Little Grove Primary School

Preventing Bullying in Schools
Evidence-based strategies that really work.
What is bullying?

Bullying is repeated behaviour used by a more powerful person or group over a less powerful person, who has difficulty stopping the situation. The person or people bullying deliberately try to make the person being bullied upset, angry or afraid.

Types of bullying:

**Physical bullying**
- Deliberately bumping, pulling, shoving or tripping someone again and again
- Throwing things at someone to hurt, annoy or upset them
- Hitting, punching or slapping, pinching, biting or scratching someone repeatedly
- Repeatedly touching someone who doesn’t want to be touched.

**Emotional bullying**
- Ignoring someone or keeping them out of group conversations (known as exclusion)
- Making fun of someone’s appearance
- Leaving someone out by encouraging others not to have anything to do with them
- Spreading lies or stories about someone
- Trying to get other students to dislike someone
- Trying to get other students to harm someone
- Spreading rumours about someone

**Verbal bullying**
- Calling people names
- Spreading rumours
- Teasing someone in a mean and hurtful way
- Being sarcastic in a hurtful way

What can bystanders do?

- Let the person doing the bullying know that what they are doing is bullying
- Refuse to join in with their bullying and walk away
- Support the student who is being bullied
- Ask a teacher or support person for help
- Support their friends and protect them from bullying by being there for them. Children who are alone are more likely to be the target of bullying so encourage your children to be aware of other children who are left out on their own in the schoolyard.

Developing Friendships

- Encourage your children to make friends and play with other children at school, at home and in your neighbourhood
- At home encourage your children to talk with their extended family (aunts, uncles, grandparents) and to talk to adults family friends and neighbours
- Invite other children for visits and sleepovers and help your children make their guests feel welcome.
- Help your children develop a range of interests and hobbies, such as sport, scouts, dance, drama crafts or music
- Encourage your child to telephone friends on the weekends and holidays
**Different children—Different Temperaments**

There are basically four different temperaments:

1. **Sensitive Children** — are more vulnerable, dramatic and tend to show their feelings. They respond most to listening and understanding.

2. **Active children** — have strong wills and like to be the centre of attention and take risks. They respond well to structure, planning and clear direction.

3. **Responsive children** — are social and outgoing. They respond well to lots of stimulation and interesting experiences.

4. **Receptive children** — are cooperative, well mannered and concerned with the flow of life. They respond well to a lot of routine and structure in their lives and are unsettled by too much change.

**Bystanders**

A bystander is someone who sees the bullying situation. Bystanders may act in different ways.

**A bystander might:**
- Watch what is going on and not get involved
- Pretend not to see and ignore the situation
- Choose to get involved in the bullying
- Choose to get involved and stop the bullying
- Choose to get help.

**Threatening**
- Making someone feel afraid that they are going to be hurt
- Making things up to get someone into trouble
- Forcing someone to do their homework
- Forcing someone to commit offences, e.g. stealing.

**Property abuse**
- Damaging someone’s belongings
- Repeatedly stealing someone’s money
- Taking things away from someone
- Repeatedly taking or hiding someone’s belongs.

**Cyber bullying:**
- Sending harassing, abusive or offensive emails, phone messages or SMS phone texts
- Making silent or abusive phone calls
- Spreading rumours via email, MSN or phone messages.

**Bullying isn’t…**
- Fighting between two students of equal power
- Teasing done in a mutual way meant in fun and jest.

**Why do students bully?**
- To be popular and admired
- Afraid of being left out
- Jealousy of others
- They enjoy the power
- They are aggressive
- They see it as their role e.g. leader
- It seems like fun
- To maintain their self-esteem
Social Skills

Far more people fail from a lack of ability to get along with others, than from lack of knowledge. There is a need to provide social skills training to children to help them:

- Develop co-operation and sharing skills in place of aggressive behaviours
- Develop values of trust and respect
- Develop an understanding of social rules and procedures
- Cope with bullying should it occur

The Classroom

- Identifying bullying
- Developing an action plan
- Identifying a support group
- Encouraging “Think, Plan, Talk Do”
- Social skill development

Helpful parent actions and responses

The “Cool” way is “Just right” (not too hard, not too soft)

- Speak in a firm but friendly manner
- Stand tall, make eye contact
- Stand up for yourself politely
- Smile or look calm
- Feel happy, confident and in control
- Feel okay about yourself

DEALING WITH FIGHTS AND ARGUMENTS

- Try to stay calm and talk through the problem in a normal voice
- If either person is getting too angry or upset, say “We are getting too angry / upset. Let’s talk about this later”. Then walk away
- Make sure you do talk about it later, when you have both calmed down
- Explain your point of view and talk about your feelings (e.g. “I felt bad when you told the rest of the team I was useless at soccer”)
- Let the other person explain their point of view. Listen and without interrupting
- Apologise if necessary and try to find a way to be friends
**ACTION PLAN**

When I have a problem I can…….

- Try to stand up for myself in a positive way
- Walk away and ignore the person completely
- Try to talk to the person I am having the problem with
- Get help from someone in my support group
- Try coming to an agreement with the other person
- Ignore the situation and keep playing or working
- Talk to a friend and get some ideas to help me make a decision

**ASSERTIVENESS**

Assertiveness training has shown to increase self-esteem and confidence in a person being bullied. A person who has good self-esteem and confidence is less likely to be bullied.

**How can I help my child be assertive?**

Explain to your child that speaking assertively or behaving in a “Cool” way is deciding what you want to do and saying clearly what you want to happen.

**Resiliency**

**Skills to Cope**

- Support
- Self-esteem

**Coping and Bouncing Back**

**Our School Policy**

**MANAGEMENT OF BULLYING:**

**STUDENTS**

**Strategies for students to follow:**

What to do if you are bullied

**STOP**

What is going on?
- How do I feel?
- Is the situation really bothering me?
- Am I in danger?
- What do I want?

