



## Mendooran Central School **Bullying Prevention Policy**

### **PURPOSE**

Mendooran Central School is committed to providing a safe and respectful learning environment for all staff and students, where bullying will not be tolerated.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- explain the definition of bullying so that there is shared understanding amongst all members of the Mendooran Central School community.
- make clear that no form of bullying at Mendooran Central School will be tolerated.
- outline the strategies and programs in place at Mendooran Central School to build a positive school culture and prevent bullying behaviour.
- ask that everyone in our school community be alert to signs and evidence of bullying behaviour and accept responsibility to report bullying behaviour to school staff.
- ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are appropriately investigated and addressed.
- ensure that support is provided to students who may be affected by bullying behaviour (including targets, bystanders and students engaging in bullying behaviour).
- seek parental and peer group support in addressing and preventing bullying behaviour at Mendooran Central School.

When responding to bullying behaviour, Mendooran Central School aims to:

- be proportionate, consistent, and responsive.
- find a constructive solution for everyone.
- stop the bullying from happening again.
- restore the relationships between the parties involved.

Mendooran Central School acknowledges that school staff owe a duty of care to students to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm, which can include harm that may be caused by bullying behaviour.

### **SCOPE**

This policy addresses how Mendooran Central School aims to prevent, address, and respond to students bullying behaviour. Mendooran Central School recognises that there are many other types of inappropriate student behaviours that do not meet the definition of bullying which are also unacceptable at our school. These other inappropriate behaviours will be managed in accordance with our MCS Discipline Policy and MCS Behaviour Management and Wellbeing Policy.

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions and activities requiring online access.

## **POLICY**

### **DEFINITIONS**

**Bullying** – in 2018 the Education Council of the Council of Australian Governments endorsed the following definition of bullying for use by all Australian schools:

*Bullying is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening.*

*Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing digital records).*

*Bullying of any form or for any reason can have immediate, medium, and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.*

Bullying has three main features:

- It involves a misuse of power in a relationship.
- It is ongoing and repeated, and
- It involves behaviours that can cause harm.

There are four main types of bullying behaviour:

- Physical – examples include hitting, pushing, shoving, or intimidating or otherwise physically hurting another person, damaging, or stealing their belongings. It includes threats of violence.
- Verbal/written – examples include name-calling or insulting someone about an attribute, quality, or personal characteristic.
- Social (sometimes called relational or emotional bullying) – examples include deliberately excluding someone, spreading rumours, sharing information that will have a harmful effect on the other person and/or damaging a person's social reputation or social acceptance.
- Cyberbullying – any form of bullying behaviour that occurs online or via a mobile device. It can be verbal or written, and can include threats of violence as well as images, videos and/or audio.

Bullying can be a form of racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, or other type of social prejudice when the behaviour is targeted at an individual or group because of a personal characteristic, such as race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability. For further information about bullying, refer to: Bullying. No Way (<https://bullyingnoway.gov.au>) and the Department's Bullying Prevention school initiatives (<https://education.nsw.gov.au/schooling/schooling-initiatives/anti-bullying/educators/understanding-bullying>).

### **Other distressing and inappropriate behaviours**

Many distressing and inappropriate behaviours may not constitute bullying even though they are unpleasant. Students who are involved in or who witness any distressing and inappropriate behaviours should report their concerns to school staff and our school will follow the MCS Discipline Policy and MCS Behaviour Management and Wellbeing Policy as applicable.

**Mutual conflict** involves an argument or disagreement between people with no imbalance of power. In incidents of mutual conflict, generally, both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the issue. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.

*Social rejection or dislike* is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

**Single episode acts** of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. However, single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not acceptable behaviours at our school and may have serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour. Mendooran Central School will use its MCS Welfare and Discipline Policy and MCS Behaviour Management Policy to guide a response to single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression.

**Harassment** is language or actions that are demeaning, offensive or intimidating to a person. It can take many forms, including sexual harassment and disability harassment.

