



PURPOSE

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. Any inappropriate behaviour that hinders the teaching and learning at Forest Lodge Public School and interferes with the wellbeing of students cannot be accepted.

Students, teachers and parents/caregivers have an individual and shared responsibility to create a secure, ordered, supportive and happy environment, free from all forms of bullying.

Underpinning the Anti-Bullying Plan is the need for Forest Lodge Public School to promote respectful relationships within the whole school community.

Bullying of Students – Prevention and Response Policy

This policy sets out the department's position on student bullying and the requirements for preventing and responding to student bullying, including online bullying, in NSW public schools and preschools.

1. Policy statement

1.1 The NSW Department of Education rejects all forms of bullying behaviour including online (or cyber) bullying.

1.2 NSW public schools works to provide safe, inclusive, and respectful learning communities that promote student wellbeing.

1.3 The department's [Behaviour Code for Students](#) requires students to be 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.

1.4 Schools are required to establish strategies and practices to encourage positive student behaviour, recognise and reinforce student achievement and wellbeing, and manage disruptive student behaviour, as outlined in the [Student Discipline in Government Schools Policy](#).

1.5 School staff need to encourage high levels of parental and community involvement in the school to improve student attendance, engagement, learning and behaviour.

1.6 Each school must complete and implement the [Anti-bullying Plan](#).

1.7 Bullying behaviour has three key features. It involves the intentional misuse of power in a relationship. It is ongoing and repeated, and it involves behaviours that can cause harm.

1.8 Bullying behaviour can also involve intimidation, victimisation and harassment, including that based on sex, race, religion, disability, or sexual orientation, both online and offline.

1.9 Bullying can be illegal if it involves behaviours that include physical violence, threats of violence, damaging property, or stalking.

1.10 The [NSW anti-bullying website](#) supports school staff, parents and carers, volunteers and contracted staff, and students to discourage, prevent, identify, and respond effectively to student bullying behaviour, where it does occur.

1.11 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.

1.12 Teachers and other school staff are provided with support and professional development to discourage, prevent, identify, and respond to student bullying behaviour.

1.13 Reports of student bullying can be made to any staff member at a school. A teacher or school executive staff (such as the principal, deputy principal or assistant principal, head teacher) at the school will address the reported bullying in a timely manner.

1.14 If a student, parent or carer believes a matter is not being dealt with effectively, they can refer the matter to the school's principal (or delegate) for resolution.

1.15 If the student, parent or carer still has concerns, after referring the matter to the school's principal (or delegate), and would like advice, they can contact the [Learning and Wellbeing Advisor or Officer](#) at the local departmental office. If the matter is then still not resolved they can contact the [Director Educational Leadership](#), at the local departmental office, who must follow the [Complaints Handling Policy](#).

1.16 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.

2. Audience and applicability

2.1 This policy applies to all NSW public schools, including those with preschools.

2.2 This policy applies to all student bullying behaviour, including online (cyber) bullying, and applies outside of school hours and off school premises where students have been involved and there is a clear and close connection to the school.

3. Context

3.1 NSW public schools must comply with the NSW Education Standards Authority requirement to provide a safe, inclusive and supportive environment for students.

3.2 Ways to prevent or respond to student bullying behaviour are addressed through teaching and learning programs across the key learning areas including the Self and Relationships strand of the mandatory Personal Development, Health and Physical Education curriculum.

3.3 This policy relates to student bullying in NSW public schools. The [Work, Health and Safety Policy](#) applies to staff bullying in NSW public schools. When bullying involves a student and staff member, both policies apply.

4. Responsibilities and delegations

4.1 Teachers

- 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.

4.2 Non-teaching staff / volunteers / contractors

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

4.3 Principals (or their delegate)

- complete and implement 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](#).

4.4 Directors, Educational Leadership

- manage complaints about how a school has responded to a report of bullying in accordance with the [Complaints Handling Policy](#)
- where required, assist schools to implement the Anti-bullying Plan, to best meet the needs of the school community.

5. Monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements

5.1 The principal, staff and community have the opportunity to review the Anti-bullying Plan every year.

5.2 The Director, Student Engagement and Interagency Partnerships monitors the implementation of this policy and reviews its effectiveness, at least every three years

6. SCOPE

This plan sets out the requirements for dealing with bullying behaviour at Forest Lodge Public School. It includes specific strategies for identifying, reporting and dealing with bullying behaviours.

This policy applies to all student bullying behaviour, including cyber-bullying which may occur on school premises and off premises and outside school hours where there is a clear and close relationship between the school and the conduct of the student.

Students have the right to attend school in an environment free from the fear of bullying, harassment, intimidation and victimisation. Unfortunately, schools exist in a society where intimidation, harassment and victimisation occur. Bullying is taken seriously and is not acceptable in any form at Forest Lodge Public School.

Forest Lodge Public School has an inclusive environment, where diversity is affirmed and individual differences are respected.

Strong partnerships with parents, students and the wider community are essential for successfully dealing with bullying. Bullying cannot be stopped by students, parents or teachers acting alone.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES

All members of the school community have a responsibility to:

- Model and promote appropriate behaviour and 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.
- Actively work together to resolve incidents of bullying behaviour.

7.1 Students have a responsibility to:

- behave appropriately, respecting individual differences and diversity, including behaving responsibly online.
- Behave as responsible bystanders.
- Report incidents of bullying to a teacher or staff member.
- Follow and support the school's Anti-Bullying Plan.

Students can expect:

- that school staff will respond to their concerns.
- to be provided with appropriate support (for both the victim of bullying and those who bully).
- to participate in learning experiences that address key understandings and skills relating to positive relationships, safety, gender equity, discrimination, bullying and harassment.

7.2 Parents/caregivers have a responsibility to:

- support their children in all aspects of their learning.
- support the school's Anti-Bullying Plan and assist their children in understanding bullying behaviour.
- support their children in developing positive responses to incidents of bullying.
- support all students of the school to deal effectively with bullying through the strategies of the Anti-Bullying Plan.
- Help their children to become responsible citizens and develop responsible online behaviour.
- Report incidents of bullying behaviour to the school.

7.3 The school has a responsibility to:

- provide staff with adequate training and professional development on preventing and responding to bullying behaviours
- provide students with strategies to respond positively to incidents of bullying behaviour, including responsibilities as bystanders.
- provide parents, caregivers and students with clear information on strategies that promote appropriate behaviour, and the consequences for inappropriate behaviour.
- communicate to parents and caregivers that they have an important role to play in resolving incidents of bullying behaviour involving their children.
- follow up complaints of bullying, harassment, intimidation and victimisation in a timely manner.
- Provide this plan to all students and parents/carers

7.4 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's Anti-Bullying Plan.
- Implement the FLPS student wellbeing policy.

8.1 DEFINING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

Bullying is deliberate. It is the desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone. It can be by one person or more and can vary in severity. Bullying can be defined as intentional, repeated and recurring behaviour by an individual or group that causes distress, hurt or undue pressure.

Bullying involves the abuse of power in relationships. Bullying can involve all forms of harassment (on the basis of one's sex, race, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity), humiliation, domination, intimidation and victimisation of others.

Note that conflict or fights between equals or single incidents are not defined as bullying. Refer to: *Student Wellbeing Practices and Procedures policy*

8.2 IDENTIFYING BULLYING BEHAVIOURS

Bullying behaviour can take on several forms¹:

8.2.1 Physical such as hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting, pushing or preventing others from going where they want to go. Repeatedly and intentionally damaging someone's property is also physical bullying.

