

HUNTERS HILL HIGH SCHOOL

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

Rationale

All schools in NSW are committed to taking action to protect students from bullying and to respond appropriately when bullying does occur. At Hunters Hill High School, all students and staff have the right to learn and work in a safe and secure environment. No student, employee, parent, caregiver or community member should experience bullying within the learning or working environments. Bullying can be illegal if it involves behaviours that include physical violence, threats of violence, damaging property or stalking. At Hunters Hill High School we believe that:

- Our school community serves to support an environment where it is not acceptable to bully or harass.
- Our school community supports a culture that says it is OK to report incidents of bullying and harassment. In such an environment, the cycle of silence about bullying can be broken.
- Our school community recognises that the student, parents, school staff and community members can tackle bullying and harassment in a consistent manner. Appropriate structures, policies and practices are in place to deal with day-to-day incidents of bullying and harassment.
- Each person has the right to be valued for his/her individuality, to be cared for, trusted and encouraged to express him/herself in a supportive school environment.

School community beliefs about bullying

It is important that students, staff and parents/carers have a shared understanding of what bullying is, how it impacts on people and how bullying is responded to at Hunters Hill High School. Bullying has three main features:

- it involves a misuse of power in a relationship
- is ongoing and repeated, and
- involves behaviours that can cause harm.

Bullying can happen in person or online, and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour might include;

- Direct physical threats or assaults
- Unwanted sexual attention
- Social exclusion of one by another or a group
- Verbal insults or spreading rumours
- Sending of threatening or demeaning messages by SMS, Email, Internet, Social Media
- Non-verbal signals
- Graffiti or offensive clothing

Some behaviours, while not bullying, are conflicts that still need to be addressed and resolved. Examples include:

- mutual arguments and disagreements (where there is no power imbalance)
- not liking someone or a single act of social rejection
- one-off acts of meanness or spite
- isolated incidents of aggression, intimidation or violence.

Reporting Incidents and Responses to bullying

At Hunters Hill High School bullying in all its forms is not accepted and all members of Hunters Hill High School accept their responsibility to promote positive relationships and to prevent bullying.

Reports of bullying will be investigated and acted upon. Responses to bullying might include support for targets of bullying and perpetrators and/or disciplinary measures.

The teacher will intervene to stop the bullying. The teacher may conduct and complete a mediation contract or refer the situation to a Year Adviser or Deputy Principal if serious.

A Year Adviser may employ one of the following intervention strategies:

- Traditional disciplinary approach
- Mediation
- Restorative practice
- Support group method

