



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY



MOUNT AUSTIN HIGH SCHOOL ANTI - BULLYING POLICY

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Statement of Purpose

This plan outlines the process 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.

This plan:

- was developed in conjunction with staff, students and parents/caregivers in 2017.*
- will be implemented throughout the school by staff.*
- will be reviewed and evaluated in 2019 by the Principal, Deputy Principal, Head Teacher Welfare, Staff and Parents/Caregivers.*

Mount Austin High School aims to provide a safe environment for all students and staff. Inappropriate behaviours which interferes with teaching and learning or adversely affects student wellbeing is not tolerated.

Students, teachers, parents, caregivers and members of the wider school community have a shared responsibility to foster a safe environment, free from all forms of bullying.

Appropriate support structures and policies are in place to support student, staff and community to provide management tools for dealing with day-to-day incidents of bullying, harassment, as well as long term preventative strategies to promote healthy and positive relationships across the school community.

Protection

At Mount Austin High School bullying is recognised in the following ways:

- a **repetitive attack causing distress** at the time of attack but also by the threat of future attacks.
- involving an **imbalance of power**.
- by nature bullying may be categorised into different categories

Verbal Bullying

is the repeated use of words to hurt or humiliate another individual or group. Verbal bullying can be using put downs, insulting language or comments, name calling, swearing, making threatening comments, nasty notes, homophobic, racist or sexist comments and/or comments about an individual or groups disability.

Physiological Bullying

may include stalking, threats or implied threats, dirty looks, spreading rumours, unwanted email, text and/or comments on social media (Snapchat, Facebook, Instagram etc), abusive websites, threatening gestures, manipulation, emotional blackmail, hiding and/or damaging possessions and/or threats to an individual's reputation and sense of safety.

Social Bullying

involves repeatedly ostracising others by excluding them from activities, hiding or persuading others to exclude

or reject another individual or group from their social interactions, making up and/or spreading rumours, sharing and/or threatening to share an individual or groups personal information.

Physical Bullying

is repetitive low level hitting, kicking, pinching, slapping, pushing, tripping, 'ganging up' and/or unwarranted physical or sexual touching, and/or damage to personal property.

Cyber Bullying

uses information and communication technologies such as email, text messages, instant messaging, social media applications (Snapchat, Facebook, Instagram etc), smart phones and/or mobile phones, mobile phone cameras and/or digital cameras and websites to engage in the bullying of other individuals or groups. This technology provides an alternative means for verbal, social and physiological forms of bullying within an ICT context.

Sexting is taking inappropriate explicit photos and making them available for others to see via a carriage service (mobile phone, laptop or computer). Sending sexually inappropriate material of anyone, is a crime if under the age of 18 year of age.

Bystanders to Bullying

Bullying can also involve 'bystanders'. A bystander

may be someone who witnesses bullying and/or knows about bullying occurring but he/she is not directly involved. It is important that bystanders discourage bullying behaviours and ask it to cease and/or by reporting it to someone who can intervene such as school staff or parent/caregivers.

The results of continual/repeated bullying is emotionally and physically damaging. For the bullied student it may result in lower academic results, psychosomatic disorders (headaches, stomach aches), truancy, anger, poor sense of self worth and esteem, stress, anxiety, sleeplessness, nightmares, cuts, bruising, torn clothing, self harm, depression and even suicide. For this reason, Mount Austin High School does not tolerate bullying behaviour.

Bullying prevention is a shared responsibility between Mount Austin High School and the school community (parents, caregivers etc). In order to prevent and promote positive relationships all stakeholders must actively work together to resolve incidences of bullying behaviour; to foster respect and accept individual differences in others and to support the school Anti-Bullying Policy implementation within the school.

Outlined in the Mount Austin High School Student Welfare Handbook and the staff Wellbeing Policy is information about bullying.