8.2.2 Verbal such as name calling, teasing, abuse, putdowns, sarcasm, insults, threats, homophobic or racist remarks.

8.2.3 Social such as ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating, ganging up, making inappropriate gestures, lying, spreading rumours or playing a nasty joke. Repeatedly mimicking someone and deliberately excluding someone is also social bullying behaviour.

8.2.4 Psychological such as intimidation, manipulating people and stalking.

8.2.5 Cyberbullying is when technology is used to bully. This includes malicious SMS and email messages, inappropriate use of camera phones. Cyberbullying can happen in chat rooms, through social networking sites, emails or mobile phones.

8.3 THE EFFECTS OF BULLYING

8.3.1 For the person being bullied¹:

Bullying devalues, isolates and frightens them and affects their ability to achieve.

They may feel shame about the attacks, and fear when the attacks will happen again.

They may suffer from low self-esteem, become more aggressive and find it difficult to concentrate at school, with their school work suffering.

¹ www.ncab.org.au

In some cases (but not all), the negative impact of bullying can be long term and may mean they're more likely in the future to:

- suffer mental health problems and depression
- find it difficult to maintain positive relationships
- want to change the way they are or hurt themselves
- abuse alcohol or drugs
- have negative, and even suicidal, thoughts.

In some cases, bullying leads to serious physical harm or violent retaliation.

8.3.2 For the by-stander:

Those witnessing the bullying may also suffer; feeling anxious and fearing if/when they'll be the next target.

8.3.3 For the person bullying:

Those who repeatedly bully are more likely to²:

- be involved in ongoing anti-social and criminal behaviour
- have issues with substance abuse
- have low academic achievement
- abuse their spouse or children later in life.

8.4 SIGNS THAT A CHILD IS BEING BULLIED^{1, 34}

It is often difficult to know when a child is being bullied. Physical injuries are rare. Other signs, such as unexplained illnesses or a reluctance to go to school may have other explanations. However, parents and carers can tell when a child is unhappy and should trust their instincts.

8.4.1 Emotional signs

- Changes in sleep patterns (eg not sleeping, nightmares, bedwetting)
- Changes in eating patterns.
- Frequent tears or anger.
- Mood swings.
- Being tense, tearful and unhappy before or after school

8.4.2 Physical signs

- Has unexplained bruises, cuts, scratches.
- Comes home with missing or damaged belongings or clothes.
- Comes home hungry.

8.4.3 Behavioural signs

- Feels ill in the morning.
- Becomes withdrawn or starts stammering.
- Becomes aggressive and unreasonable.
- Refuses to talk about what is wrong.

² Rigby, K. 2006, An overview of approaches to managing bully/victim problems. In H. McGrath & T. Noble, *Bullying solutions; Evidence-based approaches for Australian schools*, Pearson Education, Sydney.

³ www.det.nsw.edu.au/antibullying

⁴ www.parentlink.act.gov.au

- Begins to target siblings.
- Continually 'loses' money or starts stealing.

8.4.4 School signs

- Doesn't want to go to school (finding excuses for not going to school for example feeling sick).
- Changes their route to school or are frightened of walking to school.
- Doesn't want to go to school on the bus/train.
- School grades begin to fall.
- Talks about hating school or other children.
- Refusing to talk about what happens at school.

8.4.5 Other signs

- Often alone or excluded from friendship groups at school.
- A frequent target for teasing, mimicking or ridicule at school.
- Unable to speak up in class and appears insecure or frightened.

8.5 REASONS BEHIND BULLYING

There is no one specific reason why people choose to bully others. Some people bully because¹:

- they do not understand what they are doing is wrong.
- they are mimicking behaviour from home.
- they want to get or keep a social position
- they enjoy the feeling of power

Some people bully to prevent it happening to them. Some children, who have been bullied, go on to bully others; and some children simply have a noticeable lack of empathy, or do not accept value differences.

Many children bully at one time or another as they learn different ways of interacting socially, but stop when it is pointed out to them that they are causing harm.

