

Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Purpose

At Inner Sydney Montessori School (ISMS), we believe that all members of the community have the right to a learning and work environment free from intimidation, humiliation and hurt. We all share a responsibility to foster, promote and restore right relationships. Bullying in regards to children is unacceptable and we (students, staff and parents) all share a responsibility for preventing it. The School rejects all forms of bullying behaviour, including online or cyberbullying. To improve student attendance, learning and behaviour, the School encourages parent and community involvement.

2. Who is Affected by this Policy?

- Nominated Supervisor (Principal)
- Staff (including casuals)
- Children and others attending the programs and activities of ISMS
- Parents/carers
- Students on teaching placements and observations
- Outside Tutors and External Providers
- Contractors, Consultants and Visitors
- Volunteers

3. What does this Policy mean?

Schools are called to establish relationships which are grounded in love, compassion, reconciliation and justice. In witnessing these values, we reject ideas, beliefs and behaviours which marginalise or victimise people.

Whilst there is no universally accepted definition of bullying, there is general consensus that bullying behaviour:

- Is deliberate and often repeated;
- Intends to cause fear, distress, hurt or harm to another;
- Is action by a more powerful individual or group over a less powerful individual or group.

Bullying takes many forms, all of which will cause distress. Examples of bullying include:

- Physical - hitting, pushing, tripping, kicking, spitting on others etc.
- Verbal - teasing, using offensive names, ridiculing, spreading rumours etc.
- Non-Verbal - writing offensive notes or graffiti about others, using e-mail or text messaging to hurt others, rude gestures etc.
- Exclusion - deliberately excluding others from group, refusing to sit next to someone etc.
- Extortion - threatening to take someone's possessions, food or money etc.
- Property - stealing, hiding, damaging or destroying property etc.
- Cyber - any form of bullying which is carried out through electronic means such as mobile phones, email, chat room, social networking, 'sms', web page etc.

How do we prevent bullying at Inner Sydney Montessori School?

Prevention strategies through education that involve the whole School community (students, staff and parents) are more likely to reduce bullying. Therefore, at ISMS we recognise that we all share the responsibility to prevent bullying.

Possible signs a child is being bullied and warning signs include:

- Not wanting to go to School;
- Anger and tears;
- Low self-esteem and depression;
- Complaining of headaches and stomach aches.

At ISMS we adopt the following strategies to prevent bullying:

- Grace and Courtesy lessons – give the child the vocabulary, actions and steps required for them to build awareness and responsiveness of those around them (conflict resolution);
- Montessori Peace educational program which contains the children's study of peoples of the world, through to learning about the fundamental needs of humans. Emphasis is placed on the family of human kind and the interrelationship of all life. Montessori children begin to realise that they are not separate from the rest of the world but are an integral part of creating a harmonious world;
- Practical life curriculum develops the children's care of the person and their immediate environment;
- Cooperation is a key component to the Montessori philosophy. There is no focus on competition or focus on comparison by teachers on students;
- Regular whole School training of staff and routine staff development initiatives
- Explicit teaching of positive behaviours embedded within the curriculum addressing positive relationships, conflict resolution, resilience, bystander action etc.
- Regularly recognising and acknowledging students who demonstrate appropriate behaviours that promote and restore encouraging positive relationships within each class by the Director, Assistant and other children;
- Open classrooms to attract and encourage parents' involvement and direct observation of classroom interactions;
- Prompt and efficient supervision before School, at times of lunch and after School interactions, by staff members;
- Multi-age classrooms where pastoral interactions are the basis and are fundamental to students' Relationships.

At ISMS **students** are encouraged to:

- Take some positive action to stop bullying if they observe an incident, to speak up and influence the behaviour of peers;
- Report the bullying incident to a staff member as soon as possible;
- Make it clear to their peers that bullying is not accepted.

At ISMS **Staff** must:

- Take positive action to stop the bullying when they observe an incident or are informed of an incident;
- Pass on information about any reported or observed bullying behaviours to the Principal or Stage Co-ordinator.