**Discrimination** is behaviour that treats someone unfavourably because of a personal characteristic (for example, race, religious belief or activity, disability, sex or intersex status, gender identity or sexual orientation).

Discrimination, harassment, and any other inappropriate behaviour is not tolerated at our school and there may be serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour. This includes any form of racism, religious or disability discrimination, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, or any other behaviour that targets an individual or group.

## INDICATORS OF BULLYING

The following traits *may* be indicators of bullying:

- underachievement
- school refusal.
- avoidance of specific lessons
- change of routine – route to school
- late for school / staying late at school.
- lack of confidence, withdrawal from social activities
- temper flare-ups, abusive language, impulsive hitting out.
- personality change – snappy, withdrawn, tired, outburst of crying, weepiness, loss of appetite.
- desire to work / play near supervising teacher.
- mislaid books, belongings, equipment
- torn / damaged clothing, belongings.
- bruises, cuts
- reports from self, peers, parents
- psychosomatic illness
- jumpiness, forgetfulness

(This list is by no means exhaustive, and these traits may be indicative of other behaviours and/or conditions).

## **BULLYING PREVENTION**

Mendooran Central School has several programs and strategies in place to build a positive and inclusive school culture and relationships to promote wellbeing. We strive to foster a school culture that prevents bullying behaviour by modelling, encouraging, and teaching behaviour that demonstrates acceptance, kindness, and respect.

Bullying prevention at Mendooran Central School is proactive and is supported by research that indicates that a whole school, multifaceted approach is the most effective way to prevent and address bullying. At our school:

- We identify and implement evidence-based programs such as The Resilience Project, which provides students with practical mental health strategies to build resilience and happiness. The Resilience Project lessons are taught explicitly within roll call / class groups on a weekly basis.
- We strive to build strong partnerships between the school, families, and the broader community that means all members work together to ensure the safety of students.
- We support students' mental health and wellbeing through Yindyamarra (The Hub) The Yindyamarra Wellbeing Hub is a safe space where students can go to access support to regulate their emotions and refocus their attention so they can successfully return to the classroom. Support is offered with problem solving, building on social engagement skills and emotional literacy, using sensory and art-based activities.
- We celebrate the diverse backgrounds of members of our school community and teach multicultural education, including Aboriginal History, to promote mutual respect and social cohesion. We also have an Aboriginal Education Officer on site two days per week.
- Teachers are encouraged to incorporate classroom management strategies that discourage bullying and promote positive behaviour, including buddy systems, monitoring student behaviour in the classroom and playground settings, identifying and monitoring "hot spots" in the playground, closely monitoring the use of technology and acting upon student or parent reports, and engagement in professional learning.
- A range of year level incursions and programs are planned for each year to raise awareness about bullying and its impacts, such as Life Education, Harmony Day and Reconciliation Day.
- In the classroom, our social and emotional learning curriculum teaches students what constitutes bullying and how to respond to bullying behaviour assertively. This promotes resilience, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.
- We promote upstander behaviour as a way of empowering our students to take appropriate action positively and safely when they see or hear of a peer being bullied.
- Students are encouraged to look out for each other and to talk to teachers and older peers about any bullying they have experienced or witnessed.
- Students are made aware of cyber bullying and its implications during computer lessons or in class, and information is regularly provided to parents and families via the school newsletter and/or Facebook page.
- We participate in the National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence.
- We continuously enforce our Positive Behaviour Expectations in all settings.
- Utilise "Tell Them From Me" and School Bullying Prevention Survey results to gauge school culture and how students feel about the school, practices and environment.
- We continuously enforce our School Values (Respect, Responsibility, Integrity, Excellence, Cooperation, Participation, Care, Fairness and Democracy) through values education, rewarding students with Aussie of the Month award and prizes for demonstrating these values.

## **INCIDENT RESPONSE**

### **Reporting concerns to Mendooran Central School**

Bullying is not tolerated at our school. We ensure bullying behaviour is identified and addressed with appropriate and proportionate consequences. All bullying complaints will be taken seriously and responded to sensitively.