8.6 STRATEGIES TO PREVENT BULLYING

8.6.1 School Values and Culture

Develop a positive and pro-social school culture by reinforcing the school values of *Respect, Safety, Learning*. A positive climate of respectful relationships means that bullying is less likely to occur.

Each term, all teachers should hold an open discussion about bullying and harassment with their class to promote a culture of respect and support.

(Victims and witnesses should be encouraged to participate in these discussions so that there is an understanding of how others feel.)

In addition, reinforce to all students that bullying is unacceptable behaviour and that behaving respectfully towards others is a regular part of school life.

Anti-bullying messages should be embedded into curriculum area such as PDH.

8.6.2 Peer support and teaching of social skills

In these discussions, all students should be encouraged to be responsible and proactive in preventing bullying and to intervene when it occurs by not remaining silent, and 'sticking up' for others. They should be encouraged to tell a teacher or the School Principal if they are being bullied, or if they suspect someone is being bullied. The school will inform the child of the next steps and put in immediate appropriate support e.g. engaging with school counsellor

8.6.3 Whole school approach

At the beginning of each school term, the school principal should reinforce these principles in whole school assemblies, staff meetings and in the school newsletter. This reinforces a whole school approach to dealing with bullying. Engaging the whole school community means that everyone is committed to collaboratively owning the problem and solution.

The whole school community is encouraged to behave as responsible bystanders and respond to bullying, harassment and victimisation.

8.6.4 Professional Learning

Professional learning for teachers to manage bullying is conducted formally and informally at Forest Lodge Public School through Staff and stage meetings which are held each week. Incidents of bullying and its management are discussed in those meetings and further action is discussed in learning support meetings which are held on Thursday mornings. During these meetings school executive staff, learning support teacher and school counsellor are present.

8.6.5 Buddy System

Kindergarten students are assigned informal Buddies to reinforce pro-social values and offer support, while they navigate their first year at school. This also teaches the older buddies pro-social skills.

8.6.6 Peer support program

All students participate in a program that is delivered by year 5 and 6 students. The program is designed for young people to support each other and contribute positively to school life.

8.6.7 Developing and implementing early intervention support:

8.6.7.1 For students who are identified by the school as being at risk of developing long-term difficulties with social relationships.

8.6.7.2 For students who are identified at or after enrolment as having previously engaged in or has been a victim of bullying behaviour.

8.7 Classroom learning

Every year teachers deliver a series of lessons around bullying. These lessons can be linked to PDH units of work. These sessions focus on: What is bullying? What actions can I take? What is a bystander and what should they do? How to describe the events. Cyber bullying is also covered in Stages 2 & 3 (see <https://www.esafety.gov.au/esafety-information/esafety-issues/cyberbullying>) for resources. FLPS takes advantage of external programs written and taught by professional organisations to identify all aspects of bullying behaviour and how to respond to it.

9 STRATEGIES TO MANAGE INCIDENTS OF VICTIMISATION

9.1 Bullying should be addressed quickly and effectively and responses implemented consistently by school staff. Allegations of bullying are taken very seriously at Forest Lodge Public School.

9.2 Incidents of bullying are recorded and tracked by teachers and executives to identify and address patterns. The school will develop appropriate plans in consultation with parents / carers to address the behaviours

9.3 Working closely with parents

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

9.4 Restorative approach to bullying

Forest Lodge Public School adopts a restorative approach to bullying which means that the school mediates to repair harm, to resolve the problem and allows the bully to gain insight into how their behaviour has affected others.

