

FMS Anti-bullying Policy

Policy Number	3.7 (includes 3.7.1 & 3.7.2)
Policy Name	Anti-bullying
Compliance Standard NESA	Section 47 of the Education Act 1990 No 8 (NSW)
Compliance Standard ACECQA	Education and Care Services National Regulations including 170(1), (2) and 171(1), (2).
Date Reviewed	10.09.2024
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Endorsed By	Principal
Related Policies	Discipline Unlawful Discrimination Harassment and Bullying Statement Staff Code of Conduct
Related Procedures	Behaviour Management Procedures
Audience	FMS whole school community

RATIONALE

The purpose of this policy is to outline Forestville Montessori School's (the School) policy on maintaining a safe and positive environment for everyone, making bullying (children being mean on purpose) less likely to occur. The School rejects all forms of bullying behaviour including online (or cyber) bullying. We work to provide safe, inclusive, and respectful learning communities that promote student wellbeing. Staff at the school encourage high levels of parental and community involvement in the school to improve student attendance, engagement, learning and behaviour.

The school expects students to behave in a way and manner that is inclusive and respect other students, their teachers, school staff, and community members, and to not bully, harass, intimidate, or discriminate against anyone in our schools.

The school has established strategies and practices to encourage positive student behaviour, recognise and reinforce student achievement and wellbeing, and manage disruptive student behaviour.

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy covers anti bullying within the school through any medium. It applies to all students, employees, volunteers and visitors to the school.



DEFINITION

WHAT IS BULLYING Whilst there is no universally accepted definition of bullying, there is general consensus that bullying behaviour has the following elements:

A desire to hurt; the perpetration of hurtful behaviour (physical, verbal or relational) in a situation in which there is an imbalance of power; the action being regarded as unjustified, typically repeated and experienced by the target of the aggression as oppressive, and by the perpetrator as enjoyable. (Ken Rigby, 2002).

Bullying is a pattern of uninvited on-going behaviour directed by a more powerful person or group to intentionally or unintentionally hurt, injure, embarrass and/or distress a less powerful person or group.

Bullying may be physical, verbal, psychological, or social. Bullying can take many forms, all of which will cause distress. Examples of bullying include:

- Physical: Hitting, pushing, tripping, kicking, spitting on others.
- Extortion: Threatening to take someone's possessions, food or money.
- Verbal: Teasing, using offensive names, ridiculing, spreading rumours.
- Non-Verbal: Writing offensive notes or graffiti about others, using e-mail or text messaging to hurt others, rude gestures, facial gestures.
- Exclusion: Deliberately excluding others from the group, refusing to sit next to someone.
- Property: Stealing, hiding, damaging or destroying property.
- Cyber: Offensive/threatening images, offensive/ threatening/hurtful comments, rumour spreading via emails, SMS chatrooms etc.

The key features of bullying are that it:

- is people being mean on purpose;
- causes hurt and distress to the target and others, e.g. family;
- is repeated;
- involves the use of power in an unfair way; and is
- toxic to our school community.



Bullying is not always instigated by the older or stronger. “Bullying up” is bullying done by the smaller, the younger and the weaker, who either use anonymous means to bully, such as cyber bullying, or overt means to bully, knowing that any retaliation would make the provoked person look like they are the bully.

SYMPTOMS OF BULLYING

For behaviour to be classified as bullying, it needs to involve repeated actions that are intended to cause hurt. Not having friends or not being popular isn’t necessarily a sign that a person is being bullied. It may simply mean a person lacks inter-personal skills.

There is a difference between bullying behaviour and what can be described as normal interpersonal conflict. The symptoms associated with bullying include but are not limited to;

- not wanting to go to school,
- change in friends and social activities,
- anger,
- tears,
- depression,
- low self-esteem,
- and a raft of psychosomatic symptoms such as headaches and stomach aches.

Withdrawal and reluctance to “join in” can be a warning sign, as can non-attendance at school, misbehaviour and aggressive behaviour. Cuts, bruising, torn clothing, requests for extra food or stealing money, as well as a decline in academic performance can also be clues that a student may be suffering from bullying.

Any form of bullying is unacceptable, those who are identified as bullies will be supported to change their attitude and behaviour before further actions are taken.

CYBER BULLYING

Cyber bullying is causing hurt via modern technologies such as the Internet and other forms of social media, and through the use of smart phones and other mobile devices.

Cyber bullying is a growing problem in society. Modern technologies empower the individual, even the most unlikely of individuals, with an immense capacity to cause harm. It can be an attractive means of bullying for it can, under certain conditions, be carried out with relative anonymity.

Cyber bullying can be particularly damaging because of the capacity it has to humiliate, hurt and harm a person in front of a huge “audience” and the bully can remain anonymous.

