



Millen Primary School
Learning Together

Millen Primary School's Approach to Bullying Prevention

5 June 2025

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This whole school approach has been developed using the Friendly Schools Plus resources and the Australian Government's 'Bullying No Way' resources.

Purpose

Millen Primary School is committed to providing a safe and respectful learning environment. All children will feel connected and share a sense of belonging to their class and school community. We will take all cases of bullying seriously and our students will know they are being heard, their feelings matter, and bullying will be investigated respectfully and with priority.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- explain the definition of bullying so that there is shared understanding amongst all members of the Millen Primary School community
- make clear that no form of bullying will be tolerated
- outline the strategies and programs in place at Millen Primary School to build a positive school culture and prevent bullying behaviour
- encourage everyone in the school community be alert to signs of bullying behaviour, and understand the importance of reporting bullying behaviour
- ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are appropriately investigated and addressed
- ensure that support is provided to students who may be affected by bullying behaviour.

When responding to bullying behaviour, Millen Primary School aims to:

- be proportionate, consistent, and responsive
- educate and support all students involved
- restore a positive learning environment for everyone
- find a constructive solution for everyone
- stop the bullying from happening again
- restore the relationships between the students involved.

Millen Primary School acknowledges that school staff owe a duty of care to students to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm, which can include harm that may be caused by bullying behaviour.

Definitions

Bullying:

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, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.

Types of bullying:

Covert bullying

Covert bullying can be very difficult for someone outside of the interaction to identify. It can include hand gestures and threatening looks, whispering, excluding or turning your back on a person, restricting where a person can sit and who they can talk with. Social bullying (spreading rumours, manipulation of relationships, excluding, isolating) is often covert bullying.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying includes any form of bullying behaviour that occurs online or via a mobile device. It can be verbal or written, and can include threats of violence as well as images, videos and/or audio.

Physical bullying

Physical bullying includes hitting, pushing, shoving or intimidating or otherwise physically hurting another person, damaging or stealing their belongings. It includes threats of violence.

Relational bullying

Relational bullying is intended to damage relationships or feelings of social acceptance, friendship or inclusion in peer groups. This can include playing practical jokes and embarrassing a person, imitating them behind their backs, sharing secrets, spreading rumours and maliciously excluding them.

Social bullying

Social bullying can encompass indirect and relational bullying and is intended to harm a person's social status and/or self-esteem. It may include verbal rejection, negative facial expressions or body movements. It can also include slanderous rumours or social exclusion.

Verbal and written bullying

Verbal and written bullying includes name-calling or insulting someone about an attribute, quality or personal characteristic.

Bullying can happen in-person or online or both.

The role of bystanders and upstanders

Around 85% of bullying occurs with peers present as onlookers. Bystanders can have active, diverse and involved roles in the bullying process, from facilitating to inhibiting bullying.

Changing the behaviour of bystanders to become upstanders can be easier to change than the students directly involved in the bullying.

At Millen, the students will be explicitly taught how to become upstanders and will develop the understanding that it is everyone's shared responsibility to reduce bullying.

Bullying can cause physical and psychological harm

Physical and psychological harm can result from bullying. This includes the harm to a person's social standing or reducing a person's willingness to socialise through bullying (particularly covert social bullying). The fear of bullying can also create distress and harm. This can be long-lasting.

Both students who are bullied, and students who bully others, are at higher risk of experiencing mental health challenges such as anxiety or depression.

Signs of Bullying

A *teacher* may see a student displaying the following signs:

- seems upset, unhappy or angry
- starts to experience conflict with peers
- is sitting alone during class or lunch times
- does not want to talk about what is wrong
- withdraws from friends and activities they previously enjoyed
- drops in academic performance.

A *parent or carer* may see a child displaying the following signs:

- doesn't want to go to school or participate in school activities
- changes their method or route to school or is frightened of walking to school
- drops in academic performance
- experiences changes in sleep or eating patterns
- has frequent tears, anger, mood swings
- takes money from home
- has unexplained bruises, cuts, scratches
- loses or brings home damaged belongings or clothes
- arrives home hungry.