Each incident is assessed on a case-by-case basis, however the general approach is:

- Claims of bullying are investigated. This may be a teacher a teacher or school executive conducting the investigation. All students involved – the victim, the bully and any witnesses are encouraged to give their version of what happened.
- If it is deemed a bullying incident, the information is recorded in the reflection room folder by the teacher. The details of the incident and how long the bullying has been going on are also recorded. All students involved and witnesses are asked to record in writing their version of events. This information is noted and stored in the reflection room folder.
- The principal, or executive informs the parents of the victim about the bullying incident. Details of when the incident happened, re-iteration of the school's stance on bullying and follow up action are detailed.
- The principal, or executive informs the parents of the bully about the incident, and that their child's name is recorded in the reflection room folder. Possible consequences for re-offending (including suspensions and being excluded from excursions) are stated.
- After 1 or 2 days, a Restorative Conference maybe held between the students involved if the victim wants to, with the principal mediating. The victim is asked to describe how they feel about the incident. This aims to give the bully insight and understand how the victim feels and how this behaviour hurts, with both gaining and understanding the other's perspective. This leads to a mutual agreement which aims to repair the harm. The bully is asked to apologise and give assurances that this type of behaviour will not recur.
- The principal reports back to the parents/ carers, teachers and students.
- Recurrences may lead to short-term suspensions from school and in more extreme cases, long-term suspensions or expulsion.

9.5 Provide support to any student who has been affected by, engaged in or witnessed bullying behaviour e.g. school counsellor

9.6 Provide regular updates (within the bounds of privacy legislation) to parents/caregivers about the management of the incidents.

9.7 Skill Development

Directly teach social skills and resilience skills to students and organise opportunities for students to practice them.

Teach all students skills that can help them respond to bullying and particularly focus on the importance of talking to an adult about it.

Teach bystander skills to students to increase the likelihood that they will support their peers.

10. REFERENCES & FURTHER RESOURCES

10.1 Australian Education Authorities. *Bullying. No Way.* www.bullyingnoway.com.au

10.2 Department of Education and Training. <https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/bullying-of-students-prevention-and-response-policy?refid=285835>

10.3 National Centre Against Bullying. *Bullying and Cybersafety.* www.ncab.org.au

10.4 <https://esafety.gov.au/education-resources>

10.5 ACT Government. *Bullying,* www.parentlink.act.gov.au

11. APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 - A GUIDE FOR PARENTS/CAREGIVERS

APPENDIX 2 - A GUIDE FOR STUDENTS

APPENDIX 3 - A GUIDE FOR BYSTANDERS

APPENDIX 1 - A GUIDE FOR PARENTS/CAREGIVERS¹⁵

1. Talk
Start a conversation about being bullied. Talk and work to keep your communication open. Teach and model that it's okay to ask for help.
2. Listen
Hear the whole story without interrupting. Take your child's fears and feelings seriously. Ask what they want to happen before you make any suggestions.
3. Explain
It's normal to feel hurt. It's never OK to be bullied, and it's not their fault.
4. Find out what is happening
Ask what, when and where the behaviours occurred, who was involved, how often and if anybody else saw it. Find out if any teachers know and if the school's done something to address the situation.
5. Contact the school
Make an appointment to speak to your child's teacher or principal. Make a follow-up appointment in a week or two to make sure the situation is being addressed. Take your child with you.
6. Always work through the school
Don't confront the parents of a child who is bullying yours or who are accusing your child of bullying theirs. They will probably have heard a different version of events. Arguments between parents usually make the situation worse.
7. Give sensible advice
The victims of bullying need the support of their families, their teachers and friends. Any advice children are given must be appropriate.
Don't advise your child to fight back.
Don't explain that the child doing the bullying did not mean it—they did.
Don't tell them it will go away—it probably won't.
Don't let your child stay away from school—it won't solve the problem.
8.
Talk to your child about what you are doing and why. Try not to take everything into your own hands, unless it's an emergency, because this is likely to make your child feel less in control.
9. Help your child work out an action plan and write it down.
Help your child work out what ideas they have about coping with the problem. Include a few of your own to get started. Talk about which ones might help or not help and why. Encourage your child to approach the teacher they feel most comfortable with to discuss the problem. Check that they have done this.
10. Help your child practise some useful strategies.
If the bullying is verbal, you may be able to help your child to learn to ignore it, so the bully does not get any satisfaction out of it. You could practice at home ways to help your child gain confidence, for example the way to walk past with head held up.

