RESPONSE TO BULLYING POLICY

NANANGO STATE HIGH SCHOOL

Nanango State High School is committed to developing a safe and supportive school plan to address bullying.

Bullying is an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more persons. Bullying can happen in person or online (cyberbullying), and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert).

Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.

Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying. However, these conflicts still need to be addressed and resolved.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's Building Respectful and Safe School's identifies four types of bullying:

1. Physical Bullying

2. Verbal Bullying

3. Covert Bullying

4. Cyber-bullying

Bullying strategies are part of Nanango State High School's Career Education and Life Skills (CEALS) program, the Peer Skills Program, the school wide Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) program, Boys and Girls Days organised for Year 8 and 9 students, Visiting Celebrities, RE Presentations, the Key Card System, the Behaviour Monitoring and Feedback process, Newsletter Articles, Parade Items, Parent Nights and the Ground Force Team. These actions and practices are not limited to this list but are constantly evolving to meet the needs of the students and community through the **Student Support Team.**

Support is provided by the school's **Student Support Team** which tracks particular students. Counselling is provided by various agencies including CTC, the school nurse, chaplain and the school Guidance Officers.

The **e-Smart** program aims to work proactively with the whole school community to ensure the safety of all students online. This will be done via parent and community consultation and education, staff and student education, partnerships with Police and clear and safe processes for the reporting of cyber bullying incidents by teachers, students and parents. An important part of this process is the integration of safe online behaviours into all areas of the curriculum.

eSmart at Nanango State High School

Developed for Australian schools, e-Smart is an easy-to-use, evidence-based and tested system to help schools manage cybersafety and deal with cyberbullying and bullying.

The eSmart system provides a framework for schools to implement whole-school culture and behaviour change relevant to the smart, safe and responsible use of digital technologies.

The Alannah and Madeline Foundation developed the initiative with RMIT School of Education and many cybersafety and education experts.

The eSmart system guides the whole school community through a process of developing and implementing change, through a framework that is organised into six domains.
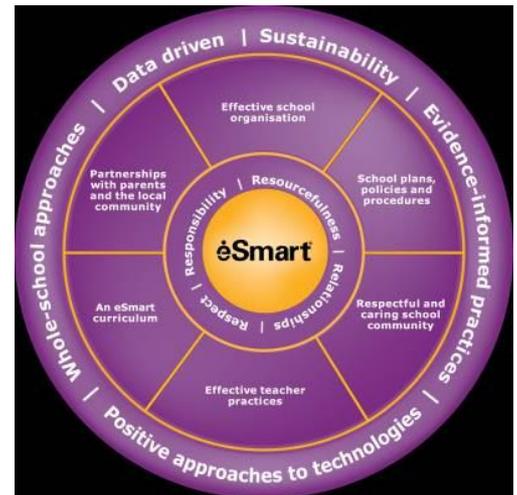
Covert and Cyberbullying

Most adults are conscious of direct physical bullying such as hitting, spitting, kicking or verbal abuse and will intervene to stop it. **Covert bullying** involves actions as subtle as scornful stares and encompasses threatening gestures, exclusion, making false claims about a person's behaviour or family, even making implicit threats by gesture or eye-contact.

Cyberbullying is a form of covert bullying. It is like other forms of bullying in that it is a relational problem where communication technologies are used intentionally, repeatedly and antagonistically to harm another person or group. It is different because it can happen at any time, anywhere; there is no escape behind doors. Targets frequently don't know the identity of the aggressor. Audiences can be huge and reached quickly. Power is allocated differently and bullying can be inter-generational. Perpetrators have at least an illusion of anonymity and their behaviour can be disinhibited because of this; empathy is also reduced because the victim's reaction is not seen. Hence, the effect of the bullying may be intensified.

Schools' successful efforts in prevention and management of overt bullying may result in increases in covert bullying (including cyberbullying) as young people find alternative means to bully, new technologies emerge and where policy development and management strategies lag behind. It is concerning that many students who do not bully face to face do so online and bullying through e-technologies is both easier and nastier.

What should students do, IF THEY ARE BULLIED OR HARASSED?

If a student says or does something that results in another student feeling fearful or seriously uncomfortable, in the first instance, the harassed student ideally will tell the student to stop in a firm but calm way. One of the main reasons harassment becomes bullying is because students are too afraid to talk about what is happening. If the bullying/harassing continues:

- It is okay to talk about it. It is important to break the bullying code of secrecy and fear
- It is important to ask for help when needed. Talk to parents/carers
- Reporting an incident is not dobbing. It is a very helpful and positive thing to do
- Speak to a teacher/staff member (e.g. Year Level Coordinator, Social Worker, School Based Youth Health Nurse or Chaplain) confidentially. The bully does not have to know.
- Talk with the Form Teacher, Peer Skills Leaders, or friendship group

What should students do if they SEE bullying or harassing behaviours?

If present when bullying behaviours occur:

- Talk to students who are getting a hard time
- If safe, challenge the students demonstrating bullying behaviours or attempt to distract them
- **Report the incident** or suspected incident and help break down the code of secrecy
- **Provide reliable information** to a staff member, if you are questioned about a bullying or harassing incident

What should parents/carers do if they suspect their child HAS EXPERIENCED bullying or harassing behaviour?

- Look for warning signs, e.g. not wanting to go to school or unexplained anxiety symptoms
- Talk to their child about any incidents and give support
- Help their child identify any of his/her behaviours which may contribute to bullying and encourage their child not to retaliate
- Advise their child to tell a staff member about the incident
- Resist the temptation to confront the bully personally
- Inform the school through the relevant Year Level Coordinator or Admin Representative

What COURSES OF ACTION might be taken to deal with bullying/harassing behaviours?

- The Year Level Coordinator/Head of Department Student Services/Deputy Principal (DP)/Principal will discuss the incident with all the student/s involved
- The student/s may be given Support by a Year Level Coordinator, Guidance Officer (GO) or member of the Support Team staff
- The parents/carers of the student/s involved may, depending on the incident, be informed and requested to discuss the situation with either the Year Level Coordinator, DP, GO or other Support Services staff
- The Admin Representative may use the Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students as a guide to address bullying behaviours and consequences

Please visit the *Bullying No Way* web site for more great information.

http://www.bullyingnoway.gov.au/