A dangerous feature of cyber bullying is that it can be done quickly and easily. On an impulse, a person can create emotional havoc for another and do so before the voice of reason hints at the inappropriateness of the action.

A further problem with cyber bullying is that the bully is often unaware of the extent of the harm they are causing because cyber bullying seldom occurs face-to-face. The feedback is muted by distance so that the bully is protected from an understanding of the awfulness of their behaviour. The School's anti-bullying policy is equally applicable when using technology. Some examples of cyber-bullying, which are unacceptable at any time, whether at or away from school are listed below. In extreme cases, this kind of bullying may be referred to the Federal or Local Police.

- Sending a text message to another student containing threats or insults or inciting anti-social behaviour
- Forwarding on an email containing a destructive rumour about another person
- Creating a social media profile impersonating another person
- Sending a picture or video of 2 people kissing through email or mobile phone
- Threatening or swearing at an opponent via online games
- Impersonating another person on social media
- Filming a teacher or another student and uploading the footage on YouTube.

SEXTING

Another expression of cyber bullying is sexting.

Sexting is taking sexually explicit photos and making them available for others to see via a carriage service such as mobile phone or computer.

Sending explicit images of anyone, including yourself, is a crime if you are under the age of 18 years. If the person in the picture is under 16 years, it can be a very serious crime possibly resulting in charges of paedophilia.

MOBILE PHONES AND CYBER BULLYING

Using mobile devices to bully (also known as cyber bullying) and threaten other students are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. In some cases it can constitute criminal behaviour.

Students are reminded that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person and almost all calls, text messages and emails can be traced.

Mobile phones or other mobile devices must not be used to take photos/video of any other student or teacher without their consent. It is also prohibited to upload photos/ video of other students/teachers to social media websites or email photos/videos to others if doing so would



embarrass, humiliate or cause discomfort to the subject of the photo/video. Students are reminded that mobile phones are not to be used in toilets and changing facilities (when offsite)

STUDENT GUIDELINES (primary)

Due to the wealth of new social media tools available to students, student products and documents have the potential to reach audiences far beyond the classroom. This translates into a greater level of responsibility and accountability for everyone.

Below are guidelines students should adhere to when using Internet tools in the classroom or in any way related to classroom or School activities. Students should follow these guidelines anytime they post material that could identify them or their relationship to the School.

- Be aware of what you post online. Social media venues are very public. What you contribute leaves a digital footprint for potentially all to see. Do not post anything you wouldn't want friends, parents, other family members, teachers, or a future employer to see.
- Follow the school's code of conduct when writing online. It is acceptable to disagree with someone else's opinions, however, do it in a respectful way. Make sure that criticism is constructive and not hurtful. What is inappropriate in the classroom is inappropriate online.
- Be safe online. Never give out personal information, including, but not limited to, last names, phone numbers, addresses, exact birthdates, and pictures. Do not share your password with anyone besides the School staff and parents.
- Be aware of user policies and how they can change over a period of time.
- Linking to other websites to support your thoughts and ideas is recommended. However, be sure to read the entire article prior to linking to ensure that all information is appropriate for a school setting.
- How you represent yourself online is an extension of yourself. Do not misrepresent yourself by using someone else's identity.
- Know that the most frequent use of the Internet is for illegal activities such as scams, pornography and gambling. If you run across inappropriate material that makes you feel uncomfortable, or is not respectful, inform staff or parents right away.
- Use of social media platform and adhering to age restrictions

CYBER ANONYMITY

Students need to remember that something sent electronically can never be entirely removed even with a press of the “delete” button. The image may emerge at any stage in their future life and lead to serious consequences. Using pseudonyms, passwords and avatars does not protect the identity of a cyber-bully. Technologies exist to identify those who miss-use modern technologies to harm others.

When using a social-networking site, the School recommends that you set your profile to private and only allow access to people you personally know and trust. Do not upload any personal details that could lead to your identification by strangers.

HOW DOES SCHOOL PROMOTE A SAFE AND PEACEFUL ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN?

Pro-social behaviours promoted include:

- Grace & Courtesy lessons are designed to answer the child’s need for order and social structures in their environment. They give the child the vocabulary, actions and steps required for them to build awareness and responsiveness of those around them.
- Montessori Peace educational program which contains the children’s study of Peoples of the World through to learning about the Fundamental Needs of Humans. Emphasis is placed on the family of humankind and the interrelationship of all life. Montessori children begin to realize that they are not separate from the rest of the world but are an integral part of creating a harmonious world.
- Grow Your Mind program (GYM) complements Montessori studies by supporting children through the process of recognising their feelings as they relate to friendships. Learning about body language, non-verbal communication and developing the ability to hold respectful conversations. It helps create an overall positive well-being culture within the whole school.
- Practical Life curriculum develops the children’s care of the person and their immediate environment.
- Protecting, defending, helping, encouraging, giving through inclusion and tolerance.
- Cooperation is a key component of the Montessori philosophy. There is no focus on competition or comparisonnd between teachers.
- Belonging to the class and school communities
- Physical space in Montessori schools are carefully structured to foster:
 - Inclusion
 - Collective and individual responsibility
 - Order
 - Access to outdoors and nature



- The prepared environment is intertwined to further support wellbeing
- Multi aged environments where students look out and care for each other.

PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS

- If you believe that you or someone that you know are being bullied, you need to talk to an adult about your concerns as soon as possible.
- Talk to your class Director, assistant educator or any adult with whom you feel comfortable.
- The person receiving the complaint will support you and help.
- Any reported bullying incident will be followed up sensitively and actions taken and documented.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU ARE BEING BULLIED?

If you are being bullied, it is important that you talk to an adult who is in a position to help. There can be a reluctance to report bullying because of a fear of being labelled a “dobber” and going against an unwritten code of student behaviour. This concern is understandable but must not prevent you from reporting bullying behaviour. Most students dislike bullying and would support your attempts to stop it.

Some students may not want to report bullying because they feel it might only make matters worse. Again, this fear is understandable, but most Directors are trained in ways to help victims of bullying in a manner that protects the victim.

It takes courage to acknowledge that there is a bully, to help support them and the victim by asking for support from adults. If you are a bystander (you are there when something happens to another person) know that we all have the power to influence the lives of others in some way. Send someone to get help from an adult, or other children or go yourself.

- Tell the person being bullied that you don't like what is happening to them and ask, "Would you like me to tell someone or go with you to tell someone?".
- Remove the victim from that area so they feel safe, "Oh, there you are, someone is looking for you", or "We're waiting for you to play with us."
- Put up your hand in the stop sign, just like you were taught when you were a little kid, and use a strong voice to shout, "Stop that!"

The School expects its students to not tolerate bullying as a bystander or as a victim. If you are being bullied, you must tell a responsible adult who has the capacity to help.

Responsible adults can be:

- Parents, guardian or adult relatives
- Director or other adult at school
- Principal

If needed, further help can be obtained from:

- Kids Helpline – 1800 551 800
- Lifeline – 131 114
- Salve Youth Line – 9360 300
- Websites:
www.urstrong.com
www.bullyingnoway.com.au
www.kidshelp.com.au
www.takeastandtogether.gov.au

STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES AND DELEGATIONS

The processes and procedures are set out for staff with steps that are incremental and depending on the situation and context (see Behaviour Management Procedures)

School staff have a responsibility to:

- Respect and support students.
- Model and promote appropriate behaviour.
- Have working knowledge of the School's policies relating to bullying behaviour.
- Respond in a timely manner to incidents of bullying.

In addition, all staff 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.
- NESA curriculum aims to enable students to develop the knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes required to lead and promote healthy, safe and active lives. Therefore students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of strategies that promote a sense of

personal identity and build resilience and respectful relationships; demonstrate an understanding of movement skills, concepts and strategies to respond confidently, competently and creatively in a variety of physical activity contexts; understand the significance of contextual factors that influence health, safety, wellbeing and participation in physical activity; and enact and strengthen health, safety, wellbeing and participation in physical activity.

- Students develop and use self-management skills that enable them to take personal responsibility for their actions and emotions and take positive action to protect and enhance the health, safety and wellbeing of others; develop interpersonal skills that enable them to interact effectively and respectfully with others, build and maintain respectful relationships and advocate for their own and others' health, safety, wellbeing and participation in physical activity; and move with confidence, competence and creativity within and across various physical activity contexts.
- Students value and appreciate influences on personal health practices and demonstrate a commitment to lead and promote healthy, safe and active lives for themselves, others and communities.

Students have a responsibility to:

- Behave appropriately, respecting individual differences and diversity.
- Behave as responsible digital citizens.
- Follow the School's anti-bullying philosophy.
- Behave as responsible bystanders.
- Report incidents of anti-social behaviour immediately.

Parents work in partnership with the School and have a responsibility to:

- Support their children to become responsible citizens and to develop responsible on-line behaviours.
- Be aware of the school anti-bullying plan and assist their sons in understanding bullying behaviour.
- Support their children in developing positive responses to incidents of bullying consistent with the School's anti-bullying plan.
- Report incidents of school related bullying behaviour to the school.

The School reserves the right to alter the means and ways by which it discourages bullying. If any member of the community would like to suggest an improvement in the way bullying, they are invited to send their suggestions to the Principal.

