



Dongara District High School

Management and Prevention of Bullying Policy



Respect, Responsibility, Achieve

Dongara District High School Management and Prevention of Bullying Policy

Rationale or Objective

Bullying and cyberbullying are pervasive issues for Australia's young people and school communities. At Dongara District High School (Dongara DHS), we are committed to a whole community approach which is required to ensure sustained change to student bullying.

Bullying is a learned behaviour that is unacceptable and can have long-term, harmful impacts on students' engagement, academic achievement, wellbeing, physical health, and mental health. However, bullying behaviours can be changed.

Bullying is a very complex behaviour, and no two circumstances are the same. Sometimes bullying may be occurring over a long period of time and it may seem that there is no way of resolving the issue. In these circumstances the school may engage the services of other support agencies with the view to work with the parties and support them to a resolution.

Effective change focuses on the prevention of bullying and cyberbullying (including cultural/societal change), being responsive to all types of bullying and cyberbullying behaviour whilst supporting individuals and the school community. At Dongara DHS we take an educative approach to managing and preventing bullying. Our school's processes and activities promote the development of the values and behaviours that create and maintain an inclusive, safe, and supportive education environment.

Vision

Staff, parents, and students of Dongara DHS are committed to treating each other with care and respect and accepting individual differences. At Dongara DHS we are all responsible for creating an environment that is safe and inclusive.

Definitions

The national definition of bullying for Australian schools is as follows:

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 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 of conflict or fight between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying. If any of these behaviours occurs only once or is part of a conflict between equals (no matter how inappropriate) it is not bullying. The behaviours alone don't define bullying.

Confirming whether the behaviours were intentional is not required to implement the strategies for responding effectively. Young people involved in bullying are not always fully aware of the impact of their actions on others. It is more important to act as a result of the effects on the targeted individual, regardless of determination of intent.

Bullying can include:

- **Verbal bullying:** The repeated use of words to hurt or humiliate another individual or group. Verbal bullying includes using put-downs, name-calling, insulting someone about the way they look or behave, spreading rumours, homophobic-gender and sexual diversity, racist or sexist comments.
- **Social/relational bullying:** Involves repeatedly ostracising others by ignoring someone or keeping them out of conversations, convincing others to dislike or exclude an individual or group, spreading rumours, and sharing information or images that will have a harmful effect on the other person.
- **Physical bullying:** Includes violent actions towards another person that involves hitting, pinching, biting, pushing, pulling, shoving, damaging or stealing someone's belongings, and unwanted touching.
- **Cyberbullying:** Involves the use of technology to bully a person or group with the intent to hurt them socially, psychologically or physically. Cyberbullying includes abusive texts and emails, hurtful messages, images or videos, imitating, excluding or humiliating others online, nasty online gossip and chat.
- **Bystanders:** Bystanders are those who are aware of, or witnesses to, the bullying situation. A supportive bystander (upstander) will use words and/or actions to support someone who is being bullied by intervening, getting and adult for support or comforting them. All members of a school community need to know how to support those who are being bullied and how to discourage bullying behaviours.

Types of behaviour in online bullying

Online bullying can include:

- sending insulting or threatening messages
- posting unkind messages or inappropriate images on social networking sites
- excluding others from online chats or other communication
- inappropriate image tagging
- sharing someone's personal or embarrassing information online
- creating hate sites or starting social exclusion campaigns on social networking sites
- sharing unflattering or private images, including naked or sexual images
- assuming the identity of the other person online and representing them in a negative manner or manner that may damage their relationship with others
- repeatedly, and for no strategic reason, attacking players in online gaming

For it to be called bullying, inappropriate actions online must be between people who have ongoing contact and be part of a pattern of repeated behaviours (online or offline). Single incidents or random inappropriate actions are not bullying. One action – such as an insulting comment or an embarrassing photo – which is repeated through sharing and forwarding to others, can be called bullying if the individuals involved know each other, and have ongoing contact either on or offline. Online bullying has the potential to have social, psychological and educational impacts.