**THINK**

What can I do?
- Is this a bullying situation?
- What strategies can I use?
- Can I handle this situation myself?
- Do I need to ask for help?
**Our School Policy**

**TALK**
Who can I talk to?
- Who is the best person to talk to?
- What do I want from my support person?
- How could I talk about it?

**TO PREVENT BULLYING**
- Respect yourself and others
- Be assertive
- Learn to tolerate and accept individual differences.

**What can you do if you are a bystander?**
- Care enough to do something about it, whether it affects you personally or not.
- Early intervention can defuse a situation before it gets out of hand.
- Report it to a teacher.

**PARENTS**

**As a parent you can:**
- Talk to your child about what is happening at school
- Support your child to be assertive but not aggressive in dealing with bullying
- Talk to someone at school who can help
- Be positive about your child’s qualities and what he/she does
- Encourage your child to be tolerant, caring and not to use aggression to resolve conflicts
- Talk to someone at school who can help, following the procedure below
- Be aware of signs of distress in your child (see below).
- Assist your child to discuss the problem with a teacher

**Helpful parent actions and responses**

- Encourage your child to talk about the situation
- Tell your child that bullying is wrong and remind them they have the right to feel safe and happy
- Keep in mind there may be other factors involved in the situation that you may not be aware of
- Be aware of your own responses and react in a calm, helpful and supportive manner
- Make sure the child knows how to get help and support at school
- Help your child enhance their friendship skills (having more than one friend has been shown to reduce the likelihood or impact of bullying)
- Encourage your child to participate in activities other than those related to the school so they have other friendship groups
- Help your child work out a plan of what they could do to make the situation better

**What can I tell my child to do if he or she is bullied?**
Like most complex problems there is not a single strategy that will stop all bullying. As a first step, it is usually best to encourage your child to talk about what has happened.
Our School Policy

What happens in ‘shared concern’

- Individual meetings are held, with each of the students involved in the bullying incident e.g. The student or students bullying, the person being bullied and any bystanders who may have seen what was happening;
- Each student is asked about the problem and to suggest ways he/she personally could help to improve the situation;
- The student being bullied is also given the opportunity to discuss what happened and encouraged to think of ways to improve the situation; and
- There is a follow-up meeting or meetings, discussion and planning that give the students the opportunity to change and improve attitudes and behaviour and to put these into practice in a supportive environment.

Note: this process can be undertaken as a group problem solving session where each individual has the opportunity to describe the problem and to suggest ways of resolving it. This can be particularly effective where the incident involves ‘friends’ where a degree of empathy already exists.

Helpful parent actions and responses

If your child tells you about being bullied:

- Believe your child because it is important that your child feels confident to talk to you about problems
- Take the child’s concerns seriously without being overprotective
- Listen to your child. Show you understand they are upset by the bullying

Our School Policy

- Discourage any planned retaliation either physical or verbal, if your child is bullied
- Contact the school if you believe your child is being bullied
- Monitor your child’s use of internet based programs and mobile phones.

POSSIBLE SIGNS OF BULLYING

Children may:

- Be unwilling to go to school
- Become withdrawn
- Begin doing poorly in school work
- Start stammering
- Cry themselves to sleep
- Start bedwetting
- Refuse to say what is wrong

PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING INCIDENTS

When you hear of an incident from a sibling or student from the school, try to establish:

Where the incident took place – in the classroom, in the playground, on the way to or from school.

When the incident took place – during class times, during morning or lunch break, before or after school.

Who was involved – single student, group of students – any names where possible.

Why it took place – money, equipment, friends, power, other

Pass on this information to –

The Classroom Teacher if it happened during class time or you are unsure of the time.

The Administration if it happened before, after school or in the playground.
Our School Policy

If you **witness** an incident:
Before or after school, report it to the **Administration**.
All reports will be recorded on the school’s ‘Integris’ data base. Where appropriate, the school will communicate with the reporting adult reinforcing that action has been taken.

Any incident that you think warrants attention can go through the same process.

Confidentiality will be maintained.

**STAFF**

Staff will:
- Adopt positive classroom management strategies and incorporate anti-bullying message in the curriculum with the Friendly Schools and Families resources reflecting the whole school approach to bullying prevention.
- use a variety of strategies such as role plays, individual, group and home based activities
- Provide positive role models for students.
- Actively counteract bullying behaviour
- Respond appropriately to any reported incidents of bullying
- Be obviously present during recess and lunchtimes when they are on duty, as a deterrent to possible incidents of bullying in the playground
- Ensure ‘Internet Use’ agreements are signed and adhered to

**STAGES IN ADDRESSING THE BULLYING**

Report the occurrence of bullying to the appropriate staff member (see previous section on reporting procedures).

Teachers to address lower level bullying concerns and to use the Method of Shared Concern with students where appropriate.

For serious bullying issues or if no improvement has been achieved from teacher interventions (e.g. from using the Method of Shared Concern) the case is to be reported directly to the Principal or Deputy Principal for further intervention.

**USING THE METHOD OF SHARED CONCERN**

The key to stopping bullying is getting those involved to talk about what is happening and decide on some ways to overcome the problem. The Friendly Schools, Friendly Families Project recommends that schools use the Method of Shared Concern where appropriate, which concentrates on finding a solution to the problem for all students involved. This strategy can also be used at home by parents.

**The aim of the Shared Concern Method**

The Method of Shared Concern aims to change the **behaviour** of students involved in bullying incidents and improve the situation for the student being bullied. This method helps students to develop empathy and concern for others and gives them strategies that will help them to get along better with others in the school and at home.