Wallacia Public School
Anti-bullying Policy and Plan

Statement of Purpose
Students attend Wallacia Public School to participate in quality education that will help them become lifelong learners who can create a positive future for themselves and their peers. Any inappropriate behaviour that gets in the way of teaching and learning and interferes with the well-being of our students cannot be accepted. Wallacia Public School rejects all forms of bullying. No student, employee, parent, caregiver or community member should experience bullying within the learning or working environment of the school.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school.

All people at Wallacia Public School, that is the staff, students, parents and caregivers, have a shared responsibility in making sure that bullying behaviours are dealt with quickly and effectively whenever they occur. We realise that bullies are everywhere in our society, not just in our schools. We also realise that even though we may do everything in our power to prevent bullying, incidents will still occur. Therefore, we must have effective strategies for dealing with both the people being bullied and those doing the bullying.

This Anti-bullying Plan applies to all forms of bullying behaviour, including cyberbullying, that occurs in the school. It also applies to bullying behaviour off school premises and outside of school hours where there is a clear and close relationship between the school and the conduct of the student.

What Is Bullying?
Bullying can be described as intentional, repeated behaviour by an individual or individuals, that causes distress, hurt or undue pressure. Bullying involves the abuse of power in relationships, and can involve all forms of harassment including that based on appearance, gender, race, disability, homosexuality or difference. Cyber-bullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies.

Bullying is repeated, unwanted behaviour which hurts or upsets somebody else. Conflict or fights between equals, or single incidents, are not defined as bullying.

Bullying behaviour can come in many forms, for example:
- **Verbal** eg. name calling, teasing, abuse, putdowns, sarcasm, insults, threats;
- **Physical** eg. hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting, biting;
- **Social** eg. ignoring, excluding, ostracizing, alienating;
- **Psychological** eg. spreading rumours, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions;
- **Cyberbullying** eg. insulting someone in chat rooms, sending cruel or threatening emails/text messages; using the web, chat rooms or mobile phones to spread rumours or information about someone; inappropriate use of camera phones.

Bullying devalues, isolates and frightens. It affects an individual’s ability to achieve, and has long term effects on those engaging in bullying behaviour, subjects of bullying behaviour, and the onlookers or bystanders.
Staff at Wallacia Public School plan and implement proactive strategies that teach students how to work and play safely in the classroom and playground. These strategies provide all staff with a framework that is both positive and consistent across all stages.

Students of Wallacia Public School and their parents / caregivers understand that any incidence of bullying will not be taken lightly, and that each reported case will be investigated and dealt with fairly and with due thought to procedural fairness by any and all teaching staff. Responding to bullying quickly and effectively will help to build a strong network of support for students and will ultimately empower all students so that bullying and anti-social behaviour is not acceptable in their lives.

**Expectations and Responsibilities of Staff, Students and Parents**

**School staff**

*At Wallacia Public School, staff expect:*
- to be treated with dignity and respect, and in turn will treat students, parents and colleagues in the same manner;
- parent and principal support when dealing with anti-social or bullying behaviours;
- that they will be listened to and supported, and that procedural fairness will be the basis for dealing with any issues;
- students and parents to understand that personal rights need to be balanced with personal responsibilities.

*At Wallacia Public School, staff have the responsibility to:*
- respect and support all students in all aspects of learning;
- model and promote appropriate behaviour;
- have knowledge of school and departmental policies relating to bullying behaviour;
- listen to and support students’ concerns and follow up on reports of bullying behaviour;
- respond in an appropriate and timely manner to incidents of bullying according to the school’s Anti-bullying Plan;
- provide curriculum and pedagogy that supports students to develop an understanding of bullying and its impact on individuals and the broader community;
- provide students with opportunities to develop appropriate responses to bullying behaviour, and to build resilience so that the impact of any bullying behaviour is minimised.

**Students**

*At Wallacia Public School, students expect:*
- to be treated with dignity and respect and in turn they will treat others in the same manner;
- that they will be listened to if they are experiencing difficulties and that their fears will be taken seriously;
- that they will experience programs and lessons that assist them to understand bullying and its consequences;
- that they will be provided with appropriate skills and strategies to deal effectively with all social situations.

*At Wallacia Public School, students have the responsibility to:*
- behave appropriately, respecting individual differences and diversity;
- behave as responsible digital citizens;
• follow the school’s Core Rules and Anti-bullying Plan;
• report any incidents of bullying or harassment that they witness or experience;
• behave as responsible bystanders;
• respond to incidents of bullying according to the school’s Anti-bullying Plan.

Parents and Caregivers
At Wallacia Public School, parents / caregivers expect:
• to be treated with dignity and respect and in turn they will treat others in the same manner;
• that the school implements programs and strategies to ensure students are equipped to deal with anti-social behaviour and bullying;
• that they will be kept informed and involved with any issues of anti-social behaviour or bullying involving their child;
• that appropriate strategies as outlined in the school’s Anti-bullying Plan will be used to resolve issues;
• that procedural fairness will underpin any decisions made.

At Wallacia Public School, parents / caregivers have the responsibility to:
• support their children to become responsible citizens and to develop responsible on-line behaviour;
• be aware of the school’s Anti-bullying Plan and assist their children in understanding bullying behaviour;
• report any incidents of school-related bullying behaviour to the school;
• support their children in developing positive responses to incidents of bullying, consistent with the school’s Anti-bullying Plan;
• work collaboratively with the school to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur.

