing collaborative planning and review process.

The school reviews data regarding patterns of bullying behaviour as part of ongoing data analysis and annual self-evaluation processes, including:

- Learning Support Meetings
- Tell Them From Me survey of students (x2 per year), families and staff
- collected records of incidents through Sentral
- other surveys and feedback from stakeholders.

Data collection and community consultation will assist with ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the plan.

The school will promote and publicise the Friendly Schools Plan to the school community through our regular school communication strategies including:

- School Website (available for accessing the Plan)
- Facebook, newsletters and Parent Information Sessions
- Student Handbook
- Staff Handbook and induction
- Class Dojo

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, students and the families of Wadalba Community School and **is to be reviewed in 2023.**

## Appendices

### Assessing Harm Guide- Appendix 1

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>LOW LEVEL HARM</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low level Incidents</li> <li>• Use Shared Concern method if there is a capacity for empathy (appendix 4) or Support Group method (appendix 6)</li> <li>• Low level consequences as outlined in Behaviour Expectations document</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MANAGED BY TEACHER</b></p> <p>Contact recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Families</li> <li>- Teachers of those involved</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MODERATE LEVEL HARM</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serious incidents</li> <li>• Assess Students ability to show empathy</li> <li>• Use Shared Concern method if there is a capacity for empathy (appendix 4) or Support Group method (appendix 6)</li> <li>• Individual Behaviour Plan (ratified by student, family and staff)</li> <li>• For students with low empathy use Motivational Interviewing (High school only- appendix 5) or Critical Thinking Line (All ages- appendix 7).</li> <li>• Consequences as outlined in Behaviour Expectations document</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MANAGED BY ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL</b></p> <p>Contact Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Deputy/ Executive Team</li> <li>- Learning Support Team</li> <li>- Families</li> <li>- Teachers of those involved</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>HIGH LEVEL HARM</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Severe Incidents</li> <li>• Assess Students ability to show empathy</li> <li>• External Support Services sourced (in discussion with family)</li> <li>• Use Shared Concern method if there is a capacity for empathy (appendix 4) or Support Group method (appendix 6)</li> <li>• Individual Behaviour Plan (ratified by student, family and staff)</li> <li>• For students with low empathy use Motivational Interviewing (High school only- appendix 5) or Critical Thinking Line (All ages- appendix 7).</li> <li>• Consequences as outlined in Behaviour Expectations document- if this includes exclusion from school then a strategy for their return is to be developed and discussed with student and the family.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MANAGED BY DEPUTY/ PRINCIPAL</b></p> <p>Contact Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- District Office (especially if suspended)</li> <li>- Deputy/ Executive Team</li> <li>- Learning Support Team</li> <li>- Families</li> <li>- Teachers of those involved</li> </ul>



