

# Anti-bullying Plan Hunter School of the Performing Arts





# Bullying:

## Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying in Schools Policy (2011)

The NSW Department of Education and Communities rejects all forms of bullying. No student, employee, parent, caregiver or community member should experience bullying within the learning or working environments of the Department.

### Bullying

**Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. Cyber bullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies.**

**Bullying can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and all forms of harassment including that based on sex, race, disability, homosexuality or transgender. Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long term effects on those involved including bystanders.**

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

Bullying behaviour can be:

- **verbal** eg name calling, teasing, abuse, putdowns, sarcasm, insults, threats
- **physical** eg hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting
- **social** eg ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating, making inappropriate gestures
- **psychological** eg spreading rumours, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions, malicious SMS and email messages, inappropriate use of camera phones.

The term “bullying” has a specific meaning. The school’s Anti-bullying Plan sets out **the processes for preventing and responding to student bullying**. The school has a range of policies and practices, including welfare and discipline policies that apply to student behaviour generally.

Schools exist in a society where incidents of bullying behaviour may occur. Preventing and responding to bullying behaviour in learning and working environments is a shared responsibility of all departmental staff, students, parents, caregivers and members of the wider school community.

**School staff** have a responsibility to:

- respect and support students
- model and promote appropriate behaviour
- have knowledge of school and departmental policies relating to bullying behaviour
- respond in a timely manner to incidents of bullying according to the school’s Anti-bullying Plan.

In addition, teachers have a responsibility to:

- provide curriculum and pedagogy that supports students to develop an understanding of bullying and its impact on individuals and the broader community.

**Students** have a responsibility to:

- behave appropriately, respecting individual differences and diversity
- behave as responsible digital citizens
- follow the school Anti-bullying Plan
- behave as responsible bystanders
- report incidents of bullying according to their school Anti-bullying Plan.

**Parents and caregivers** have a responsibility to:

- support their children to become responsible citizens and to develop responsible online behaviour
- be aware of the school Anti-bullying Plan and assist their children in understanding bullying behaviour
- support their children in developing positive responses to incidents of bullying consistent with the school Anti-bullying Plan
- report incidents of school related bullying behaviour to the school
- work collaboratively with the school to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur.

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

- model and promote positive relationships that respect and accept individual differences and diversity within the school community
- support the school’s Anti-bullying Plan through words and actions
- work collaboratively with the school to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur.

# Hunter School of the Performing Arts Anti-bullying Plan

This plan outlines the *processes for preventing and responding to student bullying in our school* and reflects the *Bullying: Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying in Schools Policy* of the New South Wales Department of Education and Communities.

The Hunter School of the Performing Arts Plan has been developed in consultation with representatives from across the school community, including staff, parents, caregivers and students.

## Statement of purpose

Hunter School of the Performing Arts recognises that schools exist in a society where intimidation and harassment occur. ***Students have the right to expect that they will spend the school day free from the fear of bullying, harassment and intimidation.*** Hunter School of the Performing Arts embraces the philosophy of a safe and happy learning and teaching environment for all students. This plan aims to identify bullying behaviour and initiate a whole-school approach to address this issue. The Hunter School of the Performing Arts community will not tolerate any form of bullying or harassment and will work hard to model respectful behaviour. We expect all of our community - staff, students and parents - to share the responsibility for ensuring a safe, resilient and caring environment that promotes personal growth and positive self-esteem for all. ***Bullying is a serious matter and is not acceptable in any form.***

## Protection

Bullying can be defined as intentional, repeated behaviour by an individual or group of individuals that causes distress, hurt or undue pressure. It can involve all forms of harassment (including sex, race, disability, homosexuality or transgender), humiliation, domination and intimidation of others. Bullying behaviour can be:

- **Verbal** ▪ name calling, sarcasm, insults, offensive names, ridiculing, teasing, abuse, humiliation, sarcasm, insults, threats;
- **Physical** ▪ hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting;
- **Social** ▪ ignoring, excluding, lying, nasty jokes, ostracising, alienating, making inappropriate gestures, forcing others to do something;
- **Psychological** ▪ intimidating, manipulating, spreading rumours, glaring, hiding or damaging possessions, offensive notes or graffiti;
- **Cyber** ▪ malicious SMS and email or social media messages, inappropriate use of camera phones.

