Jinibara State School

Anti-Bullying: Strategies to Support Students
INTRODUCTION
Every student has the right to spend each day at school without being bullied, harassed or intimidated. While we accept that bullying may occur in schools, Jinibara State School will always work to empower students to self manage their behaviour thereby addressing both perceived and real power imbalances. As a school, it is our highest priority that every student feels safe and secure in our supportive school environment.

Bullying devalues, isolates, frightens and impacts on an individual’s ability to achieve. It can have long-term effects on those engaging in bullying behaviour, those who are the subjects of bullying behaviour and those around them. Students whose schooling is affected by bullying, or who are suspended from school because of their participation in bullying, have reduced learning opportunities. Teachers, students, parents, caregivers and members of our school community have the responsibility to work together to address bullying. By addressing the issue in a positive way, the learning outcomes of many students can be improved.

RATIONALE
1. Bullying can occur at any age and across cultures, gender and socioeconomic groups. Many students are likely to experience bullying at some time in their schooling, as the person being bullied, the bystander or as the bully.
2. Jinibara State School provides opportunities for students to take part in learning experiences that address key understandings and skills relating to positive relationships, safety, gender equity, discrimination, bullying and harassment.
3. Teachers, students, parents, caregivers and members of the wider community have a responsibility to work together to address bullying.

WHAT IS BULLYING?
As a community it is important that we are clear about what is and is not bullying. Playground disputes and quarrels that occur from time to time and are resolved by the participants sometimes with peer and staff support do not constitute bullying. Bullying presupposes an imbalance of power, is systematic and ongoing oppression (Rigby, Bullying in schools & what to do about it, 1996). Bullying is defined as intentional, repeated behaviour by an individual or group of individuals that causes distress, hurt or undue pressure. Bullying involves the abuse of power in relationships.

Deliberately and repeatedly name-calling, making sexist or racist remarks, spreading rumours, sending abusive text messages or emails, threatening someone or excluding someone from games and groups are all examples of bullying or harassment.

Not all distressing or hurtful behaviour is bullying. For example:

A single incident of malicious or aggressive behaviour
Bullying and harassment are repeated actions. Single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. Single incidents will still be responded to as part of the school’s behaviour management processes as unacceptable behaviour. Cyber-bullying can occur from a single act when a message or picture is sent to more than one person. For example, a bully may only press ‘send’ once, however the choice to send the message to multiple addresses makes the action more than a single incident.
Dislike
Although social rejection can be hurtful, it is not bullying unless accompanied by repeated and deliberate attempts to distress or hurt.

Mutual Conflict
Arguments can be distressing however it is not bullying when two people are both upset and neither one is misusing power over the other. Conflict may still give rise to unacceptable behaviour which will be responded to as part of the school’s behaviour management processes.

Bullying behaviours that will not be tolerated at Jinibara State School include name-calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments, kicking, hitting, pushing, taking belongings, inappropriate text messaging, sending offensive or degrading images by phone or internet, producing offensive graffiti, gossiping, excluding people from groups, and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours.

PREVENTATIVE STRATEGIES
Our school community has a number of proactive strategies, programs and resources to combat bullying and harassment, including:

• Explicitly teaching behaviour expectations attached to the three school rules –
  o I am Respectful.
  o I am Responsible.
  o I am Safe.
• High Five (speak friendly, speak firmly, ignore, walk away, report).
• Debriefing (after each break each day).
• Counselling (for individuals and groups).
• positive reinforcement for demonstrating expected behaviours (fabulous finch)
• quality active supervision - duty staff members are easily identifiable and are constantly moving, scanning and positively interacting as they move through designated areas.
• Individual student management plans.
• Classroom Management Plans.
• Jinibara State School Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students

Programs
• Fun Friends Program
• Bursting Bubbles (anger management strategies)
• Bucket Books
• Protective Behaviours (P-3 students).