The school community
All members of the school community have the responsibility to:
• model and promote positive relationships that respect and accept individual differences and diversity within the school community;
• support the school’s Anti-bullying Plan through words and actions;
• work collaboratively with the school to resolve incident of bullying when they occur.

Strategies to Prevent Bullying
At Wallacia Public School the following strategies are utilized to effectively teach the skills necessary to eliminate bullying behaviours:
• Promoting a healthy school environment with open, honest, positive and cooperative school culture;
• Students participate in co-operative learning experiences that promote positive peer relations, social skills and resiliency;
• Students are encouraged to demonstrate their understanding, value and respect for themselves and for others;
• Students are provided with opportunities to practise constructive communication and conflict resolution skills;
• Classroom activities such as writing stories or poems or drawing pictures about bullying; reading stories about bullying or having them read to a class or assembly; making up role plays; having discussions about bullying and why it matters; rehearsing ways to handle situations; implementing lessons from the Bullying-No Way website;
• Presentations by appropriate professionals (e.g., police) to inform students about the dangers of online social networks;
• Providing newsletter information for students and parents that spread the anti-bullying message.

Reporting Incidents of Bullying
Students will be aware of what bullying is and will be encouraged to report instances that they are witness to or are involved in. Parents / caregivers are also encouraged to report instances of bullying or suspected bullying. The staff member who receives the report will take appropriate action in accordance with the school’s Anti-bullying Plan and school Welfare Policy. In cases of severe or repeated bullying, the matter will be referred to the school principal for investigation and follow up.

Staff recognise that sometimes students report bullying to parents / caregivers rather than to teachers. In these instances, it is the parent’s responsibility to report it to the school and to work with the school to resolve the issue. Under no circumstances should a parent / caregiver directly approach the parent / carer of the alleged bully to resolve the issue independently of the school.

Procedures When an Incident of Bullying is Observed or Reported
Staff actively supervise students at all times. Incidents of bullying may be directly observed by a teacher, or may be reported to a teacher (by a student or parent / caregiver.) When an incident of bullying or possible bullying becomes known to a teacher, the following procedures will be implemented:
• The incident is investigated by the teacher who has observed the incident, or to whom it has been reported.
• The teacher determines whether or not the incident is bullying, according to the agreed definitions.
• If it is not bullying, the incident is dealt with by the teacher in accordance with the Student Welfare Policy.
• If it is bullying, the incident will be dealt with using the method of “shared concern” or Pikas method (Rigby, Ken Bullying In Schools and What to do About It.)

1. Interview with bullies. This is done alone, one by one, starting with the student seen as the group leader. This is a non-adversarial interview designed to emphasise concern for the person who is being hurt or elicit some empathy, and to come to some agreement as to what the person might do to help the victim. During the meeting the teacher remains calm, empathetic, never angry or indignant and respect is shown for the bully as a person.
2. Interview with the victim. This is done in a supportive manner and the aim is to explore ways in which the victim can behave to minimise the chances of the bullying being repeated. This may involve the victim being shown assertive behaviour or reducing behaviour which may be provoking the bullies.
3. Follow-up with bullies and victims. It is essential that daily follow-up takes place. This involves asking the bullies individually how they have followed through what they agreed to do to help the victim, and asking the victim how they are progressing and whether or not there have been any further incidents. The follow-up is initially carried out daily, then tapered off if all is going well.
4. **If the bullying behaviour does not stop** as a result of this intervention, then the usual sanctions of the Student Welfare Policy (eg. Yellow Slip, Red Slip,) will be implemented. In serious cases, suspension from school may be considered. There will be a need to keep working with the victim at this time to support them and make sure that they continue to problem-solve to try to ensure that there is not something else they can do to prevent the bullying from re-occurring. This may need to be carried out by the Principal, depending when the bullying incidents come to light.

- The bully will be asked to genuinely apologise to the victim. This is an important part of the process, as it requires the bully to take responsibility for his/her actions. Other consequences may be imposed, eg. replacing lost or broken equipment.

- In cases of serious bullying, incidents will be recorded and monitored by staff. Parents will be informed and may be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem.

- If necessary and appropriate, especially in serious cases of cyber-bullying, police may be consulted.

**Monitoring and Evaluating the Anti-bullying Plan**

The effectiveness of the school’s Anti-bullying Plan will be monitored by keeping records of reports of bullying, and the outcomes of investigations. Where incidents of unacceptable behaviour are noted and persist, relevant aspects of the school Welfare Policy will be amended and strategies developed to address identified issues.

It is important that at least once each year, the whole school community is reminded of the school’s Anti-bullying Plan. This will be done through the school’s fortnightly Newsletter. It will also be included in the Parent Information booklet, updated each year. The Anti-bullying Plan will be reviewed bi-annually so that students, staff and parents are aware of and remain committed to it. This review will provide opportunities to reflect upon current practices concerning student behaviour and bullying.

**Strategies to Review the Anti-bullying Plan**

The school will gather and analyse all relevant information concerning bullying each semester. This will include the identification of trends or patterns that may need to be addressed by the school. Disciplinary action taken with students will be reviewed regularly.

More information on bullying can be found at: