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.
Our School 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 Freemans Reach Public School Anti-Bullying Plan has been communicated to our whole school community in draft form for discussion. Each year in March, this plan will be reviewed at a staff meeting, at a P&C meeting and through responses in surveys used through the school self-evaluation process.

Statement of purpose

All members of the Freemans Reach Public School community have the right to learn and work in a safe and happy environment free from the fear of bullying, harassment and intimidation. As a school community we have a shared responsibility to create and maintain such an environment.

Bullying will be taken seriously and is not acceptable in any form. Freemans Reach Public School is committed to creating a safe and caring environment in which all students can achieve success, socially as well as academically.

At Freemans Reach Public School we do not tolerate bullying or harassment. Any bullying incident which comes to the attention of students and staff, should be dealt with according to the policy and procedures outlined below. Managing the incident swiftly and consistently enforces our zero tolerance of such behaviour within the school and promotes a safe learning environment for students and staff.

Protection

Bullying can involve various forms of harassment, humiliation, domination and intimidation. It can be verbal, physical, social or psychological. It can be direct or indirect. Cyber bullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies.

The Freemans Reach Public School community will not tolerate any form of bullying behaviour. It is not acceptable. Staff, parents and students will work together to eliminate all forms of this behaviour. Our school community recognises that we all have this responsibility. We also recognise acts of bullying. Examples of bullying behaviour include:

- Physical – fighting, pushing, crowding in and shoving.
- Verbal – Name calling, offensive language, threatening, putting downs, picking on people because of their race, religion, culture or appearance.
- Gesture – Body language of subtle facial expressions to intimidate, silence or threaten a victim.
- Extortion – Involves more powerful student/s forcing weaker students to give up their food, money or other possessions.
- Exclusion/Isolation – Deliberately excluding a victim from their peer or social group
- Sexual Harassment – Includes touching or brushing up against someone in a sexual or provocative manner, dirty or sexist jokes, drawing or writing about someone’s body (especially in a sexual manner), and unwanted sexual advances, showing material of a sexual nature to others.
- Damage to property – Includes breaking, ripping, defacing or stealing other people’s property.
- Cyber harassment – includes offensive text or images posted on websites or transmitted via email or cell phones. NSW legislation states all laws that are in place for defamation, intimidation, harassment and discrimination apply to technology as well. This means it is illegal to use technology in any way to threaten someone.
Our students need to respond appropriately to bullying. The key phrases that support students are:

- **BE FRIENDLY**
- **BE POLITE**
- **PLAY CAREFULLY**
- **STAY IN BOUNDS**
- **TAKE CARE**

**All student bystanders** need to listen, invite the person being bullied to play or sit with them, check if the victim needs your help to seek teacher intervention and report to the duty teacher if they are concerned.

**Our teachers** need to model and promote appropriate behaviour. Teachers need to investigate any reports of bullying and assure the victim they will follow up on this matter. This will include reporting back to the victim what they have done and recording all information on the electronic student welfare files.

**Our parents** need to listen carefully to their child. Stay calm and get accurate details. Parents need to reinforce strategies and assure their child it is not their fault. Parents must discourage retaliation, must not approach other parents and report their concerns or information to the school.

**Our school** promotes a positive and respectful climate through proactive student welfare and curriculum programs.

**Our school** Student Welfare Committee monitors student behaviour and plans the explicit teaching of values and expectations through whole school and class programs.

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**Managing Bullying**

Strategies to promote good discipline and effective learning are clearly outlined in the school’s Discipline Policy.

In line with this policy all students are expected to respect school rules and accept the consequences of inappropriate behaviour which includes all forms of bullying. Students and parents are encouraged to report bullying behaviour to the school through the classroom teacher or the Principal.

Strategies for dealing with bullying include:

- **Reprimand** – individual or group discussion
- **Isolation** – repeated bullying behaviour after reprimand which is documented electronically.
- **Detention** – repeated occurrence of behaviour which is documented and a letter is sent to parents/caregivers, with an option for an interview.
- **Withdrawal of privileges** – documented and determined in consultation with parents.
- **Counselling** – when deemed necessary by school and/or parents.
- **Individual case management** – repeated bullying by one student.
- **Suspension**
- **Expulsion**

The choice of strategies used is dependent upon the nature and frequency of the bullying behaviour. This will be determined by the Principal and Executive of the school.
Monitoring Of Bullying Behaviour

This will occur on an ongoing basis through monitoring of Detention Referrals which is recorded electronically and School Counsellor referrals to ensure that bullying behaviour are being dealt with appropriately and are not escalating. Repeated offenders and victims will be identified and monitored through the Learning Support Team.

