



Adelaide West Special Education Centre - Anti-bullying Policy

Statement

We all have a right to be respected and a responsibility to respect each other as we strive to develop a safe and supportive environment which is conducive to learning at Adelaide West Special Education Centre.

Students have the right to be taught in and staff have the right to work in a school environment which is free from physical, verbal, sexual and racial harassment and harassment on the basis of impairment or socioeconomic background.

Bullying and harassment are not acceptable. The school is committed to preventing and eliminating bullying in all its forms. We do this by fostering respect for self and others.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is intentional, repetitive behaviour by a person or persons that hurts, threatens, embarrasses or intimidates someone. When a group or an individual uses their power to target or hurt another person **repeatedly**, this is bullying. It is usually defined by the effects on the victim, not the intent of the person/s doing the bullying. Bullying can occur between adults, between students, adult/s to student/s and vice-versa.

Bullying can leave a person with many different feelings including: being scared or angry, feeling helpless, sad, powerless, worthless, doubting, ill, lonely and/or depressed.

At Adelaide West Special Education Centre, some students engage in inappropriate behaviours that may impact adversely on other students or staff members. For many of these students, such behaviours are a form of communication or behaviour related to their disability rather than bullying behaviours. Many students at Adelaide West do not have the cognitive understanding of interpersonal relationships for their behaviours to be defined as bullying. In these circumstances, the behaviour is managed by providing students with alternative more appropriate behaviours through individual behaviour management plans and communication systems.

Bullying can include any of the following

Physical: aggression such as shoving, hitting, throwing things at someone, pushing, damaging or hiding someone's property or any kind of sexual interference

Verbal: teasing, name-calling and "put-downs" spreading rumours, making threats, constant behavior targeting an individual and undermining them, not letting people know what is happening

Exclusion: excluding people from activities or joining a group

Gesture: threatening or offensive gestures, rude gestures such as looks or shrugs, eye rolling

Cyber bullying: the use of internet services or mobile technologies such as email, chat rooms, discussion groups, instant messaging, WebPages or SMS to intimidate, humiliate, or putdown a person by sending repeated negative messages, cyber stalking, posting unwanted photos and sending threats.

Declaration of the rights of individuals in the school community

All members of the school community have the right to:

- feel safe, to be safe, and to be treated with respect
- feel included
- be valued for yourself and not be compared to others
- be free from harassment
- know who to go to for help
- be listened to and be heard
- know that steps will be taken to resolve problems or issues
- be provided with information and advice about bullying and how to manage it.

Responsibilities of the principal and staff

The principal will:

- gather information from any incidents or accusations of bullying
- all incidents or accusations of bullying will be managed in a way consistent with the DECD School Discipline Policy
- provide the Governing Council with updates each term in relation to school bullying data and trends and any anti-bullying programs or initiatives in place
- ensure all new staff members, students and their families are aware of the school's negotiated anti-bullying policy and the decision-making procedures open to them if they wish to influence school practice
- include the anti-bullying policy as part of the school's enrolment process through including it in the student induction pack
- ensure that all parents/carers have access to the school's anti-bullying policy, the *DECD Bullying and harassment at school: Advice for Parents and caregivers* leaflet
- ensure all parents/carers are aware of their rights to advocacy and of avenues open to them should they have grievances relating to the management of an incident of bullying
- ensure ongoing training and development of teachers and SSOs will occur
- remind staff about their obligations under the Code of Ethics for the South Australian Public Sector

Teaching respectful relationships to children and students makes an important contribution to increasing protective factors and decreasing bullying, harassment and violence in schools. The *Keeping Safe Child Protection* curriculum will be implemented in all year levels. The four focus areas of this curriculum are:

- The Right to be Safe
- Relationships
- Recognising and Reporting Abuse
- Protective Strategies

School staff members will:

- develop and foster positive relationships with each other, students and their families
- communicate and interact effectively with students and engage in co-operative problem solving relationships to address issues of bullying
- participate in developing, implementing and reviewing the school's anti-bullying policy, curriculum and training and development
- critically reflect on practices and develop the knowledge and skills needed to manage any incidents of bullying successfully
- establish, maintain, make explicit and model the school's expectations relating to bullying
- make themselves aware of their obligations under the Code of Ethics for the South Australian Public Sector

Students will support the school in maintaining a safe and supportive environment if they:

- are respectful towards other students, staff and members of the school community
- communicate (where possible) with an appropriate adult if bullied or harassed or if they are aware that someone else is being bullied or harassed
- learn to be an effective bystander, so that bullying and harassment are discouraged through peer influence

What can parents do?

- *Learn to recognize the signs of bullying*

Children who are bullied and those that bully are equally in need of support and guidance from caring adults. Watch children for bruises, changes in moods, eating habits, and sleeping patterns

- *Instill confidence and pride in your child's abilities*

Children with special needs who have developed a sense of pride in their differences are less likely to be victimized by bullies and will respond more effectively when faced with social pressures

- *Communicate with all parties involved*

Parents/carers are asked to keep the school informed of concerns about behaviour, children's health issues or other matters of relevance. Communicate in a respectful manner with the principal or class teacher if you believe your child may be the victim or the instigator of bullying or issues of concern.

- *Become familiar with the school's anti-bullying policy*

The anti-bullying policy is part of the school's enrolment induction and will be published in the school newsletter and website. The policy will be reviewed by parents, staff and members of Governing Council annually.