Bystanders

Bullying can take place with students (and others) present. People who witness bullying are called bystanders. Bystanders can play a number of roles:

- assisting the students who are bullying and actively joining in
- encouraging or showing approval to the students who are bullying
- doing nothing or being passive
- defending or supporting the student who is being bullied by intervening, getting teacher support or comforting them

Bystanders who are passive (take no action) or behave in ways that give silent approval (watching, nodding, walking away) encourage the behaviour to continue. Students need to be encouraged to become '**Upstanders**' and report or attempt to stop bullying behaviours. When talking to students about ways to be supportive bystanders, parents and teachers need to be aware of (and respect) the reasons that students may not step in. They may:

- fear for their own safety (now and later) or position in the group
- think that someone else will help
- be worried about making things worse
- not know what to do
- think their actions won't make a difference
- think it's none of their business
- think the student being bullied deserved it
- think it's fun to watch

Upstanders

To be an **Upstander** takes work, courage, empathy, and a desire to disrupt inappropriate behaviour.

- notice the event – pay attention to what is going on around you
- interpret if it is a problem – sometimes it is hard to tell if someone is in need of help. Take the side of caution and report to an adult
- accept responsibility – do not assume someone else will do something. Have the courage to be the first to respond
- know how to help – don't put yourself in harm's way but do attempt to do something. Ask an adult for help.
- be kind

Rights and Responsibilities

Members of the Dongara DHS Community

- Members of the school community have the right to expect that Dongara DHS provides a safe and supportive learning environment. This expectation comes with a shared responsibility for the whole school community to prevent and effectively respond to behaviours that have the potential to affect school safety and wellbeing, including bullying.
- All allegations of bullying are treated seriously, and an appropriate level of confidentiality must be maintained at all times.
- *The whole-school community* includes students, staff, parents, caregivers and the wider community who interact within the school context.
- *All members* of the school community are responsible for reporting bullying behaviour, including the person who is perceived to be bullied. The school can take no action if the behaviour is not reported.
- *School leaders and staff* play a key role in fostering a safe and supportive climate across the whole school.
- *Students* are central in the school's efforts to counter bullying and to create positive learning environments for everyone.
- *Parents* contribute to anti-bullying efforts both by their support of their own children and participating in school activities and strategies.
- *The wider community* can play an important role in strengthening the school's anti-bullying messages.



MEMBERS	RIGHTS	RESPONSIBILITIES
All students, teachers, parents, wider school community	• are safe and supported in the school environment • are included • are treated with respect	• positive role modelling and demonstrate respect for all people • participate and contribute to school positive behaviour programs • build positive relationships • demonstrate respect and tolerance towards others
School leadership	• is supported by the school community in developing the school's plan to prevent and effectively manage bullying • is supported by the school community in implementing the strategies and programs under the school's plan	• fosters a safe and supportive climate across the school • provides leadership in resourcing the school's plan • ensures plans are clear and publicly available to the school community • ensures the school community is informed of the plan • implements the plan • supports staff to implement the strategies and programs under the plan
Staff	• feel safe and supported in the workplace • are informed by school leadership of the school's plan on bullying • have access to professional learning in preventing and effectively managing bullying • have access to curriculum resources suitable for supporting students in building positive relationships, resiliency, safety and bullying prevention (including social/ emotional learning)	• promote and model positive relationships • participate in developing the school plan • identify and respond to bullying incidents • deliver the strategies and programs to students in responding to bullying effectively • promote effective bystander behaviour • promote social problem-solving • use appropriate terminology when referring to bullying and the students involved
Students	• have access to curriculum that supports the building of resiliency and social skills • are informed by staff of the school's plan on bullying • are provided with supports by staff to stop bullying	• understand and value the concepts of inclusion and tolerance • identify and respond effectively to bullying • are aware of themselves as bystanders • seek help for themselves and others as needed
Parents	• are treated with respect • are confident their children are provided with a safe and supportive school environment • are provided with access to information on the prevention and management of bullying by the principal • are informed by the principal of the school's plan and opportunities to participate	• support and encourage children to treat others with respect and tolerance • model appropriate behaviours and teach children appropriate social skills including conflict resolution • act in accordance with the school plan if they observe/ know about bullying • encourage children to report bullying incidents • work effectively with the school in responding to bullying
Wider community: including other professionals	• are strategically included in bullying prevention and management	• provide support and input into the school's approach to preventing and managing bullying • strengthen the school's anti-bullying messages

School Strategies to Prevent and Manage Bullying

Dongara DHS employs a range of processes, strategies and programs for preventing and effectively managing bullying. Ongoing planning, monitoring and review of these processes, strategies and programs will ensure the effectiveness in preventing and managing bullying. We align our strategies with the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework www.education.gov.au/student-resilience-and-wellbeing/australian-student-wellbeing-framework and Be You beyou.edu.au a national mental health in education initiative. At Dongara DHS we engage in ongoing and collaborative planning, monitoring and reviewing of the school's processes, strategies and programs will ensure that schools are ready to respond effectively.

This includes:

- setting a timeline for review and updating
- using appropriate assessment tools to identify bullying issues and the school's progress towards achievement targets
- collaborating and linking with key stakeholders of the school community to form effective family and community partnerships
- providing opportunities for authentic student participation
- using existing data to monitor changes over time (longitudinal measures)
- making adjustments to the selected strategies and programs based on the data
- reviewing available resources (including human resources) to ensure that the approaches and strategies are suitable, accessible and sustainable; and
- communicating any changes to the whole-school community.

Whole School Prevention Strategies

- promoting a whole school student support approach with shared leadership
- promoting collaborative relationships between the school, parents and the wider community on developing and implementing school-based strategies and programs with students
- a positive whole-school plan based on the teaching and recognition of respectful and pro-social behaviour
- developing active, trusting relationships within the whole school community
- establishing a skilled student support team
- promote a school culture that seeks to be proactive and restore relationships affected by persistent or unresolved conflict
- promote positive staff role modelling
- ensure the plans or policies are monitored, reviewed and refined regularly and collaboratively
- providing professional learning for staff and parents in identifying, preventing and addressing bullying i.e. through Be You professional learning modules beyou.edu.au, the Office of the eSafety Commissioner esafety.gov.au
- implementing a developmental, evidence-based social emotional learning program - Friendly Schools, a whole-school social competency development curriculum friendlyschools.com.au
- aligning approaches and strategies with the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework
- using resources such as - Be You, Friendly Schools and Bullying No Way! to guide the school's planning
- use of 'STYMIE' online bullying reporting tool. about.stymie.com.au
- interagency relationships with groups such as Head Space, Youth Focus, YouthCare and CAMHS
- the provision of professional learning for staff and parents in identifying, preventing and addressing bullying
- supporting the National Day of Action – Against Bullying and Violence
- use of resources from the Bullying No Way website bullyingnoway.gov.au

Preventative Classroom Strategies can include:

- develop supportive and inclusive classroom environments
- implement effective classroom behaviour management approaches that teach and encourage positive behaviours, and address negative behaviours effectively
- restorative approaches
- recognise and reinforce positive communication, empathy, tolerance and social problem solving
- promote the use of cooperative learning strategies
- encourage and support help-seeking and effective bystander behaviour

Programs which may include Schools Plus, Aussie Optimism and Friendly Schools to promote and develop a shared understanding of:

- what behaviours constitute bullying, the impact of bullying, safe and supportive bystander responses, positive social problem-solving skills, cyber-bullying, including strategies for the promotion of cyber safety and positive cyber citizenship

Outside of Classroom Strategies to be considered:

- a highly visible and active approach to playground and duty supervision
- implement identification of, and supervision adjustments to high-risk situations and settings
- offer a range of organised activities during break times that encourage positive peer relations and networks
- recognise and reinforce positive yard and pro social behaviour
- restorative approaches
- providing developmentally appropriate unstructured playground activities and equipment
- develop and communicate whole-school processes for responding to yard and duty problem behaviours

Targeted Early Intervention Strategies

Early identification and effective responses reduce the associated risks and potential long-term harms caused by bullying.