Bullying can devalue, isolate and frighten young people. It has long-term effects on those engaging in bullying behaviour, those who are the subjects of bullying behaviour and the onlookers or bystanders.

## Our Mission

***At Hunter School of the Performing Arts we aim to provide a caring, respectful, inclusive and supportive school culture free from bullying and harassment.***

Hunter School of the Performing Arts is an inclusive environment, where diversity is affirmed and individual differences are respected. We believe that our students attend school to participate in quality education that will help them to become self-directed, lifelong learners who can create a positive future for themselves and the wider community.

The wellbeing, safety and health of students inform school policies, programs and practices. Partnership with parents, caregivers, students and the wider community is central to the success of this process.

We endeavor to achieve this in the following ways:

- A clear whole school definition of bullying and our school's response to bullying is actively promoted throughout the school community;

- A clear Anti-bullying Plan has been developed in collaboration with staff, students and parents/carers, which addresses all forms of bullying (including digital citizenship);
- Procedural steps to appropriately respond to bullying incidents (for both the target and the bully) are clearly documented and promoted to staff, students and parents. They clearly define the roles and responsibilities of staff, students and parents/carers;
- Teaching and learning programs promote aspects of personal welfare and address all forms of bullying through the teaching of language skills, social skills, assertiveness, coping strategies, group mechanisms, motives for bullying and being effective bystanders;
- Professional development is available to assist school staff to understand the school's Anti-bullying Plan, assist in the implementation of anti-bullying related teaching and learning programs, and strategies to provide support for students;
- Students are consulted regularly to monitor and determine the types of bullying behaviour and in what school and social contexts bullying occurs;
- Students are given an option for effectively reporting bullying incidents;
- Physical environments in the school and staff supervision practices limit the incidences of bullying (including digital citizenship).
- Families are informed, supported and engaged through regular, clear communication and systematic parent awareness raising and skill building;
- Anti-bullying welfare and policy related processes are bi-annually reviewed and the effectiveness of specific school programs are recognised and celebrated.

## Shared responsibility

Each group within the school community has a specific role in preventing and dealing with bullying. Students, teachers, parents, caregivers and members of the wider school community have a responsibility to:

- promote positive relationships that respect and accept individual differences and diversity within the whole school community;
- contribute to the development of the Anti-bullying Policy and support it through words and actions;
- actively work together to resolve incidents of bullying behaviour when they occur.

The school's Anti-bullying Plan sets out the processes for preventing and responding to student bullying.

### Students have a responsibility to:

- behave appropriately, respecting individual differences and diversity;
- follow the school Anti-bullying Plan ;
- report acts of bullying behaviours;
- understand the consequences of their actions if they choose to bully;
- respond to incidents of bullying according to their school Anti-bullying Plan.

### All students must:

- understand the definition of bullying as intentional, repeated behaviour by an individual or group of individuals that causes distress, hurt or undue pressure. **It is not an isolated incident;**
- refuse to be involved in any bullying situation;
- take some form of preventative action if they are present when bullying occurs;
- report incidents of bullying when it occurs and help break down the "code of secrecy";
- be assertive in using appropriate directive language to anyone who demonstrates behaviours that are hurtful, offensive or insulting;
- behave appropriately, respecting individual differences and diversity;
- behave as responsible digital citizens;
- follow the school Anti-bullying Plan ;
- behave as responsible witnesses.

**Teachers have a responsibility to:**

- respect and support students in all aspects of their learning;
- model appropriate behaviour;
- respond in an appropriate and timely manner to incidents of bullying according to the school Anti-bullying Plan .