**Triage Guide- Appendix 2**

<b>Possible Restorative Approaches for students who Bully others</b>	
<b>Restorative approach</b>	<b>Triage checklist - perpetrator</b>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Shared Concern method</b></p> <p>Age: upper primary and lower secondary students For cases that are low to moderate severity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• willingness to change behaviour</li> <li>• groups of students identified as bullying others</li> <li>• feels remorse, capacity for empathy</li> <li>• also bullied by others (bully/victim)</li> <li>• multiple targets</li> <li>• agreeable to participation in a series of meetings</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Support Group method</b></p> <p>Age: middle to upper primary students For cases that are low to low-moderate severity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• currently or previously a friend of target</li> <li>• girls bullying girls</li> <li>• target has other supportive friends</li> <li>• feels remorse, has capacity for empathy</li> <li>• influenced by group norms and normative expectations</li> <li>• agreeable to participating in a series of meetings</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Motivational interviewing</b></p> <p>Age: all secondary students For cases that are low to moderate severity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• does not feel remorse, limited capacity for empathy</li> <li>• also bullied by others (bully/victim)</li> <li>• popular and/ or high self-esteem</li> <li>• willing to talk about behaviour</li> <li>• multiple targets</li> <li>• agreeable to participating in a series of meetings</li> </ul>
<b>Possible Restorative Approaches for Students who are a target of Bullying</b>	
<b>Counselling Approach</b>	<b>Triage Checklist- target</b>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Shared Concern method</b></p> <p>Age: upper primary and lower secondary students For cases that are low to moderate severity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provocative target</li> <li>• multiple perpetrators and/ or bullied for extended length of time</li> <li>• also a perpetrator (bully/victim)</li> <li>• lower self-esteem</li> <li>• agreeable to participating in a series of meetings</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Support Group method</b></p> <p>Age: middle to upper primary students For cases that are low to low-moderate severity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• currently or previously a friend of perpetrator</li> <li>• girls bullying girls</li> <li>• target has other supportive friends</li> <li>• agreeable to participating in a series of meetings</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Motivational interviewing</b></p> <p>Age: all secondary students For cases that are low to moderate severity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• high motivation to take action to stop bullying</li> <li>• willingness to help themselves</li> <li>• multiple perpetrators and/ or bullied for extended length of time</li> <li>• provocative target</li> <li>• also a perpetrator (bully/victim)</li> <li>• agreeable to participating in a series of meetings</li> </ul>

## The Co-LATE Model- Appendix 3

The Co-LATE model is used when talking to students about personal issues, including relationship difficulties and bullying behaviour. The model is simple and can be used by all school staff, regardless of their role in the school. The Co-LATE model is based on the work of Michael Tunnecliffe and comprises five steps:

**C**onfidentiality

**L**isten

**A**cknowledge concerns

**T**alk about the options

**E**nd with encouragement

### **Confidentiality**

School staff can be clear with students about when they may need to talk to other adults about the content of their conversation (for example, duty of disclosure). If staff need to consult other staff about student interactions, it is important to do so in a confidential location (not by the photocopier), and with the permission of the student concerned. Students should be able to speak to staff knowing that other students will not have to know they have done so.

### **Listen**

Active listening enables school staff to confirm they have understood the details of the conversation accurately, as well as demonstrate to students they have been paying attention to them. Avoiding behaviours which demonstrate to students that staff do not have time to talk to them can enhance students' confidence in approaching staff. These may include watching the clock, shuffling papers and interrupting students.

### **Acknowledge concerns**

School staff can acknowledge students' concerns, even if they do not agree with them. Acknowledging takes the form of paraphrasing students' concerns and their reaction to the situation. For example, "So you are concerned that if you don't forward the email you have received about Sam, your friends might not want to have you around. I can see how that would upset you a lot." Comments about opportunities to make new friends and dismissing students' concerns are usually ineffective and demonstrate to students you don't understand the situation they are in. Hence, students may discontinue the conversation at this point.

**Talk about the options**

This step is likely to be most effective when school staff encourage students to identify solutions to their own concerns. This does not mean that staff cannot offer their own suggestions, but solutions suggested by, and endorsed by, students will likely be put into action faster than those suggested by staff. When identifying responses with students, it is important to also discuss the positive and negative consequences of each to enable students to make an informed decision about how to proceed with the situation.

**End with encouragement**

Ending the conversation with a summary of what was discussed can help students make a decision about how to proceed with their situation. In addition, it provides an opportunity for school staff to give encouragement to the student for deciding to implement their chosen response strategy. While school staff cannot guarantee the outcome of students' actions and that they will resolve the situation, encouragement enables students to feel confident in trying to respond. At this point it may also be helpful to establish a time to have a follow-up meeting with the student, to discuss the effectiveness of implementing their strategy. If no follow-up is required, school staff can reassure students that they can reconnect if the situation is not resolved, or they need more support to take further action.