⁵ www.parentlink.gov.au

Actively develop and encourage communication and assertive skills (Eg. Prepare and rehearse appropriate responses).

Help your child think of ways to avoid the situation for example by staying within a group.

10. Give your child assurances that the situation will change. Try to rebuild your child's self-confidence. Some children are helped by imaging a special wall around them to protect them against harsh words.
11. Involve the child in activities at home to prevent brooding.
12. Encourage your child to make new friends and take up new interests.
13. Work on improving their confidence by concentrating on things your child does well at.

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APPENDIX 2 - A GUIDE FOR STUDENTS¹

Bullying is a serious problem, and is something lots of children experience. Bullying can be very harmful and it should not be part of anyone's growing up.

No one should have to put up with bullying. You always have the right to feel safe at school. It is never your fault if bullying happens to you.

Bullying is when someone (or a group of people) with **more power** than you, **repeatedly** and **intentionally** uses negative words and/or actions against you, which causes you distress and **risks your wellbeing**.

If you're being bullied, it is likely you are feeling very different to how you would normally feel.

You may be:

- finding it hard to sleep or you may have lost your appetite
- feeling angry, sad, powerless or scared
- wanting to avoid school, friends or going out

If you're being bullied...

- tell the person to stop
- use neutral language to respond to the bullying, like '*maybe*' or '*that's what you think*'
- walk away
- try to act unimpressed

But if it's been going on for a while and these don't work...

- talk to your friends and ask for support
- talk to your parents
- talk to your teacher.

If you are cyberbullied...

- don't respond to the message or image
- save the evidence
- block and delete the sender
- report the situation to the website or Internet Service Provider
- tell trusted people—friends, adults, teachers, parents and police if necessary.

Who can help? Parents or trusted adult, teachers, Community Youth Liaison Officer (Glebe Police Station phone: 95528099 or Kids Helpline: <http://www.kidshelp.com.au>; phone: 1800 55 1800

Remember...bullying hurts and it should not be part of anyone's growing up. If it is happening to you, tell someone. There are always people who can help and remember it's not your fault.

APPENDIX 3 - A GUIDE FOR BYSTANDERS⁶

We are all bystanders if we are aware of something happening but do not act to stop it.

Bystander behaviour includes:

- watching an argument – This includes social media platforms
- gathering to watch a playground fight

⁶ www.bullyingnoway.com.au

- knowing that someone is being hurt but not intervening or seeking help
- failing to investigate and be proactive about the bullying in your school.

The most common response is to ignore, avoid or minimise what is going on.

This is because we:

- believe that not being involved means we're not doing any harm
- assume someone else will help (so our personal responsibility is reduced)
- think that it's not our business
- not know how to stop the behaviour
- feel that we will make things worse
- feel embarrassed about speaking up
- be afraid of becoming a target of bullying, getting hurt ourselves or of being labelled a 'dobber'
- think that the behaviour is normal e.g. "boys will be boys" or that the person being bullied 'deserves it'
- have learned to be passive or go along with bullying and violence

However bullying is never okay and silence only makes the problem worse.

If you see someone being bullied:

- Keep yourself safe. Each bullying situation is different and it's not always best to act alone. Choose your response to match the situation.
- Speak up and let the person doing the bullying know what they are doing is bullying - tell them to stop
- Try to change the subject
- Refuse to join in with their bullying and walk away.
- Try to comfort the student. Explain to the person being bullied that it's nothing to do with them—it's about the other person's behaviour.
- Support the student who is being bullied to ask for help
- Ask a teacher for help. This is not "dobbing". Dobbing is when you are deliberately trying to get someone in trouble. Helping someone who is being bullied is not dobbing.