**All teachers must:**

- be role models in their behaviour at all times;
- be on the lookout for signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying;
- be on time for playground duty and actively supervise the playground;
- arrive at class on time and actively supervise the areas around their staffroom between lessons;
- be aware of and follow procedures to help victims of bullying and report incidents of bullying using Millennium;
- behave appropriately, respecting individual differences and diversity;
- have knowledge of school and departmental policies relating to bullying behaviour;
- respond in a timely manner to incidents of bullying;
- investigate and report incidents of bullying and when necessary inform your supervisor, relevant Year Adviser or Deputy Principal (following the Anti-bullying flowchart) on the same day (when possible) you became aware of the bullying;
- assist in the provision and determination of appropriate support strategies for bullies and their targets;
- teach students key understandings and skills relating to positive relationships, safety, gender equity, discrimination, bullying and harassment. These experiences will be guided by specific welfare strategies, school programs such as Peer Support and Peer Mediation as well as Personal Development, Health and Physical Education syllabuses and other Key Learning Areas.

**Head Teachers have a responsibility to assist classroom teachers in the management of bullying incidents by:**

- guiding teachers in the processing of documentation and referring to the HT Welfare or Deputy Principal where appropriate;
- investigating incidents, interviewing and implementing strategies where necessary;
- supporting teachers in their investigations of incident/s to assist in the evaluation and strategy implementation where necessary;
- supporting and encouraging staff to respond to all bullying incidents in a timely manner;
- providing ongoing support for all involved.

**Year Advisers have a responsibility to:**

- assist the Deputy Principal, or Head Teacher where appropriate, in the effective liaison between the school and home, in the successful management of bullying related incidents;
- provide feedback to staff on bullies and targets, in order to enable effective support strategies to be determined;
- record relevant incidents and discuss and review incidents of bullying at Learning Support Team meetings.

**The Head Teacher Welfare has a responsibility to:**

- liaise with Executive, Year Advisers and parents in regard to the school's Anti-bullying Plan ;
- manage the mediation and resolution of specific incidents, where appropriate;
- assist in the provision of training and development of all staff in anti-bullying and mediation strategies;
- assist, where appropriate, in the provision of conflict resolution and anti-bullying programs for students;
- assist, where appropriate, in the support of students who are at risk, this involves informing staff and/or providing appropriate strategies to individuals where necessary;
- support, where appropriate, parents/caregiver in dealing with bullying issues of a general nature.

### **The School Counsellor has a responsibility to:**

- liaise with the relevant Assistant Principal, HT Welfare and/or Deputy Principal regarding case management relating to bullying incidents of an extreme or critical nature;
- assist the relevant Deputy Principal, where appropriate, in the effective liaison between the school and home in the successful management of bullying cases.

### **The Deputy Principals have a responsibility to:**

- manage critical bullying incidents referred by a member of the Hunter School of the Performing Arts community;
- offer support and guidance to all staff when dealing with critical bullying incidents.

### **The Principal has a responsibility to:**

- lead the development, implementation and evaluation of the Anti-bullying Plan and ensure that the policy is readily accessible to all members of the school community;
- Develop a shared community understanding of bullying behaviour that captures all forms of bullying including cyber-bullying;
- Maintaining a positive climate of respectful relationships where bullying is less likely to occur;
- Empower the whole school community to recognise and respond appropriately to bullying, harassment and victimisation and behave as responsible bystanders.

### **Parents and caregivers have a responsibility to:**

- support their children to become responsible citizens and to develop responsible online 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;

- work collaboratively with the school to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur;
- support their children in all aspects of their learning;
- be aware of the school Anti-bullying Plan and assist their children in understanding bullying behaviour;
- support their children in developing positive responses to incidents of bullying consistent with the school Anti-bullying Plan.

### **Hunter School of the Performing Arts encourages parents to:**

- watch for signs of distress, unwillingness to attend school or other signs suggesting stress or anxiety;
- advise your child to tell a staff member about the incident if bullying occurs;
- advise your child not to react in an aggressive manner;
- keep written records of bullying or encourage your child to print or save any incidents of online bullying;
- inform the school if bullying is ongoing;
- not attempt to confront anyone accused of perpetrating bullying behaviour at school.

## **Prevention**

At Hunter School of the Performing Arts we endeavour to deal with bullying efficiently (with a timely response time) and effectively. Strategies for dealing with bullying are linked to the school's Welfare Plan and encompass the range of options available to deal with unacceptable behaviours, including suspension and expulsion.