## Shared Concern Method- Appendix 4

### Description

The Shared Concern method aims to change the causes of the behaviour of students involved in bullying within their social groups and to improve the situation for the student or students being bullied. The method employs a non-punitive problem-solving approach to addressing reported incidents of bullying involving groups who are bullying others. Due to the non-disciplinary nature of the method, the process of responding to a report of bullying is not slowed down by needing to determine if the bullying actually occurred, who may be guilty of what part in the bullying, or even that the student reportedly bullied is free of having contributed to the circumstances affecting them.

The method targets the dynamics within groups carrying out bullying. Often groups who bully others use power and subtle reinforcing pressures or even open threats to maintain the cooperation of their own group members. The threat of expulsion from the group is a significant reinforcer for the participation of each member in bullying others. The Shared Concern method equalises power imbalances inherent in group bullying and then allows the resolution of any underlying social problems with all of the parties involved.

The goals of the Shared Concern method are:

- to elicit empathy and a sense of cooperation towards the bullied student or students from the students involved in the bullying
- to work with the students involved in the bullying to shift the group dynamics that allowed and sustained the bullying behaviours to occur in the first place
- to empower the bullied student or students by ensuring they are party to solving the social problems affecting them

The Shared Concern method is designed to get the students involved in the bullying to have empathy for the bullied student's situation and to really want to do something about it. Empathy reduces the attitudes that support bullying behaviours. Thinking of something they could do to improve the situation encourages each student to take on a more positive attitude.

Each student involved in the bullying participates in a series of individual discussions with a staff member. Clearly defined steps are used to reach the point where each student involved in the bullying of others agrees that there is a problem for the bullied student or students and that the situation warrants concern. The student or students who are bullying are then encouraged to suggest ways to help to improve the situation for the student or students being bullied. The student being bullied is also provided with an opportunity to discuss what is happening for them and encouraged to consider ways the situation could be improved, including any actions they could take to help themselves.

### Key points

The method is used with student or students who have the capacity to develop empathic responses towards the individual or individuals being bullied.

- Those involved in the bullying are firstly interviewed individually.
- The facilitator or teacher elicits, from each student involved in the bullying, concern for what is happening for the bullied student or students.
- The facilitator or teacher invites and supports the students who are bullying to then generate ideas they could undertake to improve the situation.
- The bullied student or students are then given an opportunity to discuss the situation.
- The students who previously bullied others then meet together with the facilitator or teacher to follow up the outcomes of their individual actions.
- The students who bullied and the student or students who were bullied are then invited to meet altogether to report against the outcomes of their actions only if the target of the bullying is comforted, resolve any ongoing concerns and develop some common understandings around how they will talk to each other in the future.

## Meeting with each student who is suspected of bullying others

### Step 1

"Thank you for coming to see me; I am meeting with a number of students because I have heard that some unpleasant things have been happening for 'X'"

- Give space for the student to respond.
- If the student doesn't respond ask, "Do you know 'X'? What can you tell me about them that might help us?"
- Do not try to force the student to 'own up' or admit to their involvement; simply try to encourage them to acknowledge that there is a situation which is making 'X' unhappy.
- If the student complains about 'X', don't question, just let the student explain the situation.

### Step 2

"So it sounds like 'X' is having a bit of a tough time."

- Give space for the student to respond.
- As soon as the student agrees or acknowledges that 'X' is having a hard time, move to Step 3.
- If the student says that 'X' is to blame, accept the point but suggest that "but it still sounds like the situation is not good, is that correct?"

### Step 3

"Well, I was wondering what you could do to help improve the situation for 'X'?"

- Accept any reasonable suggestions with positive feedback.
- If the suggestions are negative, ask the student whether they think this would help 'X' feel better about what is happening.
- If the student can't think of anything to do or is resistant to the idea, ask them to take some time to think about something they could do to help make 'X' feel better", then move to Step 4.

### Step 4

"Okay, I'll see you in a few days to find out how you are getting on."