The signs of possible cyberbullying can be the same as signs of other bullying, but include other behaviours with phones, computers and other devices, for example:

- being hesitant about going online
- seeming nervous when a notification, message or phone call appears
- being visibly upset after using their phone or computer, or suddenly avoiding it
- closes the screen, or hides the mobile phone when others enter the room
- spending unusually long hours online.

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.

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 learning to build skills, knowledge and confidence about preventing bullying. Including how to recognise, respond and manage it.
- Collect data on bullying at the school through the Friendly Schools Plus annual student survey. Use the data to plan how to 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.
- Act when bullying and cyberbullying has been reported.
- Help parents and carers to recognise bullying. Include information about what to do when their child is engaging in or affected by bullying.
- Support students to repair and restore relationships that have been harmed by bullying.

Parents and families:

- Model and promote safe, respectful and inclusive behaviours.
- Help children to be safe online at home. This includes checking their children's use of technology and social media.
- Make sure children know how to identify and report bullying. Work with the school to help their children be safe from bullying.
- Talk to 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 children to go to school while a bullying issue is being worked on.
- Seek external professional support for their child, if needed.

Students:

- Model behaviours that are safe, respectful and inclusive, both face-to-face and online.
- Take a stand when bullying is observed. Step in, if it's safe. Seek help from adults.
- Support friends and peers to get help from trusted adults if being bullied.
- Support friends to behave in safe, respectful and inclusive ways if their friends engage in bullying.

Reporting bullying at Millen

Millen Primary School staff will introduce processes for children to report bullying to their class teacher. These processes will be explicitly taught to each class every year.

School staff will report bullying to the administration team if it is causing (or is likely to cause) serious harm to a student's safety or wellbeing, or if the behaviour continues despite teacher intervention.

Parents are encouraged to report bullying to the class teacher and if it is not resolved, to the administration team.

Responding to bullying

If a student reports bullying the teacher will:

- Reassure the student(s) that they will try to help them.
- Avoid minimising the issue.
- Find a suitable place to talk or make a time to discuss and investigate the problem privately.
- Ensure that their voice is calm, and their body language is open as they listen.
- Listen without interrupting, using only encouraging questions or sounds to show listening. The teacher will make notes while listening and if deemed to be bullying a record of the report will be added to Integris under 'Activities'. If a duty teacher makes notes, these will be passed onto the classroom teacher or admin, and they will record on Integris.
- The teacher will, ask the student when, how and where the bullying happens, including:
 - what words have been said or written
 - has anyone been physically hurt and how
 - who is usually around
 - who else have they talked to about this
 - if it is happening online, ask if there is any evidence of what has happened
 - distinguish between single incidents of conflict and an ongoing pattern of bullying.
- Reassure the student it's never okay to be bullied and acknowledge the student for speaking out.
- Ask the student what they would like to happen.
- Ask the student if they feel safe in the short term and take preventative safety measures.
- If the bullying is not currently causing serious harm to a child's safety or wellbeing, the teacher will manage the situation. If the bullying is major, the teacher will refer to the administration team.

Actions the school will take

The teacher will attempt to work with the students involved to build empathy, shift the dynamics and empower all students involved.

When teacher intervention does not stop bullying or when the bullying is deemed to be at risk of causing serious harm to a student's safety or wellbeing, the administration team will implement the Method of Shared Concern.

This will not be used when:

- severe violence, abuse or safety is an urgent issue
- the students involved deny, show a lack of concern or refuse to engage.

In these cases, the school will develop behaviour plans for the students who have conducted the bullying. The behaviour plans will include clear consequences for continued bullying behaviour and may lead to suspension and loss of good standing.

Other distressing and inappropriate behaviours

Many distressing and inappropriate behaviours may **not** constitute bullying even though they are unpleasant. Students who are involved in or who witness any distressing and/or inappropriate behaviours should report their concerns to school staff. The Millen Way's Behaviour Response Flowchart will be followed to address these behaviours.