Resources (additional to teaching staff and Admin team)
• Chaplain
• Guidance Officer

ROLE OF STAFF
Students can expect that their concerns about bullying will be responded to by school staff and that appropriate support will be provided (for both the target of; and the person responsible for, the bullying behaviour). Staff interaction with students has important consequences for the level of bullying in a school. Staff can have a significant impact on reducing bullying by:

• Promoting anti-bullying programs in the classroom and school
• Listening sympathetically to students who need support and initiating action
• Expressing disapproval of bullying whenever it occurs and following up appropriately
• Providing strategies for both students and parents to deal with bullying issues
ROLE OF STUDENTS
Students can counter the effects of bullying by:

- Being actively involved in the variety of programs that the school offers
- Developing a sense of respect and understanding of the needs of others
- Not taking part in bullying
- Reporting bullying incidents involving themselves or others
- Supporting students who are being bullied
- Developing strategies to deal with bullies

ROLE OF PARENTS/CARERS
Students are frequently and consistently reminded that bullying behaviour is unacceptable and will not be tolerated at this school. As parents and carers you play an active role in countering bullying by:

- Taking some time to speak with your children about bullying and to remind them of the importance of treating others with fairness, dignity and respect.
- Addressing unacceptable behaviour of your children both at home and at school.
- Informing the school of any concerns and allowing the school to follow up with those concerns.
- Seeking understanding of bullying instances before reacting.
- Supporting the school anti-bullying strategies.

How can I tell if my child is being bullied?
Sometimes children who are bullied do not talk about it with parents/carers or teachers. They are concerned that "telling" will make matters worse. Some signs that a child may be experiencing bullying may include:

- loss of confidence, fearfulness or anxiety
- changes in eating or sleeping habits, bedwetting
- health problems, vague headaches or stomach aches
- unhappiness, tearfulness or mood swings, sudden temper tantrums
- reluctance to go to school, changes in academic performance
- lack of friends
- missing belongings or torn clothing.

What should I do if my child tells me they are being bullied?

- Help your child to identify the bullying behaviour and ask them:
  - What has been happening?
  - Who has been involved?
  - Where has each incident occurred?
  - Discuss with your child some immediate strategies. Make a plan to deal with the bullying. Encourage them to:
    - walk away.
    - use the HIGH 5.
    - firmly say “No!”.
  - Contact the school to check that your child has spoken to someone about the problem and arrange a meeting to discuss the school's strategies to address the situation.
  - Monitor, and continue to contact the school if there are further instances of the bullying.
Use some of the additional internet resources listed below to assist you and your child to learn more about bullying and prevention.

**What will the school do?**
In situations where bullying is reported, the teacher or Deputy Principal will meet separately with reportedly involved students to establish the events and the students’ roles and relationships in respect to the events.

Action by the school in response to the findings is intended to
1. Stop the Bullying
2. Prevent further Bullying
3. Teach the bully that bullying behaviour will not be tolerated.

and may include:
- applying disciplinary consequences
- assisting students to develop more appropriate social skills
- implementing a behaviour management plan or playground plan for individual students
- explicitly teaching about conflict and bullying
- implementing resilience and anti-bullying programs
- conducting mediation sessions
- addressing bullying as part of the curriculum.

Our staff will not give you any of the personal details of other students involved and will not give you any details of consequences given to other students involved because of privacy requirements.

**What can I do if I feel the school is not addressing the bullying appropriately?**
Make an appointment to meet with the school principal to discuss your concern.

**Where can I get more information about bullying?**
- **KidsMatter**: a school based framework that aims to improve the mental health and wellbeing of children. [http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/](http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/)
- **ReachOut**: an online resource that assists young people by providing information to improve understanding of the issues that relate to mental health and wellbeing. Reach Out also has information on how young people can get the best help from services, as well as opportunities to connect with other young people. [http://au.reachout.com](http://au.reachout.com)
- **National Centre Against Bullying**: a peak body working to advise and inform the Australian community on the issue of childhood bullying and the creation of safe schools and communities, including the issue of cyber safety. [http://www.ncab.org.au/](http://www.ncab.org.au/)

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PRINCIPAL