- If the student had an idea then say you will see them to "discuss how your idea went when you tried it."
- If they didn't have an idea then say you will see them to "discuss the idea you have come up with."

## Meeting with the student who has reportedly been the target of bullying

### Step 1

"Thank you for coming to speak with me. I have heard that some things have been happening that are making you feel unhappy at school."

- Give space for the student to respond.
- Let the student explain their situation and acknowledge how it is affecting them.

### Step 2

"I have spoken to a few students about the situation and they have made some good suggestions to improve things."

- If the student is concerned about this reassure them that you will be keeping a close eye on what is happening.
- Let the student know that there may be a few changes in some students' behaviour towards him or her.
- If you feel the student could help the situation by changing some of their behaviours move to Step 3.

### Step 3

"I was wondering if there is anything you can think of doing yourself that may improve the situation?"

- Accept any reasonable suggestions with positive feedback.
- If the suggestions are negative, ask the student "How do you think that will work?"
- If the student does not offer any ideas ask, "What have you tried already?" and "How did that work for you?"
- If the student can't think of anything to do or is resistant to the idea ask them to take some time to think about something he or she could do, and then move to Step 4.

#### **Step 4**

"Okay, I'll catch up with you again in a few days to find out how you are getting on."

- If the student had an idea then say you will see them to "discuss how your idea went when you tried it."
- If the student didn't have an idea then say you will see them to "discuss the idea you have come up with."
- Say "Remember to keep an eye out for any positive changes that may be happening, and let me know what you have noticed when we meet again."

Plan follow-up meetings with the individuals to check on progress following this process. A final step may be a 'group meeting' of the students doing the bullying followed by a "summit meeting" which includes the bullied student to report on positive outcomes, develop a plan and problem-solve ideas about how it can be maintained. This meeting should only occur if and when the target of the bullying feels comfortable being involved, it should not be forced on the target. A plan is also put into place to look for early warning signs and deal with any future relationship issues.

Staff must have a thorough knowledge of the Shared Concern method before implementing it, as it is easy to fall back into persuasive coercion approaches rather than a more neutral attitude that is required for it to be effective.

## Support Group Method- Appendix- 5

This technique aims to encourage students who are bullied and students who bully others to work together to try to decide on a mutually agreeable way to deal with the bullying.

### Key points

- This method is best used when the facilitator or teacher feels that the students bullying, as well as the students who are bullied, want the bullying to stop.
- The facilitator or teacher who intervenes avoids blaming anyone for the problem.

This approach works best in less serious cases of bullying when the students who are bullied and the students who bully may have previously been friends but this friendship has ended. It is unlikely to work if the students who bully are picking on students they don't know or care about, and if the patterns of bullying are so well-established that the bullying itself has become a reward for the students who bully. CHPRC research has found this method to be most effective when bullying occurs within a social group, particularly girls who are having friendship difficulties (for example, exclusion and teasing). By developing empathy for the feelings of the person being bullied, the groups are able to resolve this behaviour and determine ways to prevent it from reoccurring.

When bullying has been observed or reported the following steps can be taken:

#### **Step 1**

Interview with the person being bullied

When the facilitator or teacher finds out that bullying has occurred, they begin the process by talking to the student being bullied about their feelings. The teacher does not question them about the incident but does need to know who was involved.

#### **Step 2**

Convene a meeting with the people involved

The facilitator or teacher arranges to meet with the student or students who have been involved. This will include some bystanders who joined in but did not initiate any bullying.

#### **Step 3**

Explain the problem

The facilitator or teacher talks about the way the person being bullied is feeling and might use a piece of writing or a drawing to emphasise their distress. At no time does the teacher discuss the details of the incidents or assign blame to the group.

#### **Step 4**

Share responsibility

The facilitator or teacher does not attribute blame but states that they know the group is responsible and can do something about it.