In dealing with bullying behaviour, we recognise the repeated and recurring nature of bullying and have put mechanisms in place to identify patterns of repeated offending.

Students, their parents and caregivers are encouraged to be proactive in dealing with bullying, so that appropriate support can be provided to those students involved in any incident.

Strategies are in place (or currently being developed for implementation in 2014) in our school to effectively teach the skills and understandings that will lead to eliminating bullying behaviours.

These strategies:

- must be incorporated into the teaching programs across key learning areas;
- must be reinforced consistently through school practices that promote respectful relationships including but not limited to anti-bullying messages in the school's newsletter, the school websites (including the custom built bully e-reporting tool Connect@HSPA), the Skoolbag SmartPhone application and the school's social media (Facebook and Twitter) pages, student notices, assemblies and the use of anti-bullying messaging posters, welfare days and other anti-bullying resources;
- encourage the empowerment of the whole school community to recognise and respond appropriately to bullying, harassment and victimisation;
- contribute to the general health and wellbeing of all students.

## Specific strategies

### 1. Anti-bullying Leadership Team

In 2013, students (including select SRC/Mind Matters students and the Primary Captains) and staff (including the HT Welfare, Year Advisers and interested teachers) created the Anti-bullying Leadership Team which aims to lead, implement and monitor whole school anti-bullying initiatives and programs. Parents are also invited to contribute to the team initiatives to encourage a whole school community approach.

The team meets formally at least once a term to monitor and evaluate anti-bullying related initiatives to ensure consistent awareness and the refinement of strategies to reflect the current context of the school.

The Anti-bullying Leadership Team have been integral in the development of the school's inaugural Anti-bullying Plan and will take part in its ongoing review and evaluation procedures.

### 2. Anti-bullying Awareness Campaign

From 2014, the Anti-bullying Leadership Team will lead a revitalised initiative to create and maintain a whole school anti-bullying awareness campaign. The aim is to engage and motivate students and staff while embracing a whole school approach to bullying behaviours.

The campaign will include (but is not limited to):

- A whole school slogan and poster campaign promoting the *Stand Up, Speak Out* message and also the Connect@HSPA website.
- The *Stand Up, Speak Out* Creative Showcase will take place in Term 1 culminating in an assembly to showcase the winners on Harmony Day. This will then take place every year (sponsored by Beyond Bank and other local organisations for prizing).
- Week 11 in Term One (each year) will be dedicated to a range of anti-bullying related welfare programs (guest speakers, workshops, performances, curriculum focus areas) and whole school activities to support the school's policy and campaign;
- The launch of the new school website Connect@HSPA will take place in Week 11 of Term One, 2014. This unique custom designed website is dedicated to anti-bullying awareness and online reporting strategies. It will be maintained and updated each term to reflect the changing need of the school. Its success will be evaluated regularly in its initial phases;
- The painting of one (or multiple) murals around the school showcasing the school anti-bullying campaign messages – these murals could feature in designated “safe spaces” around the school. One mural could feature handprints or messages from the student body conveying the support and commitment of the school to anti-bullying philosophies;

- School campaign to be launched with social media focus to spread the school message; media and special guests to be invited to the day;
- *Note* – in future years our celebration/recognition of anti-bullying messaging will be linked with Harmony Day and/or the National Anti-bullying Day.

### 3. Online E-Reporting System – Connect@HSPA

The current offline reporting system involves:

- **Students** are encouraged to report any form of bullying, whether they are the victim or a bystander. Students should report incidents verbally to a teacher or Year Adviser, or use an incident form to document and report the bullying.
- **Parents and caregivers** should phone the school and report low level bullying to the Year Adviser, and any high level, physical or persistent bullying should be reported to the Deputy Principal.
- **Teachers** – should record and report low level bullying to the Year Adviser, and any high level, physical or persistent bullying should be reported directly to the relevant Head Teacher or Deputy Principal; all confirmed incidence of bullying are recorded on Millennium.

The school is supporting the introduction of an online reporting system to allow for discrete and detailed reporting of bullying incidents. This online reporting system will be implemented in April, 2014.