Students who may be experiencing bullying behaviour, or students who have witnessed bullying behaviour, are encouraged to report their concerns to school staff or another trusted adult as soon as possible.

Our ability to effectively reduce and eliminate bullying behaviour is greatly affected by students and/or parents and carers reporting concerning behaviour as soon as possible, so that the responses implemented by Mendooran Central School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances. We encourage students to speak to their classroom teacher OR with any trusted member of staff including teachers, admin staff, integration aides and Principals.

Parents or carers who develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Mendooran Central School should contact Assistant Principal – Mr Owen Batten, Head Teacher Secondary Studies – Mr Brendon Bearman or Principal – Michelle Winston by phone on (02) 6886 1149, in person, or via the school email [mendooran-c.school@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:mendooran-c.school@det.nsw.edu.au).

### **Investigations**

When notified of alleged bullying behaviour, school staff are required to:

1. record the details of the allegations in SENTRAL and
2. inform Year Level Coordinator, Head Teacher Secondary Studies / Assistant Principal or Principal.

Identified staff are then responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, staff may:

- speak to the those involved in the allegations, including the target/s, the students allegedly engaging in bullying behaviour/s and any witnesses to the incidents.
- speak to the parent/carer(s) of the students involved.
- speak to the teachers of the students involved.
- take detailed notes of all discussions for future reference.
- obtain written statements from all or any of the above.

All communications while investigating an allegation of bullying will be managed sensitively. Investigations will be completed as quickly as possible to allow for the behaviours to be addressed in a timely manner. The objective of completing a thorough investigation into the circumstances of alleged bullying behaviour is to determine the nature of the conduct and the students involved. A thorough understanding of the alleged bullying will inform staff about how to implement an appropriate response most effectively manage that behaviour.

Serious bullying, including serious cyberbullying, is a criminal offence and may be referred to NSW Police.

## **Responses to bullying behaviours.**

When the investigating staff member has sufficient information to understand the circumstances of the alleged bullying and the students involved, several strategies may be implemented to address the behaviour and support affected students in consultation with Student Wellbeing Team, teachers, Head Teacher Secondary Studies /Assistant Principal and Principal.

There are several factors that will be considered when determining the most appropriate response to the behaviour. When deciding about how to respond to bullying behaviour, Mendooran Central School will consider:

- the age, maturity and individual circumstances of the students involved.
- the severity and frequency of the bullying, and the impact it has had on the target student.
- whether the student/s engaging in bullying behaviour have displayed similar behaviour before
- whether the bullying took place in a group or one-to-one context
- whether the students engaging in bullying behaviour demonstrates insight or remorse for their behaviour
- the alleged motive of the behaviour.

Staff may implement all, or some of the following responses to bullying behaviours:

- Offer wellbeing support, including referral to Yindyamarra for:
  - o the target student or students
  - o the students engaging in the bullying behaviour
  - o affected students, including witnesses and/or friends of the target student.
- Facilitate a restorative practice meeting with all or some of the students involved. The objective of restorative practice is to repair relationships that have been damaged by bringing about a sense of remorse and restorative action on the part of the person who has bullied someone and forgiveness by the person who has been bullied.
- Facilitate a mediation between some or all the students involved to help to encourage students to take responsibility for their behaviour and explore underlying reasons for conflict or grievance. Mediation is only suitable if all students are involved voluntarily and demonstrate a willingness to engage in the mediation process.
- Facilitate a process using the Support Group Method, involving the target student(s), the students engaging in bullying behaviour and a group of students who are likely to be supportive of the target(s).
- Facilitate a Student Support Group meeting to discuss a Behaviour Support Plan for affected students involving parents, Wellbeing leader and or Principal/Assistant Principal / Head Teacher.
- Prepare a Behaviour Safety Plan and/or Student Risk Assessment restricting contact between target and students engaging in bullying behaviour. Make a Learning and Support referral.
- Monitor the behaviour of the students involved for an appropriate time and take follow up action if necessary. Make a Learning and Support referral.
- Implement cohort, year group, or whole school targeted strategies to reinforce positive behaviours such as Mendooran Money, Attendance Rewards.
- Implement proportionate disciplinary consequences for the students engaging in bullying behaviour, which may include removal of privileges, planning room, orange day sheet, suspension and/or expulsion consistent with the and the Suspension and Expulsion policy of the NSW Department of Education, MCS Discipline Policy; and MCS Behaviour Management and Wellbeing Policy.