Prevention

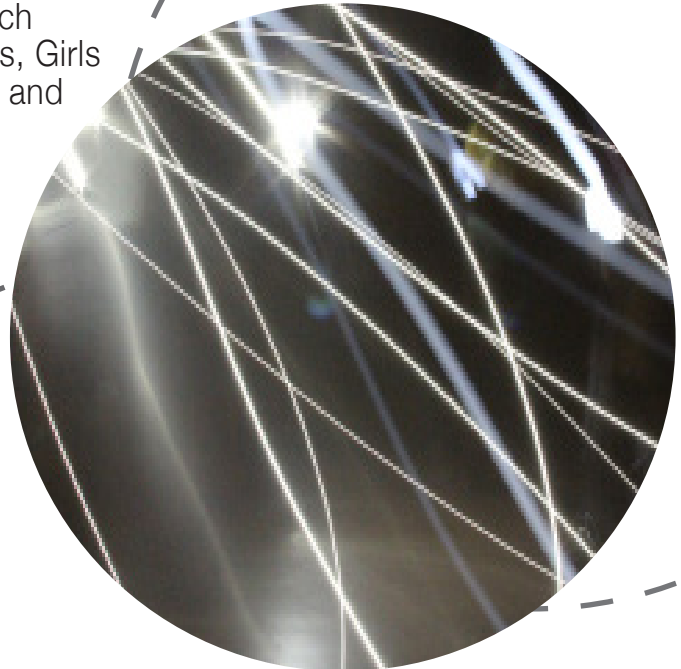
Mount Austin High School acknowledges a positive and safe learning environment is important in the development of an adolescent's social and positive personal identity. Furthermore, it promotes our school as a desirable place to be by establishing a sense of community.

Mount Austin High School builds this sense of community to support positive relationships by:

- fostering positive relationships amongst students, staff, parents/caregivers and within the school community.
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in classrooms by implementing 'Restorative Practices Approach' (all years), 'Second Step' (Year 7 and 8) and 'Circle Work' (all years) and by modelling mutual respect.
- setting high but achievable expectations of its students.
- encouraging student contribution and participation through programs such as Student Representative Council, Mount Austin Koori Education Team, Girls at the Centre, Clontarf Academy, Second Step as well as through the Restorative Practices Centre.
- understanding that a strong partnership between the school and parent/caregivers to deal effectively with bullying and/or harassment is essential.

That together, with open communication and clear procedures, we can make a concerted effort to improve outcomes for the victim, perpetrators and/or bystanders.

- educating students about bullying during whole school assemblies, year meetings, within leadership groups, 'Bullying No Way!' Day, School Police Liaison Officer Talks (Year 7 - 10), Harmony Day, Second Step Program (Year 7 and 8) as well as distribute information to students through the annual Student Welfare Handbook, Melting Pot, morning student notices, school website and Facebook page, during PDHPE classes (year 7 - 10), Clontarf Academy sessions, Girls at the Centre Sessions, Be Unique Program (Indigenous girls only) and through the Crossroad Programs (College 1).
- discussing strategies to support individual students, groups and cohorts through communication at a weekly 'Welfare Meeting' which engages Year Advisers, Girls Adviser, Boys Adviser and School Counsellors.



Early Intervention

Early intervention to stop bullying is an important part of supporting students at Mount Austin High School.

Mount Austin High School endeavours to support students who are identified at risk through the following programs and initiatives:

- ensure students are aware of the Department of Education - Code of Behaviour. Students are aware they have a responsibility to reduce bullying incidences by respecting other persons property and by treating others with respect at all times. The Code of Behaviour is clearly displayed in each classroom throughout the school.
- Year 6 Transition Adviser (incoming Year Adviser) collects information from the Year 6 Feeder Primary Schools teachers about incoming Year 7 students. This information is shared with staff.
- providing a safe transition area for incoming Year 7 students for a period of time close to the front office and under careful supervision by executive and teaching staff.
- teachers and senior executive wear high visibility vests whilst on playground duty to ensure they can easily be sighted by students in the event of requiring support in the playground. Furthermore, playground areas are clearly outlined indicating in-bound areas.
- a quiet Learning Support and Special Education

Garden area open at recess and lunch for students.

- a 'Social Skills' program to support students to develop social competencies.
- transition plans and risk assessments are created for students in conjunction with parents who are identified as 'at risk' at school.
- regular communication with students about Bullying and Cyber Bullying through various programs and through distributed information.
- discussing strategies to support individual students, groups and cohorts through communication at a weekly 'Welfare Meeting' which engages Year Advisers, Girls Adviser, Boys Adviser, Aboriginal Community Engagement Officer and School Counsellors. Place interventions and early support utilising the Restorative Practices Centre as well as other early interventions as listed above.
- ongoing monitoring by the Year Advisers of issues and concerns of their respective Year Group. Any issues of concerns are discussed with the Head Teacher Welfare and/or Deputy Principal.
- online tracking of student behaviour using Sentral - Wellbeing. This facilitates easier communication and information sharing between school staff.
- ongoing communication (phone calls, emails, text messages) between parents and/or caregivers and/or staff regarding student

behaviour positive/negative as well as to discuss attendance. This open communication encourages a shared responsibility of student wellbeing.