Serious and repeated incidents

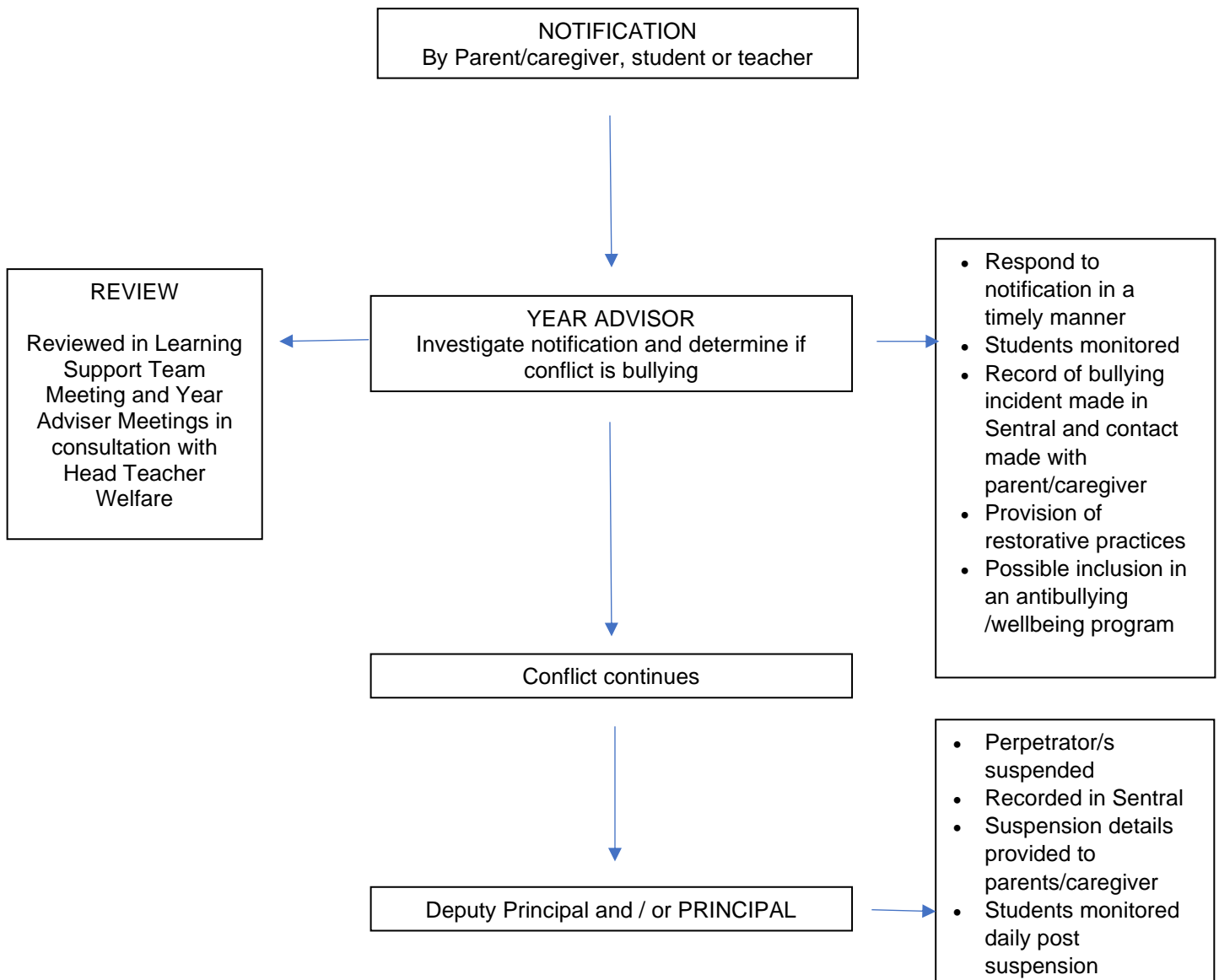
Not all cases of bullying will be easy to deal with, but these cases will be dealt with through providing support for victims and their families, and consequences for bullies.

In serious cases, mediation between parties will be encouraged and the unacceptability of the deed (not doer) will be emphasised. The effect the deed has had on all parties involved will be explored. Our aim at this stage is to help the perpetrator see that a change in behaviour is required, that the victim feels supported and that the problem is solved with arrangements for restitution to be made.

Response

MANAGING STUDENT CONFLICT

The following flowchart represents the plan of action the school community will undertake to combat bullying. Not all disagreements or conflict are bullying, therefore it is important to review suspected incidents to determine the nature of the conflict. If bullying has occurred, the school community is committed to resolving the incident positively through initiatives and strategies that promote positive student relationships and discourage bullying behaviours.



Prevention Programs

Effective social skills and positive relationships act to prevent bullying. At Hunters Hill High School we promote effective social skills and positive relationships through:

- Year Advisers who Case Manage for students with difficulties in their year levels. Year Advisers often become among the first people to hear about any bullying behaviour and will take appropriate action including regular contact with parents.
- U Matter mentoring sessions with a Teacher Mentor to develop resilience, conflict resolution and reflective skills.
- Student Leadership Team
- Alternative Programs that emphasise tolerance and respect such as the Friends Resilience program, Raise Mentoring, Ready, Set, Sail, Rock and Water and Creating Chances
- Extra-Curricular programs to support and challenge students and to provide them with opportunities to develop new and important life skills

The Bullying Incident Package involves a series of confidential interviews based on an intervention strategy devised by Professor Anatol Pikas called the Method of Shared Concern. Basically, it is a method of dealing with bullies that avoids an accusatory approach. It deals with bullies as individuals and aims to move the bully towards behaving responsibly as an individual.

The method aims not only at helping victims but also aims at changing attitudes of children who join in group bullying. If the group members are re-individualised, as Pikas suggests, they will begin to act responsibly and change is more likely to be lasting, not merely maintained by surveillance.