Mutual conflict involves an argument or disagreement between people with no imbalance of power. In incidents of mutual conflict, generally, both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the issue. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.

Social rejection or dislike is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

Single episode acts of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. However, single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not acceptable behaviours and may have serious consequences for students perpetrating this behaviour.

Harassment is language or actions that are demeaning, offensive or intimidating to a person. It can take many forms, including sexual harassment and disability harassment.

Discrimination is when someone is treated unfavourably because of a personal characteristic (for example, race, religious belief or activity, disability, sex or intersex status, gender identity or sexual orientation).

Bullying research

The 'Bullying No Way' website has reviewed the research on bullying for Australian educators and produced a series of snapshots:

- [What is bullying, including online bullying? \(PDF, 698KB\)](#)
- [What is the prevalence of bullying in schools? \(PDF, 453KB\)](#)
- [Who is involved in bullying? \(PDF, 705KB\)](#)
- [What are the impacts of bullying? \(PDF, 697KB\)](#)
- [What role do parents and carers have in relation to bullying? \(PDF, 697KB\)](#)
- [What is the role of school culture and school climate in countering bullying? \(PDF, 697KB\)](#)
- [What is the role of school policy? \(PDF, 702KB\)](#)
- [What evidence-based practices can schools adopt? \(PDF, 699KB\)](#)

Communicating the policy

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Endorsed by the School Board
- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- Included in enrolment packs
- Discussed with students in class during Term 2's Friendly Schools Plus lessons relating to bullying
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request.

The following websites and resources provide useful information on prevention and responding to bullying, as well as supporting students who have been the target of bullying behaviours:

[Bullying No Way](#)

[Bullying | Kids Helpline](#)

[Families - Friendly Schools](#)

[Cyberbullying | What is cyberbullying? | eSafety Commissioner](#)

Appendix – The Method of Shared Concern (or Pikas Method)

The Method of Shared Concern (or Pikas method) is a non-punitive multi-stage strategy that addresses group bullying.

It facilitates the emergence of a solution to a bullying problem through a series of interviews and discussions with the students involved.

Rationale

- Bullying behaviour is commonly (though not always) undertaken by, or with the support of, a peer group.
- When approached in a non-accusatory manner, students will typically acknowledge the distress of the victim and agree to act to reduce that distress.
- Sometimes bullied students have in the past acted provocatively and need to recognise their part in the ensuing conflict.
- Once some of the students of the group have begun to act constructively, the group can be brought together to plan how they will finally resolve the matter with the person they have targeted.
- An agreed resolution involving all concerned is likely to be sustainable.

Application

The Method of Shared Concern can be appropriately and most successfully implemented as follows:

1. When a group of students are thought to be involved in bullying an individual student who consequently has become distressed.
2. Each of the suspected bullies is interviewed in turn, without any accusation, beginning with the student who seems most likely to fill the role of ringleader. The meeting takes place without other students present or able to observe the interaction. The interview begins with the teacher/deputy/principal sharing a concern about the experience of the victim. Once this is acknowledged, the suspected bully is required to say what he or she will do to improve the situation.
3. A further meeting is arranged several days later to assess progress with each of the suspected bullies individually.
4. The teacher/deputy/principal then meets with the student who has been bullied and offers support. The question may at some stage be raised as to whether the student who has been bullied has provoked the bullying in some way. (Occasionally bullying is provoked).
5. Once progress has been confirmed, a group meeting is held with the suspected bullies to plan how they will finally resolve the problem when they meet with the student, they have bullied at the next meeting convened by the teacher/deputy/principal.
6. A final meeting is held with the bullied student present to bring about an agreed and sustainable solution.

This will not be used:

- When there is or has been severe violence, abuse or safety is an urgent issue
- The students involved deny, show a lack of concern or refuse to engage.

In these cases, the school will develop behaviour plans for the students who have conducted the bullying. The behaviour plans will include clear consequences for continued bullying behaviour and may lead to suspension and loss of good standing.

Conclusion

Implemented rigorously, this method has been shown in several studies to have a high success rate and has considerable educational value for those involved.