

Bullying Prevention at MAS

Our values:

Determination: We will show determination in our approach to teaching and learning by fostering a growth mindset that embraces tenacity, independence, flexibility, and resilience. Our students strive to achieve success in their learning outcomes, life skills development and individual wellbeing. Our staff demonstrate determination through continual growth and professional development, and through their support for students. We persist through challenges to achieve our goals.

Kindness: We embrace kindness in our interactions with others. We demonstrate this through inclusivity, understanding, compassion and courtesy for one another.

Respect: Is the foundation from which we teach and learn, enabling teachers and students to form a learning relationship based on trust, honesty, integrity, and mutual understanding. We recognise respect is reciprocal.

Collaboration: We work collaboratively to deliver quality, contemporary education and learning opportunities that prepare our students for a vibrant future. Our students are supported by staff and their peers throughout their learning journey to identify, work towards and achieve their individual potential. We recognise and honour our place in our community, our heritage, and our cultural connections. We work together with our community to create positive outcomes that benefit the future of our students, our school, and our area. We are united in our shared purpose of learning and growing. We embrace diversity in all its forms. We value each individual and their unique lived experiences, knowledge, and skills.

National vision

Australian schools are safe, inclusive, and connected learning communities that promote positive relationships and wellbeing as a foundation for children and young people to reach their full potential. (*Australian Student Wellbeing Framework 2018*)

All students have the right to feel safe, respected, and included. Our learning communities are free from bullying and harassment.

Our school climate fosters healthy and respectful relationships. We will create this with our students, families, and the broader community.

We will model behaviours that:

- demonstrate respect.
- value diversity
- promote belonging and wellbeing.

MAS Vision

We work together to achieve our potential. We will achieve this through:

- Providing a safe, stable, and encouraging environment for all students.
- Providing equitable opportunities for all and commitment to improving learning outcomes for all students.
- Strengthening connections with our wider community.
- Embracing flexible learning opportunities and accrediting learning from different contexts.
- Commitment to professionalism and professional growth within all staff.

Our approach to bullying prevention

At Meningie Area School we will plan, implement, and review our bullying prevention strategies. We will do this with our Governing Council, staff, students, families, and local community.

- Create a welcoming and inclusive school.
- Make sure staff understand their role to create a safe school.
- Build staff skills to respond well to bullying.
- Teach about bullying in all year levels. Include how to prevent, identify, respond to and report bullying and cyberbullying.
- Take bullying seriously. Respond to reports of bullying or observed bullying behaviours.
- Use fair and consistent responses to bullying or suspected bullying.
- Document all bullying incidents. Check in with students while bullying incidents are being resolved.
- Work with the Governing Council, site leadership, department staff and the local community to design local strategies to prevent and reduce bullying.
- Encourage parents and carers to take part in activities that promote safety and wellbeing.
- Share information on how to prevent and respond to bullying and cyberbullying.
- Review our strategies and actions to prevent and respond to bullying. We will make sure that student needs are being met.
- Set up safe ways for students to report bullying and let students know how to do this.
- Make information about the complaint's resolution process available.
- Develop solutions to bullying incidents with students, staff, parents, and caregivers.
- Take action against discrimination, harassment, and violence. Report criminal actions to South Australia Police.
- Provide targeted social and emotional support for students who need more help after bullying incidents.

How bullying is reported and resolved

We will work with students, parents, and carers to resolve bullying issues. If needed, we will get advice, counselling, and support from external services.

All reports of bullying will be taken seriously. Responses will be planned and quick. The principal or leadership team will immediately respond to life threatening, significant harm or criminal behaviour issues. We will refer criminal actions to South Australia Police.

Our responses will restore the safe and positive learning environment.

Report bullying

You can report bullying to:

- Principal
- Assistant Principal
- Student Wellbeing Leader
- Year Level Coordinator
- Home Group Teacher
- Classroom Teacher
- Support staff

You can report bullying incidents by:

- Face-to-face

Give us as much information as possible. This might include:

- who was involved, including who engaged in the bullying behaviour, who the behaviour was directed at and witnesses
- when the incident happened
- where the incident took place, for example social media
- the behaviour
- if anyone stopped or tried to stop the behaviour
- what led up to the incident
- what happened after the incident.

Gather and document information

Staff might speak about the incident with:

- students
- parents or carers
- other staff
- any other witness or person involved.

Intervention and support

Staff will see if the incident:

- meets the definition of bullying
- poses an immediate risk to student or staff safety.

If there is no immediate risk, staff might use the following strategies with students directly involved:

- restorative practices, including an apology
- Method of Shared Concern or Support Group Method of intervention
- parent or carer meeting
- school-based consequences

For example:

- loss of privileges
 - given a learning task
 - use of reflection space or class
 - limited areas for play or activities or extra yard supervision
- suspension and exclusion.

Refer to services

Refer students to specialist support, if needed. This might be from the Department for Education or external services. Options will be discussed with students and their families.

Document and record

All incidents of bullying and responses will be documented and stored in line with Department for Education records management procedures. A record of an incident might go in a student's file. Incidents can be recorded in our electronic databases. For example, EDSAS, IRMS or Day Map.

Monitor and follow-up

Staff will check on all students involved in a bullying incident. They will make sure all students are safe, and relationships are repaired. They will talk with students, parents and carers about the actions taken. They will check if these actions have helped.

If a student, parent, or carer are not happy with the steps taken by the school, they can call the department's complaints management line on 1800 677 435.

