



Anti-bullying Policy

Flaxmill School P-7 aims to be a healthy and collaborative community of learners in which all members are encouraged and supported to live by the values of Respect, Responsibility, Honesty, Learning and Friendship.

We are committed to being a safe and supportive school community, where the risk from all types of harm is minimised, diversity is valued, and all members of the school community feel respected and included.

At Flaxmill School P-7 we regard bullying, including harassment, violence, discrimination and online bullying as extremely serious. Flaxmill has an inclusive school community, and as such, consideration is given to tailoring our programs and responses to respect Students with Disabilities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, Students under the Guardianship of the Minister etc. The information in this policy explains what bullying is, how you can report it, and what can be done about it.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more persons. Bullying can happen in person or online, and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert).

Bullying of any form or for any reason can have 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. However, these conflicts still need to be addressed and resolved.

Examples Of Bullying Are:

- Having your lunch money taken away
- Being left out of games and conversations
- Being repeatedly hit or kicked
- Being called names and verbally abused
- Being bullied on mobile phones or through the Internet.

What Can You Do If You Are Being Bullied?

- Stay calm and cool
- Stay with a group of friends
- Stand up for yourself - stand tall, use strong eyes, be clever - use humor
- Tell an adult - keep telling until someone does something about it.
- Don't respond with anger or violence
- Act confidently
- Just walk away

What We Do About Incidents Of Bullying

- We will listen and talk to the person who has been bullied and the person who has bullied others. This is done separately.
- We will put consequences for bullying in place for the person who has been bullying. These may include time in the office, restricted play, detention or suspension. They may not be able to go on excursions or special events.

School staff may hold a restorative practice meeting to increase understanding and improve or restore the relationship. This may include a community police officer if the incident involves threatened or actual assault. Everyone has a chance to talk about what

happened, the impact on them. Both the bullied person and the person doing the bullying will be asked what needs to be done to repair the harm and make things safe and fair for everyone.

What We Do To Reduce Bullying

At Flaxmill School P-7 we use prevention, intervention and post- intervention strategies.

Prevention strategies include;

- Ensuring adequate student supervision
- Teaching curriculum programs that teach students about our values, respectful relationships and safety
- Teaching students to be helpful bystanders and support their peers

Intervention strategies include;

- Counselling students
- Talking with parents/caregivers
- Putting consequences in place
- Ensuring staff know how to intervene

Post-Intervention strategies include;

- Monitoring the situation to ensure safety and well-being
- Collecting data and reviewing policy

What Can Parents Do?

- Listen to your child and take seriously his/her feelings and fears. Children need to articulate their feelings to be empowered to deal with bullying and build a sense of power.
- Help him/her to work out if and why he/she is being bullied. This also gives empowerment. It is not bullying if it is a one-off conflict between 2 children, especially of the same age and gender - it is peer conflict.
- Try not to take everything into your own hands, unless it is an emergency, because this is likely to make your child feel less in control. In extreme cases action must be taken without your child's approval.
- Help your child to work out what ideas he/she has about coping. Write them down. Include a few of your own to get started. Talk about which ones might help or not help and why. Choose an idea that he/she would like to try and then practice this in a role-play.
- Don't call your child names, eg. "Weak" or "a sook" and don't let anyone else do so.
- If the bullying is verbal teasing you may be able to help your child to learn to ignore it, so the child who is doing it does not get any satisfaction out of it. You could practice at home ways to help your child gain confidence, such as walking past with his/her head up.
- Help your child think of ways to avoid the situation, such as walking away, or staying with a group.
- Some children are helped by imagining a special force field around them to protect them from the hard words that will bounce off.
- Work on improving your child's confidence by concentrating on the things she/he can do well.
- Find out about 'assertiveness training' which may be useful. When children can solve the problem themselves, they are more likely to develop resiliency.
- If your child has been traumatised she/he may need professional help. You could start with a conversation with leadership.
- Most importantly, if the bullying is happening at school, contact your child's teacher. If it continues, contact leadership staff.
- Be very careful that your child does not feel that being bullied is his/her fault. It is the bully who needs to change and stop his/her behaviour, not the child who is being bullied. Do not bully the bully.

Talking To School Staff

When bullying happens at school you will need to talk to us about it. Start with your child's teacher.

Make a list of the things that have happened to your child. Be clear about his suffering. Be prepared to name the children who bully. If bullying persists, write down WHO, WHAT, WHERE and WHEN.

- Talk to the teacher about what can be done to help your child.
- Talk to a member of leadership about the school's way of dealing with bullying and what steps the school will take to prevent it happening again to your child.
- Keep in contact until the problem is sorted out. If you find it difficult to talk about this with the school staff, take another adult with you.

It is important to get professional support (usually CAMHS: Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service 8326 1234) especially if you believe:

- this is an ongoing problem rather than an occasional one
- it happens to your child a lot, in different situations and with different children. Research has shown that one in six Australian students are bullied every week, and that those children are three times more likely to develop depressive illnesses.

If you would like further information about bullying or about our school please contact us on 8382 3057.

School staff cannot support children with bullying issues when they are not aware of what is happening. Encourage your child to speak with his/her child's class teacher or leadership staff.

You may choose to email leadership staff to report bullying.

Further information can be found at; www.bullyingnoway.com.au