Support Agencies and Policies

Students who are victims of bullying or have been affected by or witnessed bullying will be given support by the school through classroom and playground interventions, ongoing monitoring by the Learning Support Team and/or referral to the School Counsellor. This support will be determined by the needs of each individual circumstance.

- Child Welfare Unit (DET Intranet)
- Police School and Youth Liaison Officers (Windsor Police 4587 4099)
- Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800

Prevention

All students in Years K-6 at Freemans Reach Public School will take part in an Anti-Bullying unit in the first semester each year. This will be a series of lessons that teach about bullying as well as the school-based procedures. Further units of work that form part of the school’s PD, Health PE scope and sequence, dealing with bullying will occur throughout the year.

Our Student Wellbeing Committee monitors student welfare data and referrals.

Our Learning Support Team which includes our School Counsellor and our school executive team monitor teacher and parent referrals concerning bullying.

Early Intervention

Individual programs will be planned, implemented and monitored by class teachers, Assistant Principals and the Principal when needed. Individual counselling will be provided when needed by the school counselor. Targeted small group social skills lessons will be implemented by class teachers, school learning support officers, the school counsellor or other support staff when necessary.

Response

Our school will provide clear information on strategies that promote appropriate behaviour and outline the consequences of inappropriate behaviours regularly. The school will make use of its newsletter, school assemblies, website, P&C meetings and classrooms to communicate this.

An anti-bullying brochure will be given to all students each year that details our school procedures. Incidents can be reported in the following ways:

- Students tell the teacher on duty
- Students tell their classroom teacher
- Students tell the Assistant Principal or Principal
- Students tell their parents who inform the school
- Students may complete a notification sheet for their teacher or Principal.

These methods of reporting can be used by the victim or a bystander.

When a report of bullying occurs the school will:

- Investigate the issue interviewing all parties involved
- Provide support for the victim
- Implement appropriate consequences according to the school Discipline Policy
- Implement and monitor behaviour modification plans including counselor or agency support as required, small group or whole class programs or playground activity programs
- Inform parents of actions taken and planned
- Ongoing monitoring of student involved
The Anti-Bullying Plan – Freemans Reach Public School

Each incidence of bullying will be looked at by the executive team or the Learning Support Team to develop the best plans for all students involved. Factors such as age, ability levels, family circumstances and previous history will all contribute to the decisions made.

Appropriate and purposeful support will be provided to students who have been affected by, engaged in or witnessed bullying behaviour. This will be dependent on need and negotiated between the school, student and parents.

Parents will be informed of the actions taken by the school in regards to bullying incidents within the bounds of privacy legislation.

In the case of incidents involving assaults, threats, intimidation or harassment of a serious nature the Principal will contact the local police, School Safety and Security Directorate and Penrith District Office.

Where a student’s wellbeing is of concern, the Principal will apply the Mandatory Reporter Guide to the situation and implement the required actions from this which may include notifying the Child Wellbeing Unit or the Department of Community Services.

If a situation remains unresolved there are procedures for feedback or complaint. Complaints, suggestions and other feedback help the school to meet expectations, remedy problems and improve situations. Attempts should be made to resolve matters at a school level in the first instance. If a resolution cannot be reached, parents can utilise the “Responding to Suggestions, Complaints and Allegations Procedures” which can be found on the DEC website at www.det.nsw.edu.au/complaints/

The school endeavours to identify patterns of behaviour that may be of concern across the school, for individuals or in areas of the school. This information is recorded on the school network and is analysed on a monthly basis by the Student Welfare Committee. Where necessary system changes or targeted interventions are implemented to respond to and resolve such patterns.

Our school Anti-bullying Plan will be presented for discussion at both a P&C and staff meeting. The plan will be made available on the school website.

The school Anti-bullying Plan will be evaluated as part of the school’s self-evaluation process through the use of observation, surveys and behavioural data. This will be reported on each year in the school Annual School Report.

Freemans Reach Public School will review this Anti-bullying Plan every year in Term 3. The school will review school data on the number of reported incidences of bullying over time periods, the success or failure of interventions and the results of student, parent and staff surveys in relation to bullying.

Additional Information
Any student who needs additional support in this area is encouraged to ring the Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800

Principal’s comment
As Principal of Freemans Reach PS I am very proud of the safe and caring environment that we provide for all our students. Bullying is part of our society and no school is immune from it. As a school we all need to work in partnership to ensure that no student suffers from ongoing bullying. I thank everyone for their efforts and support in this area.

Grace Palamara
Principal
11th February 2013

This document was developed with the assistance of Assistant Principals, Lee Cain and David Baxter.

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