LIVING OUR VALUES

The School is committed to providing a safe and happy learning environment.

The School knows that preventing and responding to bullying is the shared responsibility of all school staff, volunteers, and contracted staff employed by schools, and students, parents and carers. Teachers and other school staff are provided with support and professional development to discourage, prevent, identify, and respond to student bullying behaviour.

Directors and assistants: support the school in maintaining a safe, inclusive and supportive learning environment; model and promote appropriate relationships and behaviours; promote a school culture where bullying is not acceptable; teach students to identify, report and respond to bullying at school and online; manage reports of bullying and escalate matters to the principal (or delegate) when necessary.

Non-teaching staff: refer any report of bullying to a teacher or school executive staff.

Principals (or their delegate): Ensure the implementation of the Anti-bullying Plan for their school; maintain a positive school climate which includes respectful relationships; identify patterns of bullying behaviour and initiate school action to respond; manage complaints about bullying in accordance with the Complaints Handling Policy.

Monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements

The principal and staff review the Anti-bullying Policy regularly. NESAs monitor the implementation of this policy and reviews its effectiveness, at least every three years.

We focus on supporting children with practical skills-based strategies for how to manage and stand up to mean-on-purpose behaviour. When children start standing up to such behaviour, they are not only learning to treat themselves with respect, but they also deter the children who are being mean-on-purpose from doing it again. Children have a toolkit to use when they are faced with a challenge which includes a school wide vocabulary to use, such as using respectful conversations to 'put out Friendship Fires' regarding normal conflict or a "mean on purpose" incident. They have simple skills to perform in these situations and they have practised their technique.

Admit to imperfections. It can send positive messages about you having a realistic understanding of yourself.

Use non-offensive humour. Bullying can be blunted by a good laugh. The capacity to laugh at yourself can create a bonding with a group that might otherwise remain hostile.

Review your own behaviours and body language. If you look like a victim you can become a victim. Develop your “emotional intelligence”. This includes the ability to read body language, to sense mood, to be intuitive and empathetic. Such skills not only make you less of a target, they can enable you to see where a situation may be heading.

Surround yourself with good friends. Those with strong friendships are usually less of a target for bullies.

If bullied, try not to retaliate for this can often inflame the situation.

If bullied online or via text, take a screen shot.

If you are being bullied, remind yourself that it is the bully who has the problem, not you. Try to think through what inadequacies the bully might have that causes them to behave this way.

Understanding a bully is a great way to begin to solve the problem.

DON'T BE A VICTIM

Victims can attract bullying behaviour. This is NOT to excuse bullying or condone it in any way. It is to suggest that victims can sometimes reduce their chances of being a target if they:

- Work on fitting in, getting involved and making a rich contribution to the School.
- Model kindness, thoughtfulness and respect.
- Don't catastrophise situations out of all proportion.
- Develop an ability to deal with:
 - failure,
 - threats and fears,
 - rejection and disappointment,
 - anger and hurt.

Try and maintain good physical fitness, it can help with resilience.

Having noted the above, it is vital that anyone who is a victim of bullying recognise that they have been wronged. They must report the matter and not suffer in silence.

HOW TO HELP A CHILD WHO IS BEING BULLIED

The most important thing a parent can do to help their child who is being bullied is to provide love and reassurance and to support them in their quest to solve the problem. A report of bullying by a child should always be taken seriously.

Parents can take comfort that the bully-free world they want for their child is also wanted by the School.

FINDING OUT

Sometimes, a child can be reluctant to tell their parents that they are being bullied. Creating a culture of openness within the home can help. Solutions can be as simple as having evening meals together, without the distraction of the television, and making it a regular habit to enquire how your child is feeling.

It can be useful to use an intermediary such as an older sibling, grandparent or close friend in order to find out if a son is being bullied. Use can also be made of the family doctor or child psychologist.

PARENTS CAN HELP REDUCE THE CHANCES OF THEIR CHILD BEING BULLIED?

- Developing their child's independence.
- Practicing strategies of how to react in situations.
- Role model and teach empathy and respect for all
- Share your family values
- Good management around online interactions (encouraging computer use in an open family area, so that there is effective monitoring of online activity)

Support and understanding is sought from parents of alleged bullies and alleged victims when the School is investigating an accusation of bullying.

If you have any concerns, your first point of contact should be your child's class director. If you are not satisfied with the response, contact the Birth to Six Coordinator, Assistant Principal or the Principal.

For incidents of physical violence, and where required, staff should administer first aid (consistent with their training and experience) and contact emergency services whenever necessary. Staff must also report the incident to the Incident Reporting and Support Hotline on 1800 811 523 and the police on 02 9971 3399 (Dee Why).