

Could My Child Be Bullying Others?

It is particularly difficult for adults to recognise bullying perpetrated by students who are socially skilled and well-behaved in class. Bullying can sometimes be hard to see and hard to believe. A child who bullies may exhibit some of the following behaviours:

- frequent name-calling
- regular bragging
- a constant need to get his or her own way
- spending time with younger or less powerful kids
- a lack of empathy for others
- a defiant or hostile attitude

Is My Child Being Bullied By Others?

A child that is being bullied might:

- have unexplained cuts and bruises
- have equipment or personal items hidden, damaged, stolen or destroyed
- complain of feeling sick
- wet the bed, bite nails, have poor sleep patterns or bad dreams
- exhibit unusual emotional outbursts
- withdraw from friends or family
- appear anxious, insecure, sad, teary
- have low self esteem
- display an unwillingness to go to school
- sit alone or play alone in the playground
- change friendship groups frequently
- show deterioration in school work and/or avoid participating

Parents/carers can help by

- reinforcing school expectations
- acting as a positive role model in words and actions
- listening to your child
- being observant of signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying
- encouraging your child to recognise, refuse, and report bullying
- re-directing your child's normal interest in power and influence into appropriate forms of expression
- communicating your concerns to your child's teacher

Don't be a bystander!

Most bullying takes place when bystanders are present. Most students recognise bullying but avoid intervening in case they become the target of the bully. Teach your child the following action plan so that they know what to do if they observe or experience bullying behaviours.

Stop! Walk! Talk!

1. **"STOP!"** Use a clear hand sign and say in a strong voice "Stop, that's bullying. I don't like it". If the bullying continues then
2. **"WALK"** away without saying anything and go and
3. **"TALK"** to an older student, teacher, parent or trusted adult.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Di6mqEYp8U> (video clip suited for senior students)

Find out more at

<http://www.schooltoz.nsw.edu.au/wellbeing/behaviour/bullying-advice-for-parents1>



Middle Harbour Public School

To create community, each of us needs all of us, and all of us need each of us.

Fair Discipline and Responding to Bullying in MHPS



Our shared vision and values

*Respect
Responsibility
Personal best*

Our school motto

To thine own self be true.

Our school pledge

*I will be honest with myself
I will be loyal to my school
I will respect others
I will care for my world*

The Middle Harbour Public School Fair Discipline Policy and Anti-Bullying Plan is underpinned by the core values of NSW Public Schools and our shared vision and values as a school community. *At Middle Harbour Public School, we are striving to create a safe, happy and harmonious environment where all members of the school community are treated with respect and supported to reach their full potential.*

Students will:

- know what is expected of them and others in the school community
- regulate their own behaviour so that they are able to make responsible decisions
- feel safe and supported in the school environment
- feel connected and a valued part of the school community

Bullying can take many forms, including:

Misunderstandings and arguments are pretty common in the playground. Children are still developing social skills and learning how to communicate with others. Not every incident or disagreement that upsets a student can be defined as bullying – sometimes it's a one-off problem or a genuine misunderstanding. Bullying is different.

Bullying is repeated verbal, physical or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons.

- **Verbal:** eg name calling, teasing, abuse, putdowns, sarcasm, insults, threats
- **Physical:** eg hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting
- **Social:** eg ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating, making inappropriate gestures
- **Psychological:** eg spreading rumours, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions, malicious SMS and email messages, inappropriate use of camera phones.
- **Cyberbullying:** includes verbal, social and psychological bullying in virtual space.

Using a common process to build, maintain and restore relationships

Restorative Practice is used as common process for resolving all bullying issues, taking into account the safety and well-being of the victim first. Restorative Practice aims to:

- prevent escalation of issues and resolve conflict
- offer a sound practice framework that fosters healthy relationships and stronger school communities by focusing on harm and relationships, as opposed to blame and punishment
- develop a common language and practice for teachers, students and parents
- introduce students to the idea that being restorative is about understanding what has happened, who has been hurt and what is needed to make things right
- support victims, bullies and bystanders

Learning from mistakes

Schools are places of learning. It is important that students understand that making mistakes is part of the learning process. If your child is involved in a bullying issue or incident at school, your child may bring home a reflection sheet. The reflection sheet is designed to involve parents/carers in the learning process. Please note, the sheet is not a writing exercise. Parents/carers may act as scribe.

The sheet uses a series of questions that ask students to:

1. **Think about the PAST.** What happened and what they were thinking and feeling at the time? This step builds responsibility.
2. **Think about the PRESENT.** Who has been hurt or harmed? How has this impacted on others? How do they feel? This step builds empathy.
3. **Think about the FUTURE.** What should happen to make things right? What should the consequences be? Saying 'sorry' isn't always enough. This builds responsibility. What will you do next time? This step builds respect and helps to restore relationships.

Using a common language to set high expectations

We believe that expectations are more effective when they are clearly linked to shared values and developed with students.

Our shared expectations

- We have 3 school expectations that encapsulate our key behaviour goals.
- Each expectation is stated using positive language to describe the expected behaviour for a particular setting, e.g. playground, classroom, library, hall and so on.
- Pictures and symbols help our students remember our rules and expectations.

Our shared expectations		What does this look like, sound like and feel like?
Show respect		Listen and communicate with courtesy Respect opinions and feelings of others Allow others to learn Wear your uniform with pride
Show responsibility		Take care of belongings, yours and others Be honest and accountable for your actions Work, move and play safely Care for our world
Do your personal best		Aim high and set goals Get along with others Persist and put in the effort Recover from setbacks and learn from mistakes

Rights, respect and responsibilities

While it is important that students understand they have rights, they must learn that they also have responsibilities. Our school community believes that all students have the

- **right** to learn,
- **right** to be safe,
- **right** to be treated with dignity and **respect**, and the
- **responsibility** to uphold and **respect** the rights of others.

The following questions point back to our school expectations and guide students in making responsible choices and decisions:

Is it fair?

Is it safe?

Is it the right thing to do?

DO THE RIGHT THING—REPORT BULLYING : Tell a friend, tell a teacher, tell your parent, tell an adult. Please go to Policies on our MHPS website to report any bullying..