The online reporting system will include:

- A dedicated website, linked to the current website, featuring comprehensive resources for students, teachers and parents related to a range of bullying issues and strategies. Contact details for external resources will be provided. The aim is for the online resource to be a “one stop shop” for all bullying and anti-bullying issues relevant and specific to our school;

- The online resource will feature a reporting system which will allow students to report specific incidences (this system may or may not allow for anonymity). The reports will be collated and checked by a nominated Executive member who will follow up promptly on all reports.
- Links to ongoing and/or term based surveys to allow for continuous feedback and evaluative data relating to bullying at our school;
- Anti-bullying Leadership Team have proposed the website/resource be called “Safe House” – but this may change to reflect the final campaign;
- Social media/newsletter/posters to promote online resource/s.

### 4. Ongoing Intervention

Students are encouraged not to tolerate any forms of bullying and to contact a staff member to report any incidents. Students who are a witness to bullying should only intervene for low level bullying where they are in no danger of physical harm; if the act is violent, then a teacher should be informed immediately.

Parents/caregivers are encouraged not intervene or contact bullies or their parents directly, but should contact the school to get support for the victims of bullying.

Specific strategies include:

- A “Bullying Box” (in a discrete location) for reporting bullying incidents for Primary and Stage 4 students who do not have easy access to online devices;
- A designated “Safe Space” (possibly in library) – featuring informative books and resources for students who are being bullied;
- Regular surveys (two per year per year group) collect information and data which reflect the current context and student body needs;
- Behaviour and/or specific welfare support provided for Year 7 students identified by their primary school as at risk;

- Students will have access to counselling and advice from Year Advisers, the HT Welfare and/or the school counsellor/s;
- An anti-bullying focus in curriculum areas. For example, all students in Year 7 English (as of 2014) will take part in the *Stand Up, Speak Out* unit of work which focuses on concepts such as celebrating individuality, tolerance and acceptance;
- Ongoing professional learning opportunities for teachers and Year Advisers focusing on bullying issues and particularly dealing with cyber bullying and digital citizenship.

## 5. Year Adviser Support and Welfare Programs

The HT Welfare and Year Advisers play a fundamental role in providing ongoing support to students who are being bullied or are bullying themselves.

Specific strategies include:

- A dedicated school based award system to encourage students to support victims of bullying to recognise individuals who help others and/or the school community with regards to bullying;
- The Learning Support Team (in conjunction with the Anti-bullying Leadership Team) ensures the consistency and longevity of regular whole school anti-bullying focused programs, surveys and initiatives. Boys Education strategies and initiatives in Stage 4;
- Peer Support Program in Year 7;
- Peer Mediation Program in Years 5-12;
- Year group anti-bullying focus programs from Years 7-12 (specific programs to be confirmed by HT Welfare);
- A strong 6-7 Transition Program which includes an anti-bullying focus and opportunities to participate in small focus groups with student leaders;
- The development of a student created short film and anti-bullying physical resources (offline and online) to provide new students with access to information and resources specific to our school;

- Input from our Police School Liaison Office with all year groups in targeted digital citizenship workshops;
- Visiting performances which use drama and performance to role play bullying-related behaviour, its impact and coping strategies;
- Specific resources to be added to the school diaries – including a flowchart outlining how students can respond to acts of bullying and a summary of the school's Anti-bullying Plan;
- Executive presence in reinforcing consistent rules/consequences across the whole school in relation to bullying behaviours. There should be transparency in students having a clear understanding of consequences in relation to specific behaviours;
- Parent/carer contact and interviews.

## 6. School Environment

- “Safe Spaces” will be identified in the playground and library (and other potential areas) where students can seek solace. One designated space will also provide students with resources to generate an incident report (offline and/or online) as well as information and contact details for assistance and support;
- School poster campaign will provide a visual presence around the school. Posters will encourage students to speak out against acts of bullying;
- Murals and artwork around the school will reinforce the school's commitment to wiping out bullying behaviours;
- A playground audit will be conducted to identify areas in the school prone to bullying incidents. Teachers will provide closer supervision or out of bounds areas may be redefined to ensure all areas of the playground are safe and accessible for all students;
- Teachers (in conjunction with the whole school anti-bullying campaign) will reinforce that classrooms must always be safe places - free from ridicule and harassment where students' possessions are not stolen or 'borrowed' by others and where learning takes place in a supportive environment.