#### **Step 5**

Ask the group for their ideas

Each member of the group is encouraged to suggest a way in which the person being bullied could be helped to feel happier. The facilitator or teacher gives some positive responses but does not go on to extract a promise of improved behaviour.

**Step 6**

Leave it up to them

The facilitator or teacher ends the meeting by passing over the responsibility to the group to solve the problem and arranges to meet them again to see how things are going.

**Step 7**

Meet them again

About a week later the facilitator or teacher discusses with each student, including the person being bullied, how things have been going. This allows the teacher to monitor the bullying and keeps everyone involved in the process.



## Motivational Interviewing- Appendix 6

Motivational interviewing and the critical thinking line can be used in conjunction with the Shared Concern method or when a student has limited capacity to empathise with the person who has been bullied. These strategies assist students who bully others to talk about why they engage in this behaviour.

### Key points

- This strategy is best used with students who bully who are not responding well to the Shared Concern method or who have limited empathy for the person that they bullied.
- Motivational interviewing will not work with all students and may be less effective with individuals who are not willing to talk about their bullying behaviour.

### Interviewing students who bully

Always begin by asking the student who bullies others if it is okay to talk about bullying. You need their permission to proceed. Explain that all discussion is confidential and if they prefer not to talk about bullying they can read the school's behaviour expectation policy.

#### Step 1

Getting permission

Involve students in the conversation and get their permission before getting started:

- "I'd like to spend a few minutes talking about your behaviour, is that okay with you?"

#### Step 2

Open-ended questions

To get the ball rolling students may need to be drawn into conversation. Open-ended questions require more than single word responses and may provide opportunities to explore students' issues. These question stems may help:

Ask open-ended questions, such as:

- "To what extent..."
- "How often ... "
- "Why ... "
- "Tell me about..."
- "Help me understand ... "

Avoid asking closed questions, such as:

- "Did you .. .?"
- "Will you .. ?"

#### Step 3

Reflective listening

Asking more than three questions in a row may stop the conversation; reflections demonstrate that you have been listening to the student. They usually involve a statement restating, rephrasing, paraphrasing or deducing from the information given to you (a reflection that slightly understates may work best). Reflections result in affirming or validating the student and keeping the student talking and thinking.

The following are safe reflections:

- "It sounds like this has been tough for you ... "
- "It sounds like you're not happy with ... "
- "It sounds like you're a bit uncomfortable about ... "
- "It sounds like you're not ready to ... "

- "It sounds like you're having a problem with ... "

#### **Step 4**

##### Summarising

At natural breaks summarise the conversation. These summaries allow all "facts" to be considered and gives the student the opportunity to correct or add to the story so far. For example:

- "Let me see if I understand what you've told me so far ... "
- "Okay, this is what I've heard so far ... "

Follow-up with ...

- "Okay, how did I do?"
- "What have I missed?"
- "Anything you want to correct or add?"

#### **Step 5**

##### Self-motivational statements

The aim is to allow the student to 'discover' discrepancies in their behaviour. The interviewer encourages students to voice their own motivation for behaviour change and helps students find solutions to the barriers they have created. For example:

- "Could you tell me some of the things you like (enjoy) about. .. "
- "Could you tell me some of the things you don't like about. .. "
- "Could you tell me some of the reasons why you might want to change your ... "
- "Could you tell me some of the reasons why you may not want to change ... (fears, barriers)"
- "How might your life be different if you ... "

Remember that bullying is seen by the person doing the bullying as having both benefits and disadvantages. Help students to clarify for themselves their own barriers to, and benefits of, stopping the bullying behaviour.

What do you like about, or get out of, bullying someone? (barriers to stopping)

What makes it hard for you to stop?

What are some things that you think aren't so good about bullying (advantages of stopping)?

If the student cannot think of any advantages of stopping, ask the student to role-play someone convincing you not to bully. For example, "If I was bullying someone, how would you convince me to stop?"