Definitions

Bullying

A national definition of bullying has been endorsed by the Education Council.

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 of 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

Conflict or fights between equals are not defined as bullying. Bullying occurs where there is a power imbalance. This might come from:

- the context. For example, a number of children acting against one child.
- personal characteristics. For example, different physical, emotional, or social development.

It is ongoing and repeated

One incident of misbehaviour is not defined as bullying. Schools will respond to all incidents of misbehaviour.

One act by a single person might be bullying if:

- the behaviour adds to a series of other people's behaviours that misuse power and result in harm.
- it can be shared online or through technology to a wide audience or repeated with multiple views.

It involves behaviours that can cause harm.

Bullying can cause physical and psychological harm.

Physical harm can include injury. It can also include theft or damage to belongings.

Psychological harm can include:

- anxiety
- not wanting to go to school
- lack of interest in school
- isolation and depression.

Psychological harm can last some time. It will depend on a student's situation and the support available to them. Support might come from family, school, and friends.

A fear of being bullied can create psychological harm.

Examples of types of bullying

Physical: hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching, pushing, or damaging or stealing belongings.

Verbal: verbal abuse, name calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, or threats.

Social: social exclusion, lying, spreading rumours, unkind facial expressions, or body language, mean and condescending looks, playing jokes to embarrass and humiliate, mimicking and damaging someone's reputation or social relationships.

Cyber: Cyberbullying is online bullying. It uses technology, including social media platforms. Verbal and social bullying can be cyberbullying when they occur online.

Cyberbullying includes:

- abusive texts and emails
- hurtful messages, videos, and images, including images that have been changed.
- sharing personal images and videos without consent
- pretending to be someone else online to be hurtful.
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Harassment, discrimination, and violence

Bullying, harassment, discrimination, and violence all create or add to a negative environment. This can make students feel unsafe and unable to reach their full potential.

Harassment

Harassment is behaviour that targets an individual or group. This can be because of their: identity, race, culture, or ethnic origin; religion; physical characteristics; gender; sexual orientation; age or ability.

It offends, humiliates, intimidates, or creates an unsafe environment. It might be a: pattern of behaviour or a single act. It might be on purpose or unintended.

Discrimination

Discrimination happens when people are treated differently to others. This can be because of their: identity, race, culture, or ethnic origin; religion; physical characteristics; gender; sexual orientation; age or ability. Discrimination interferes with people's right to fair treatment and equal opportunities.

Violence

Violence is the intentional use of physical force or power. It can be threatened or actual, against another person. It might result in psychological harm, injury or in some cases death. It might involve provoked or unprovoked acts. It can be one incident, a random act or can happen over time.

Bullying, harassment, discrimination, and violence may be based on gender, race, sexuality, culture, religion, disability, and care status. Bullying, harassment, discrimination, and violence for any reason is not acceptable in South Australian public schools. It will be responded to.

Responses will depend on the:

- behaviours
- needs of the students
- rights of all students to be safely included in learning.

Roles and responsibilities

We each have a role to play to:

- prevent bullying and harassment.
- respond when it happens.
- support those involved and affected by bullying.

The Australian Student Wellbeing Framework elements are leadership, inclusion, student voice, partnerships, and support. They guide our practices and responses to prevent and reduce bullying in our school community.

School leaders and staff

- Model and promote positive behaviour. Value diversity, demonstrate respect, and include all students and their families.
- Provide and take part in professional development to build skills, knowledge, and confidence about preventing bullying. Including how to recognise, respond and manage it.
- Assess bullying data and trends to develop prevention strategies. Do this with the Governing Council and school community.
- Collect data on bullying regularly. Use the data to plan how you will prevent and respond to bullying.
- Explicitly teach students about respectful relationships, bullying and cyberbullying. Teach them how to recognise bullying, what to do and how to get help.
- Work with students to come up with solutions to bullying. Include them in decisions that affect their safety and wellbeing.
- Support all students to be included, in particular students at higher risk of being bullied.
- Take action when bullying and cyberbullying has been reported. This includes incidents that happen out of school hours or off school grounds when it relates to school relationships.
- Report criminal matters to the South Australian Police.
- Help parents and carers to recognise bullying. Include information about what to do when their child is engaging in or affected by bullying.
- Work with families, service providers and the community to support students affected by bullying.
- Support students to repair and restore relationships that have been harmed by bullying.
- Have planned responses to bullying. Make them visible and consistent. Responses should foster trust and confidence.
- Help students to be physically and psychologically safe from bullying.

Parents and families

- Model and promote safe, respectful, and inclusive behaviours.
- Help their children to be safe online at home. This includes checking their children's use of technology and social media.
- Make sure their children know how to identify and report bullying. Work with the school to help their children be safe from bullying.
- Talk to their children about safety issues. This includes bullying and cyberbullying. Help them understand what it is, why it is harmful and how to respond. Use the same messages the school uses.
- Report concerns about bullying to school staff.
- If a bullying incident happens, work with the school.
- Support their children to go to school while a bullying issue is being worked on.
- Get external professional support for their child, if needed.

Students

- Model behaviours that are safe, respectful, and inclusive, both face-to-face and online.
- Build skills, knowledge, and confidence to recognise, respond to and manage bullying.
- Be a part of decision making to improve student safety and wellbeing.
- Take a stand when bullying is observed. Step in if it is safe. Seek help from adults.
- Support friends and peers get help from trusted adults if they experience bullying.
- Support friends to behave in safe, respectful, and inclusive ways if their friends engage in bullying.