## 7. Accessing Help and Support

In accessing help and support:

- Students should be encouraged to talk to a parent, teacher, Year Adviser, School Counsellor, Deputy Principal or Principal;
- Parents/ Caregivers should be encouraged to call the school and discuss any issues relating to bullying with a teacher, Year Adviser, School Counsellor, Deputy Principal or Principal;
- Teachers and other school staff should be involved in discussions with students, parent, teachers, Year Advisers, the School Counsellor, Deputy Principal or Principal and external health care professionals to consult with regards to bullying issues;
- Relevant resources about coping with bullying are available from the school library “Safe Space”;
- Comprehensive resources including videos, stories and links for further information and support are available on the school’s anti-bullying web resource and Facebook page;

## 8. Peer Mediation

The HT Welfare is the Peer Mediation Coordinator and works with Year Advisers and the Deputy Principals to:

- Promote in-school publicity and education of staff and students
- Oversee the training of peer mediators
- Explain mediation to students in conflict and encourage them to engage in the process
- Schedule mediation sessions
- Supervise mediation sessions (when required)
- Follow up on all cases and maintain records
- Keep the school community informed about the program's progress

Peer Mediation is offered to students from Year 5 to Year 11. Selected Year Advisers and SRC students from Year 7 to Year 11 are trained each year by Mind Matters in Peer Mediation processes. The peer mediators can

then mediate conflicts/issues with students who are in a younger year group. Students have indicated their preference would be to mediate students two years below them (ie Year 7 students mediate Year 5, Year 8 mediate Year 6, Year 9 mediate Year 7, Year 10 mediate Year 8, Year 11 mediate Year 9 and 10. Year 11 students can choose to mediate within their year group or seek support from their Year Adviser).

Year Advisers and the HT Welfare must set up the mediation time and place. Mediators can then access support materials and relevant resources from the HT Welfare office.

Peer Mediators need to document a school based flowchart outlining their process so that formal mediation sessions can begin in Term 3, 2013.

## 9. Professional learning for teachers and other school staff

Teachers will have access to a range of internal and external resources to help them support and provide guidance to students and parents experiencing bullying related issues. This may include:

- Ongoing Professional Learning opportunities for programs and issues such as - Peer Support, Mind Matters (peer mediation), conflict resolution and digital citizenship (cyber-crimes).
- Staff must ensure they have a thorough understanding of the school’s anti-bullying policy and related procedures including the correct utilisation of Millennium to report on bullying incidents and related communication with parents or other external contacts;
- Staff support and encourage a range of programs and initiatives that foster a positive climate of respectful relationships.

## Early intervention

The school has early intervention strategies for students who are identified as being at risk of developing long-term difficulties with social relationships and those students who are identified at, or after, enrolment as having previously experienced bullying or engaged in bullying behaviour.

For students at risk, the school will:

- Work with relevant parents to support students encountering difficulties in social relationships;
- Arrange for the Learning Support Team to work with parents/caregivers to develop a negotiated personalised plan for students with disabilities who may encounter difficulties with social relationships;
- Use the expertise of the school counsellor to develop intervention strategies and provide opportunities for counselling sessions;
- Mentor at-risk students using key personnel, for example, the Year Adviser, support teacher, Head Teacher Welfare, Deputy Principal or a nominated person who can provide trust and support;
- Ensure students and parents are aware of and understand the school's Anti-bullying Plan so that appropriate action can be taken by the school to support all parties;
- Seek outside agency support to further encourage resilience and self-esteem, if required;
- Utilise the expertise of regional personnel to provide support and guidance, if required.

## Empowering the school community

We will focus on whole school behaviour change through:

### Staff Awareness

- Raise awareness through whole staff meetings, ongoing evaluation and regular reporting;
- Training and development of staff, information for permanent and casual staff on procedures to deal with bullying;
- Implement programs to involve all school staff;
- Adopt whole school procedures for dealing with bullying incidents.