- notifications about students of concern is communicated through Staff, Executive, Welfare and Learning and Support meetings and on Staff Good Morning Sheet to keep staff well informed of information regarding students.
- Counsellor referrals completed by teachers as well as student self referral to the School Counsellor.
- an Aboriginal Community Engagement Officer to support the Indigenous community, foster positive relationships between the school and Indigenous community and implement activities and programs such as Sister Speak, Bro Speak and Be Unique Program to actively engage and support Indigenous students.
- utilising the Student Representative Council and Mount Austin Koori Education Team to promote positive communication and model behaviours amongst their peers as well as a safe place to raise concerns about bullying behaviour from the student body.
- training for all staff in applying and using the Restorative Practices Approach when dealing with conflict resolution and bullying.
- Electronic Device Policy outlining limited use of technology in the classroom

- anti Bullying signs posted around the school.

- positive reward programs such as VIVO (points based reward system), Classroom Teacher / Year Adviser and Deputy Principal Awards, Catch a Good Kid Excursions and free lunches to encourage positive behaviour among students.



Response

Response to bullying is a shared responsibility between all students, staff and parents/ caregivers.

Outlined below is a checklist of responsibilities:

Students

Students have a role to play in the education of bullying. Students have a responsibility to:

- follow the Department of Education Code of Behaviour and school rules and adhere to the Wellbeing Policy as outlined.
- follow the Mount Austin High School Anti Bullying Policy.
- participate in school programs to build knowledge, identification and understanding about bullying behaviours.
- treat others with respect at all times by behaving appropriately, respecting individual differences and diversity.

Students *should*:

- read the Student Wellbeing Handbook at the start of each year.
- report all incidences of bullying using the Bullying Form (located in the front office) and/or located on the School Website. Submit this to a teacher, Year Advisor, Deputy Principal and/or Principal. This enables an investigation as soon as possible. A student should complete this form even as a bystander to bullying. Intervention by peers is an

important part of preventing bullying behaviours.

- visit any of the following staff members to have an informal or formal discussion about bullying - Teachers, Year Advisors, Head Teachers, Head Teacher Welfare, Deputy Principal and/or Principal.
- visit the Restorative Practices Centre or Koori Connection room.
- report bullying to parents/ caregivers as required.
- if being cyber bullied, keep evidence of text messages, emails, Facebook messages/ comments, Snapchat pictures/messages etc. Report this information collected to staff and/or parents. A 'Stop Harassing Me' Postcard can be sent in the event of bullying behaviours being identified.
- do not retaliate to bullying behaviours under any circumstance.

Parent / Caregivers

Parent / Caregivers are the primary carers of students. They have an important role to play in ensuring that students attend school as well as to discuss ongoing school related information such as school work and student relationships with peers, in a supportive environment.

Parents/Caregivers can contact the school should any issues arise in regards to their child's welfare. Parents can support Mount Austin High School by raising awareness and educating

their children about bullying as well as reminding them that bullying can occur when not in direct supervision of teachers, online (through social media and text messages etc) and possibly on the way to and from school.

Parents / Caregivers have a responsibility to:

- support their child to become responsible citizens and develop responsible on-line behaviour.
- be aware of the school Anti-bullying Plan and assist their children in understanding and dealing with bullying behaviour whilst at school.
- support your child 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.

Parent /Caregivers *should*

- ask their child if everything is okay if they notice significant changes in attitude to school, mood or if they show concern or are apprehensive to attend school.
- report bullying incidences to Mount Austin High School. Contact can be made with a Deputy Principal, Year Advisor or Head Teacher Welfare. If

possible, keep any evidence of bullying such as emails, text messages and/or from social media etc.

- encourage and support your child to speak up about bullying to staff at Mount Austin High School

- assist your child to complete the Bullying Report Form.

Staff

School staff have a responsibility to:

- support students who approach you about bullying.

- model and promote appropriate behaviour.

- have a knowledge of the school and department policies relating to anti bullying.

- respond in a timely manner (within a week) to incidents of bullying, as per the school's Anti-Bullying Policy Plan/Procedure.

- deliver (as required) information about bullying which supports students in developing an understanding about bullying and its impact on individuals and the broader community.

- investigate all incidences of reported bullying. Where a teacher witnesses bullying they must intervene to prevent the continuation or escalation of an incident.

- Complete a bullying form with students or ask students to complete a form

and return it to Teacher/Year Advisor/ Deputy Principal.

- document all conversations, parent phone conversations, interviews and information on Sentral - Wellbeing.

- communicate with Year Advisor, Deputy Principal, as necessary.

Year Advisors

Year Advisors have a responsibility to:

- plan, develop and implement proactive anti bullying programs, as determined by the Welfare Team, based on student needs.

- distribute the Student Welfare Handbook at the start of each calendar year as well as other information pertaining to bullying as necessary.