Mendooran Central School understands the importance of monitoring and following up on the progress of students who have been involved in or affected by bullying behaviour. Where appropriate, school staff will also endeavour to provide parents and carers with updates on the management of bullying incidents.

Bullying exists at all levels in our society. Addressing bullying in all its forms is a whole school community responsibility.

## **COMMUNICATION**

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes.
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required.
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions.
- Included as annual reference in newsletter.
- Discussed at student forums/through communication tools.
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request.

## **FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- MCS Discipline Policy
- MCS Behaviour Management Policy

Our school also follows Department of Education and Training policy relating to bullying including:

- Student Behaviour Policy / Student Policy
- Digital Devices and Online Services for Students
- Multicultural Education Policy
- Anti-racism Policy
- [Behaviour Code for Students](#)

The following websites and resources provide useful information on prevention and responding to bullying, as well as supporting students who have been the target of bullying behaviours:

- [Bullying. No way!](#)
- [Bully Stoppers](#)
- [Kids Helpline](#)
- [ReachOut Australia](#)
- [Lifeline](#)
- [Student Wellbeing Hub](#)
- [Australian Student Wellbeing Framework](#)
- [Raising Children Network](#)
- [eSafety Commissioner](#)

## **EVALUATION**

This policy will be reviewed as required, following an incident or analysis of new research or school data relating to bullying, to ensure that the policy remains up to date, practical and effective. Data to inform this review will be collected through:

- discussion and consultation with students and parent/carers
- regular student, staff, and parent/carer surveys
- assessment of other school-based data, including the number of reported incidents of bullying in each year group and the effectiveness of the responses implemented.
- attitudes to school survey and student forums to discuss annual results.
- parent opinion survey

Proposed amendments to this policy will be discussed with students, staff, parents, and P&C.

## **POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL**

Policy last reviewed: December 2024

Consultation: P&C, Staff

Approved by: Principal.

Next scheduled review date: November 2025

(sections also included in School Behaviour Support & Management Plan 2025)





NAME (Optional):

YEAR:

MALE / FEMALE:



### HOW DO YOU REALLY FEEL ABOUT SCHOOL?

1. Do you like being at Mendooran Central School? Why or Why not?

2. Who helps make you feel happy at Mendooran Central School?

3. Who or what makes you unhappy at Mendooran Central School?

4. Who would you like to be your friend?

5. Who makes it hard for you to learn in class? How or why?

6. Tick the boxes of things that have happened to you in the last 6 months.

- ☐ Teased or called names?
- ☐ Deliberately excluded / left out / not picked for games?
- ☐ Forced to give away money, food or your favourite things?
- ☐ Teased about the way you look?
- ☐ Teased about your race, religion, disability or gender identity?
- ☐ Deliberately hit, kicked or punched?
- ☐ Threatened by another student in any manner – in person, over the phone, through the internet / social media?
- ☐ Negative body language eg. death stares



7. Name the people who will do something about teasing and bullying in Mendooran Central School?

8. What can we do or what do we do about bullying at Mendooran Central School?

9. Is there anything or anyone that makes you not want to come to Mendooran Central School?

10. Where do you feel safe within the school grounds? Colour these on the school map.

11. Is there anything else you would like to add?



# MENDOORAN CENTRAL SCHOOL

## BULLYING PREVENTION SURVEY