### Student Awareness

- Explicitly teach students to recognise what is bullying and ways of building resilience;
- Raise and promote continued awareness of the school's Anti-bullying Plan through visual campaigns, the school website and social media forums, SRC, school assemblies and curriculum focus areas;
- Visual displays and posters to promote a safe environment;
- Year Advisers and DPs to raise awareness and explain procedures at regular year based assemblies

### Parent and Community Awareness

- Awareness rose through the school's online forums – school website, Facebook, Twitter, Skoolbag, emailed newsletters;
- Advice to parents in Student Information Booklets and Parent Information Evenings;
- P & C support of policy;
- Published Anti-bullying Plan on school website.

## Communication

The school intranet and Millennium provides an efficient and confidential way of communicating information about students. Students with risk assessment and/or behaviour management issues will have these details made available to their classroom teachers and Head Teachers. This information dissemination will be coordinated by the HT Welfare and relevant DPs and Year Advisers.

Information regarding specific students and newly identified issues is shared, when required, at weekly briefings and Learning Support Team meetings.

## Dealing with bullying incidents

Students, parents, community and staff work together to establish whether or not an incident of bullying has occurred. It is important to differentiate between a one off incident and ongoing behaviour that causes distress.

### Parents/Caregivers

- Parents who feel their child may be a victim of bullying should contact their child's Year Adviser or Deputy Principal in order that the school may support the child in a caring, protective manner;
- After initial contact and a feeling of cooperation has been established, the procedures for managing a bullying incident should be implemented.

### Students

- The relevant staff member must investigate all reports made by students to teaching staff as the bullying act may, in some cases, appear to be minor, but its effect on the victim may be more serious;
- Students are expected to report any incident that they feel constitutes bullying in the following ways:
  - In the classroom: firstly to the classroom teacher
  - In the playground: to the teacher on duty first and HT on duty or the Deputy if teacher unavailable.
  - Travelling to and from school: to the Bus Drive, to the Year Adviser, Deputy or Parent
  - At Sport: to the supervising teacher at sport or Teacher in charge of Sport
  - In all cases students must complete an incident report or online e-report, which is available from a DP or HT Welfare.
  - This form is essential, as it will give the teacher more information to help the student recognise whether or not the incident was bullying behaviour.

All incident reports or parent contact are investigated within two working days where possible. Interventions may include:

- Mediation or peer mediation;
- A record of the incident in Millennium;
- A referral to the Learning Support team for additional support;
- Parent/carer interviews;
- Disciplinary consequences;
- Referral to counsellor or outside agencies;
- Year meetings with the Year Adviser to address widespread problem behaviour;
- A student or teacher mentor;
- Contact with the Police Liaison Officer;
- Referral to the Child Well-Being Unit or Community Services.

## Response

All reported incidents of bullying will have investigations initiated within a reasonable timeframe (usually within two school days). All reported incidents will be formally recorded in Millennium. Where significant bullying has been determined, parents/caregivers of those concerned will be informed.

In instances, where appropriate, the Child Wellbeing Unit and/or Community Services will be informed. This includes if a child is at high or imminent risk of significant harm due to:

- serious physical injury to a child or young person requiring medical attention;
- serious neglect to a child or young person of an immediate nature
- domestic violence involving serious injury and/or use of a weapon;
- sexual harm involving serious current concerns;
- a high risk prenatal report where the birth is imminent;
- immediate safety issues;
- death of a sibling in circumstances which are reviewable by the NSW Ombudsman.

All mandatory reporters will report matters to the Child Protection Helpline where they believe a child is at risk of significant harm. They can:

- call 13 3627
- fax 9633 7666 using the designated fax form in accordance with agency policy
- eReport (where available)

Before making a report, mandatory reporters should consult the Mandatory Reporter Guide to assess whether a child or young person is at risk of significant harm. The Mandatory Reporter Guide will also be available to anyone concerned about a child or young person and who wants help with determining if a report to the Child Protection Helpline is necessary.