- investigate initial reports of bullying, when required, through Student Interviews and asking students to complete bullying form(s).

- document all conversations, parent phone conversations, interviews and information on Sentral - Wellbeing.

- refer students to the School Counsellor, where appropriate.

- inform and share information with staff, where appropriate.

- communicate with parents about incidences, where appropriate.

- implement strategies and specific programs, when applicable.

Head Teacher Welfare

The Head Teacher Welfare has a responsibility to:

- develop a Anti-Bullying Plan / Procedures for the school.

- develop an Anti-Bullying Policy in conjunction with parents/caregivers, staff and students.

- update and publish the Student Welfare Handbook, bullying report forms and other important information about bullying to staff, students and on the school website.

- implement wellbeing programs and information sessions about bullying/ anger management, in collaboration with staff and the Welfare Team.

- communicate the Anti-Bullying Policy with staff, parents/caregivers and students.

- publish the Anti-Bullying plan as well as supporting documents to the school website.

- monitor Bullying issues at school, in conjunction with staff. Communicate and support the Year Advisors with investigations and management plans, where necessary.

School Counsellor

School Counsellors have a responsibility to:

- provide specific counselling to student(s), as required /requested.
- communicate with Staff, where appropriate, to support student(s).

Deputy Principals

The Deputy Principals have a responsibility to:

- contribute to the development of policies and procedures for the school Anti-Bullying Plan.
- communicate the plan and procedures with students, staff and parents/caregivers, as necessary.
- investigate initial reports of bullying, when required, through Student Interviews and asking students to complete Bullying Form(s).
- liaise with the Principal to determine action plans to manage bullying incidences.
- refer to external agencies such as Child Wellbeing Unit and/or Police, as necessary.
- prepare written pre-suspension warnings, suspensions and parental interviews where appropriate, and to support student

wellbeing.

- Document all conversations, parent phone conversations, interviews and information on Sentral - Wellbeing.

Principal

The Principal has a responsibility to:

- contribute to the development of policies and procedures for the school Anti-Bullying Plan.
- liaise with the Deputy Principals, Head Teacher Welfare, Year Advisors, School Counsellors and/or staff to manage incidences of bullying.
- document all conversations, parent phone conversations, interviews and information on Sentral - Wellbeing.
- supply the Departments Appeal Procedure and Complaints Handling Policy, when required.

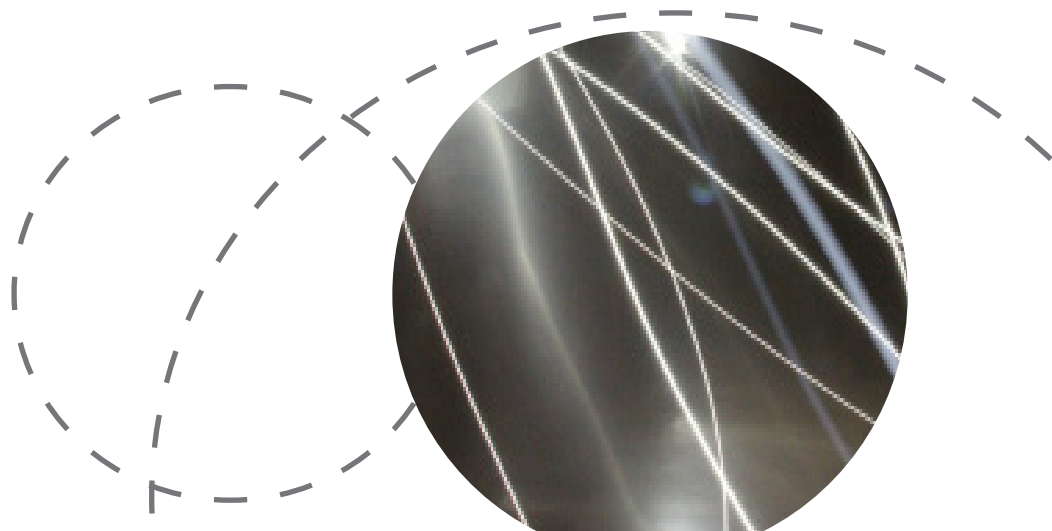
The Anti-Bullying Policy will be implemented and monitored from 2016 by staff and parents/caregivers.

The Anti Bullying Plan will be updated/ evaluated in 2019 by parents/caregivers, students and staff.