At ISMS **Parents** are encouraged to:

- Listen to their child and encourage their child to speak to their teacher;
- Organise a meeting with their child's Director to discuss their concerns.

How do we respond to allegations of bullying at ISMS?

Bullying is viewed as a major breach of the School's 'Respectful Guidelines' and therefore follow up action will align with our School policies that relate to quality relationships.

Any reports of bullying will be investigated and appropriate action will be taken promptly. The response to bullying will include:

- Investigate impartially and, where appropriate, informing parents and involving them in any action and follow up;
- Guidance and other support for the recipient of the bullying (e.g., as appropriate, re-skilling and re-teaching of strategies, resilience and social skills, counselling, conflict management skills, social networking etc.);
- Guidance and support for 'bystanders', 'supporters' and witnesses of the bullying (e.g., intervention strategies etc.);
- Age appropriate and consistent sanctions for the student who is bullying e.g., counselling, parent contact;
- Interventions and support for the student who bullied included in a Behaviour Guidance Plan (e.g., specific interventions developed to reduce the bullying behaviour, teaching of replacement behaviours, reinforcers etc.).

Procedures for investigating bullying and follow up:

In discerning appropriate responses to bullying, the collective welfare of the School community will be balanced with the individual needs of the student (refer to 3.6.1 Child Protection Policy).

Counselling support for students involved in instances of bullying or suffering stress and anxiety can be sought through the local GP or through:

1. Balmain Hospital
29 Booth Street
BALMAIN NSW 2041
Tel: (02) 9395 2111
2. Goodwill Relations
449 Darling Street
ROZELLE NSW 2039
Tel: (02) 8015 5662

Counselling support for staff can be sought through:

Inner West Psychology
20 Jarrett Street
LEICHHARDT NSW 2040
Tele: (02) 9518 1061

Preliminary interview(s) will be conducted to ascertain the facts and specific nature of the bullying as necessary. These interviews should be with individuals initially (i.e. student being bullied, students witnessing bullying, student engaging in bullying behaviour, staff etc.).

The initial interviews should focus on the safety of all individuals and include:

- A clear statement on the consequences if the bullying continues or if there are any reprisals as a result of the reporting of the incident
- Immediate preventative actions that will be implemented to avoid further incidents. This might include separation of those involved and support of those involved.

Decisions will be made, in conjunction with the Principal, as to the level of severity of the incident and whether the parents of those involved need to be informed.

- Follow up interviews should focus on appropriate strategies to assist and support all involved

within a Behaviour Guidance Plan. This Plan will specifically identify the inappropriate behaviours, name the replacement behaviours, outline strategies to support the replacement behaviours and reinforcers (both negative and positive) when behaviours occur.

- A record of the separate interviews should be kept
- Regular monitoring and follow up with the students involved is necessary (for example daily, prior to and after break times etc.)
- Review of the Behaviour Guidance Plan will take place to modify strategies
- Any further recurrence of bullying may result in an issue of warning and could lead to the implementation of suspension procedures and, if necessary, removal of the student from the School through:
 - Suspension pending negotiated transfer
 - Negotiated transfer or
 - Expulsion

Police

Contact for advice and/or reporting made by the Principal at the point that the Principal requires further information or considers a matter serious enough for reporting, and after consulting with the ISMS President of the School Council.

Should contact with the police be required:

Youth Liaison Officer
Balmain Police
368 Darling Street
BALMAIN NSW 2041
Tele: 9556 0624

Mobile Phones and Cyberbullying

Mobile Phones

Using mobile devices to bully and threaten other students or staff are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Students are reminded that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile device to menace, harass, or offend another person and almost all calls, text messages or emails can be traced.

Cyberbullying

From 1 July 2015 there is a newly formed Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner which administers the cyberbullying complaints scheme under the *Enhancing Online Safety for Children Act 2015*.

The Act allows children suffering from serious cyberbullying to contact the Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner to have content removed if social media companies do not remove the offending content after it has been reported to them.

The Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner – resolving complaints with Schools

What information we will give you?

When we notify a complaint to a School Principal, we may provide information about:

- (a) The name of the student who is the target of the cyberbullying
- (b) A summary of the cyberbullying material
- (c) Suggested options to help resolve the complaint in accordance with your School policies
- (d) Action taken by us to date with respect to the complaint.
We will also advise you of any conditions that apply to the use of the information supplied by us (see below).

What actions should Schools take?

If we notify you about a cyberbullying complaint concerning students in your School, you can help resolve the complaint by undertaking to do the following (to the extent you are capable of doing so):

- (a) Acknowledge receipt of the notification within 24 hours to an email address provided by us
- (b) Inform us of the types of actions the School proposes to take and the time period for that action to be taken by email within five working days of the notification
- (c) Meet any conditions placed on information that has been disclosed
- (d) Inform us of the outcomes of the action you have taken within three weeks' form receipt of the notification
- (e) Talk to us if you feel that you are unable to resolve the complaint and/or that you have a serious concern that the bullying will continue so we can discuss any further assistance we may be able to provide

Disclosure of information – conditions

When we disclose information to you, amongst other things we may ask you to:

1. Only discuss the information with the students involved and – with the student's consent – their parents or guardians
2. Only disclose the information to third parties with the consent of the affected students or as required by law
3. Comply with applicable privacy laws and policies in relation to the personal information disclosed

4. Related Policies and Procedures

Policy to be read in conjunction with:

- 3.6.2.3 Unlawful Discrimination, Harassment & Bullying
- 3.6.2.4 Staff Code of Conduct
- 3.7.2 Student Discipline
- 3.7.3 Behaviour Management Procedures
- 3.8.7 Parent/Carer Code of Conduct

ACECQA policy requirements covered within this policy include:

- Interactions with children (155)
- Relationships with children (156)

5. Access to and Communication of Policy

Families have access to an electronic version of this policy through the ISMS Intranet. Staff have access to an electronic version through ConnectISMS. Hard copies are available at all campuses.

Families:

- If there are changes to the policy, the Deputy Principal and ICT Manager are responsible for ensuring parents are notified via the School Newsletter or email and the policy is updated on the ISMS Intranet.

Staff:

- If there are changes to the policy, the Deputy Principal and ICT Manager are responsible for ensuring staff are notified via email and the policy is updated on ConnectISMS. Additionally, significant changes are discussed and communicated verbally at Whole Staff Meetings.

The Deputy Principal is responsible for the upkeep of policies and procedures through Intranet sites and hard copies in central locations. This includes initiating the review process for all policies.

6. Review Process

Person Responsible for Initiating the Review: Deputy Principal

Consultation & Review Team: Principal, Executive Team, Business Manager, Deputy Principal

External Consultation: ACECQA, CELA, AISNSW, NSWDET

Approver: School Council

7. Consequences of Non-Compliance

PARENTS

We expect parents to support their children and work with the School including through meetings with Directors/Stage Coordinators/Principal. It is expected that all staff will comply with the Policy and if not, consequences will be as per the Parent/Carer Code of Conduct.

STAFF

It is expected that all staff will comply with the Policy and if not, consequences will be as per the Staff Code of Conduct.

STUDENTS

It is expected that all students will comply with the Policy and if not, consequences will be as per the Behaviour Management Procedures.

8. Legislative Requirements

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

ACECQA

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (ACECQA):

- Regulation 170 (1), (2) – Policies and procedures to be followed
- Regulation 171 (1), (2) – Policies and procedures to be kept available

Link to National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety

Link to National Quality Standard, Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children.

NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA)

Registered and Accredited Individual Non-Government Schools (NSW) Manual

- Section B8 – Safe and Supportive Environment
- Section B9 – Discipline

“The School’s policies which are made from time to time are made pursuant to the requirements set out in section 47 of the Education Act, the Board of Studies for registration of the School and the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA).”