When the advantages and disadvantages of bullying have been identified, summarise both sides of the issue. For example, "On one hand you want to bully because ... but you also say that it is the best way to deal with the situation because ... What do you think about this?"

#### **Step 6**

##### Offering advice

Allow students time to explore their barriers. Ask students to identify who could help them to stop using bullying behaviour and where and when they might need help. (Again, you may have to ask students to imagine that they want to stop)

Summarise what they have said. "So, what you are telling me is that. . .is that right?"

If students are interested, ask for permission to offer tips. "Would you like to hear some things other students have found useful for changing their behaviour so they don't bully others?"

It is important not to offer unsolicited information or advice. There may be times when students require information or suggestions. Information or advice should only be provided when:

- the student asks for it
- the student gives you permission to provide it

Where possible offer only the facts and ask the student to interpret them.

Students may need help to identify the best strategies. If the student asks for suggestions or provides permission, you may provide a range of strategies others have used (for example, decision-making techniques). However, where possible ask the student to identify strategies that have worked previously for them or they have observed others using.

Remind the student that there are people in the school and the community who can help them with information and support for their behaviour change.

### Sample questions for motivational interviewing

#### 1. Positives and benefits (good things)

- What are some of the good things about your bullying behaviour?
- What do you enjoy about bullying?
- How important are these things to you?

#### 2. Less positive and costs (not-so-good things)

- What is there about your bullying behaviour that you or other people might see as reasons for concern?
- What worries you about your bullying behaviour? What can you imagine happening to you?
- What do you think might happen if you don't make a change?

#### 3. Life goals

- How do you see yourself?
- Describe to me what sort of person you are.
- How do your friends, teachers and parents see you?
- What would be the advantages of making a change?

#### 4. Compare with current unchanged behaviour

- How would you like things to be different in the future?
- You'd like to be ..., so what do you think is stopping you?
- You've told me something about yourself and your bullying behaviour, but how would you like to see yourself in three months' time?

#### 5. Ask for a decision

- Where does that leave you now?
- What do you think you might want to do now?

#### 6. Plan a short-term goal

### In Summary - Motivational interviewing

+ (good things about. ..)

- (less good things about. ..)

Summarise

Assess balance of + and -

Goal set

Support

## Critical Thinking Line- Appendix 7

The critical thinking line is based on a number line and can be used for many purposes. For younger students the line can be used to help students consider the intensity of their feelings. For example, "You are feeling angry. Look at the critical thinking line and tell me how angry you feel". In class students can think of the things that make them feel most angry and mark these on the line. This allows students to see how others feel and their levels of response to those feelings.

The critical thinking line can also be used when talking to students about bullying. It is best used in conjunction with the Shared Concern method or motivational interviewing as a means to establish, for example, some feelings of empathy for the student being bullied.

The interviewer asks the student to consider how they feel about the person they have been bullying. Then ask the student, on a scale of 1-10, how strong that feeling is. On this scale 1 is low, 10 is high.

For example:

"On a scale of 1-10 how do you feel about \_\_\_\_?"

Very few students have been found to answer zero. But if this happens ask the student why and continue with the process you are using either the Shared Concern method or Motivational interviewing.

A student might say: "He's about a four".

The interviewer then replies: "Okay, about a four. What was it about that person that made you decide on a four rather than a lower score, like a three?" (At this point you are trying to get the student bullying to identify some positive characteristics about the student being bullied.) For example, the student might reply: "Well he's not the worst kid I ever met". From this point the interviewer can attempt to establish some positive attributes of the bullied student.

The interviewer then asks why the student bullying didn't give the other student a higher score, for instance a five. At this point the student will usually point out the reasons why this particular student was targeted for bullying. This is an important starting point for discussion relating to the characteristics and feelings of the other person, and how the bullying may be affecting that student.

This method of getting the student to think critically about the person they are bullying helps to develop an awareness of how the bullying situation developed and may provide ideas as to how this problem could be addressed.