- use of Stop, Walk, Talk anti bullying strategy www.pbisworld.com/tier-1/stop-walk-talk-strategy
- raising awareness of and planning around specific forms of bullying, such as cyberbullying and racism
- identifying and targeting early signs of problematic peer relationship issues within the school community
- identifying individuals and groups at risk that require targeted programs
- teaching effective bystander behaviour to targeted groups or for specific situations
- teaching pro-social behaviour to identified students and groups
- restorative approaches
- providing high supervision areas for students with higher support needs
- providing effective options for individual students experiencing safety issues (such as buddy systems, alternative play areas and transition routines)
- providing access to specialist/pastoral care staff and case management processes for students at risk of being targeted or those who demonstrate bullying behaviour
- promoting the inclusion of parents of students at risk in identifying and addressing bullying behaviours that may be occurring within the community



Procedures and Actions to respond to Bullying Incidents

Dongara DHS responds to bullying behaviour in the following ways:

- staff are provided with the support and training by school leadership to confidently manage bullying situations as they occur
- provide parents with information including key contacts and how the school will respond to bullying incidents
- staff, students and parents have processes for reporting incidents of bullying or when they become aware that a student needs support because of bullying
- intervention practices that resolve conflicts, restore relationships, and promote tolerance and social problem solving are used for responding to bullying incidents i.e.. restorative approaches
- help all the students involved with the incident (e.g. the student/s using bullying behaviours towards others; the student being bullied; bystanders) to discuss the incident such as using a *Co Late Model*- a technique used to encourage children and young people to speak to school staff about their concerns and stands for *Confidentiality, Listen, Acknowledge concerns, Talk about options* and end with *Encouragement*
- ensure staff members are aware of the processes for recording bullying incidences and monitoring the effectiveness of response strategies
- students who are experiencing bullying are provided with support by staff to promote recovery and resilience
- case management of students involved in persistent bullying is implemented. The School Psychologist and Chaplain can assist schools in implementing whole-school approaches to preventing and responding to bullying incidents.

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This Policy was ratified by the Dongara DHS School Board on 3 September 2025.



Restorative Approaches

Possible restorative approaches for students who bully others	
Restorative approach	When this approach can be used
The Shared Concern method Age: upper primary and Lower secondary students. For cases that are low to moderate severity	• Willingness to change behaviour • Groups of students identified as bullying others • Feels remorse, capacity for empathy • Also bullied by others • Person who bullies multiple individuals • Agreeable to participating in a series of meetings
Support Group method Age: middle to upper primary students. For cases that are low to low-moderate severity.	• Currently or previously a friend of person being bullied • Girls bullying girls • Person being bullied has other supportive friends • Feels remorse, has capacity for empathy • Influenced by group norms and normative expectations • Agreeable to participating in a series of meetings
Motivational interviewing Age: all secondary students. For cases that are low to moderate severity	• Does not feel remorse, limited capacity for empathy • Also bullied by others • Popular and/or high self-esteem • Willing to talk about behaviour • Person who bullies multiple individuals

Possible restorative approaches for students who are bullied by others	
Counseling approach	When this approach can be used
Individual meeting Age: Upper Primary and Secondary students. For cases that are low to moderate severity.	• Provocative individual • Individual has been bullied by multiple individual students and/or bullied for extended length of time • Also an individual who bullies others • Lower self-esteem • Agreeable to participating in a series of meeting
Support Group method Age: Middle to Upper Primary students and Secondary For cases that are low to low-moderate severity	• Currently or previously a friend of person who is bullying them • Girls bullying girls • Individual being bullied has other supportive friends • Agreeable to participating in a series of meetings
Motivational interviewing Age: All Secondary students. For cases that are low to moderate severity	• High motivation to take action to stop bullying • Willingness to help themselves • Individual has been bullied by multiple individual students and/or bullied for extended length of time • Provocative individual • Also an individual who bullies • Agreeable to participating in a series of meetings

Dongara District High School Managing and Preventing Bullying and Peer Conflict Flow Chart