As a means of evaluating the anti-Bullying Policy the following steps will take place:

- 'Tell Them From Me' parent survey data and student survey data will be used to evaluate bullying prevention and strategies implemented and used at Mount Austin High School.
- communicate to and give an opportunity for parent/caregivers to contribute ideas/strategies for Bullying Prevention through consultation at P&C Meetings as well as organised events of school site at the local community centres.
- the 'Student Representative Council' and 'Mount Austin Koori Education Team' students will complete an evaluation form about Anti- Bullying processes/programs as well as canvas the student body about strategies to improve bullying prevention.
- survey staff to evaluate the Anti-Bullying Policy/ Plans.

After consultation with parents, staff and students the Anti-Bullying Policy Team will meet to discuss changes to the Anti-Bullying Policy.





Additional Information

Wagga Wagga Police Youth Liaison Officer (YLO)

Wagga Wagga School Liaison Police Officer
(SLP)

Troy Fisher and/or Paul Mumbler

Wagga Wagga Police Station

217-219 Tarcutta Street

WAGGA WAGGA 2650

P (02) 6922 2599

F (02) 6922 2511

Websites:

<http://www.ncab.org.au/forschools/>

<https://esafety.gov.au/>

<http://bullyingnoway.gov.au/>

<http://www.racismnoway.com.au/>

<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>

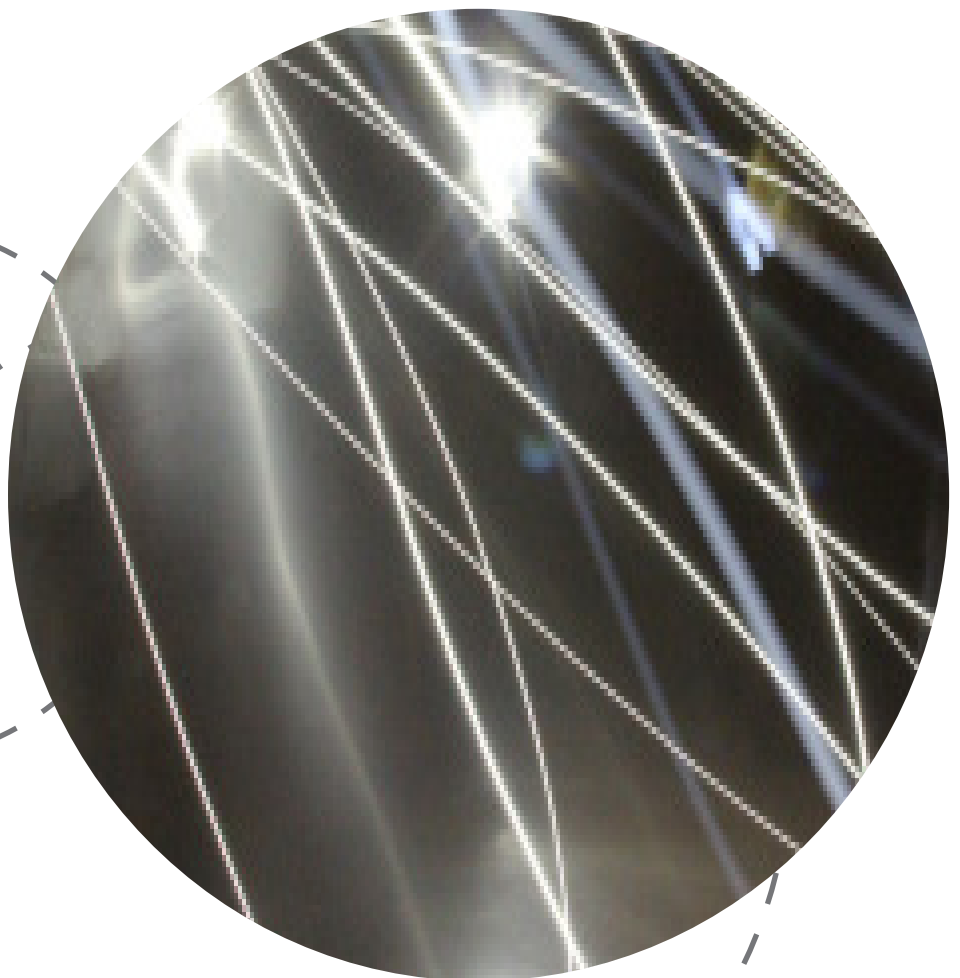
[http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentsupport/
bullying/downloads/cyberbullying.pdf](http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentsupport/bullying/downloads/cyberbullying.pdf)

[http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentsupport/
bullying/downloads/bystanderbhvr.pdf](http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentsupport/bullying/downloads/bystanderbhvr.pdf)

Telephone

Kids Helpline - 1800 55 1800

Beyond Blue - 1300 22 4636





Education
Public Schools

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