For serious bullying behaviours, the DEC School Safety and Response Unit will be called and the School Education Director informed. Such instances are those in which physical injury necessitating medical treatment has been required or where student/staff safety may be compromised. In the most serious of cases, the school will call the police immediately.

Serious incidents of assault (including all physical fights which involve blows to the head), whilst rare, are always reported to the police and to the School Security and Safety unit. Parents are informed if this happens. Students involved in fighting or violent behaviour can expect to be suspended. Any possession or threats involving a weapon leads to a mandatory long suspension (up to 20 days).

Parents can report suggestions, complaints and allegations to the Principal. These will be dealt with according to DET Policy: [Responding To Suggestions, Complaints And Allegations \(PD/2002/0051/V001\)](#). [The Complaints Handling Policy](#) establishes the standard approach to resolving complaints, including complaints about the way a reported incident of bullying has been managed and it is required that it be used in all learning and working environments of the department of education and training.

If a student is suspended, parents are able to appeal the decision as per DET [Suspension and Expulsion of School Students - Procedures](#) which is provided to parents with a letter notifying of suspension.

Regular year based and whole school surveys relating to bullying will be undertaken to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this Anti-bullying Plan. Survey results will be reported in the Annual School Report from 2013. A complete review of the Anti-bullying Plan will be undertaken in Term Three, 2015.

## Monitoring and evaluation

The Anti-bullying Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Anti-bullying Leadership and Learning Support Teams, so that all members of the school community are aware of and remain committed to it. The plan should reflect the current teaching and learning practices and welfare strategies at Hunter School of the Performing Arts and annual reviews will provide opportunities for reflection and renewal. Current research as well as NSW Department of Education and Communities policy reviews will also inform the shaping or reshaping of this policy.

### Strategies to review the school Anti-bullying Plan include:

- gathering and analysing all up to date and relevant information on the nature and extent of bullying, harassment and victimisation, including data that highlights patterns and trends, such as suspension data;
- evaluating (through student, staff and parental surveys) the extent to which the school's Anti-bullying Plan has been effective in addressing bullying, harassment and victimisation and promoting a safe and secure environment;
- developing and implementing a refined or revised plan, if and when necessary, following annual reviews by the Welfare Committee (and/or the Anti-bullying Leadership Team once established) and the school Executive;

- monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the plan on an ongoing basis.

The Anti-bullying Plan and related surveys and evaluations will be reported on in the school Annual Report.

### Additional contact information

Schools Police Liaison Officer ▪ Margaret Sordo ▪ 02 4926 6599  
 Department of Community Services ▪ 133 627  
 Child Wellbeing Unit ▪ 1300 480 420  
 Kids Helpline ▪ 1800 551 800  
 Kids Helpline ▪ <http://www.kidshelp.com.au/>  
 Mind Matters ▪ <http://www.mindmatters.edu.au>  
 Reach Out ▪ <http://au.reachout.com>  
 National Centre Against Bullying ▪ <http://www.ncab.org.au>

### Principal's comment – Mr Richard Jennings

Hunter School of the Performing Arts has long been recognised as a school where students feel *safe and happy*. It is a school where students can express themselves free from the fear of being bullied, harassed or vilified, for being different. This plan gives structure to our commitment that bullying in any form has no place at our school.

*I congratulate the team for their time and effort in the development of the plan and the school community members who, through consultation, have contributed to a plan that promotes the values of public education.*

### Key members of the plan development

- Richard Jennings ▪ Principal
- Janeanne Hardie ▪ Head Teacher Welfare
- Krystal Bevin ▪ Head Teacher English (Rel.)
- Mark Anderson ▪ Year 8 Adviser

- Melanie Clarke ▪ Year 9 Adviser
- Adrian Allan ▪ Year 10 Adviser
- Ros Murton ▪ Year 11 Adviser
- Robert Prisk ▪ Year 12 Adviser
- Christine Fletcher ▪ Teacher (Primary)
- Year 7-11 SRC Students and Primary Captains
- Parents and Citizens Association

### School contact information

#### Hunter School of the Performing Arts

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