ANTI - BULLYING POLICY

AL NOORI MUSLIM SCHOOL

KNOWLEDGE IS LIGHT

GOOD DEEDS ARE PIETY

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1.0 Policy Statement and Objectives

Al Noori Muslim School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people, to acting in students' best interests and to keeping them safe from harm. Our vision at Al Noori Muslim School is to provide a supportive and challenging learning environment where all members of the school community feel safe and supported. It is an expectation that all members of the school community treat one another with mutual respect, and we believe that all members of the community have the right to a learning and working environment where they are treated fairly and with dignity in an environment free from disruption, intimidation, harassment, victimisation, and discrimination.

Al Noori Muslim School recognises its duty to students to provide a safe and positive learning environment where individual differences and diversity within the school is respected and accepted.

Bullying is not tolerated at Al Noori Muslim School.

This policy builds on the school's Wellbeing policies to provide clear and agreed procedures and strategies for combating bullying in the school, responding to bullying behaviours and protecting and supporting all parties involved.

It is our policy that:

- bullying be managed through a 'whole-of-School community' approach involving students, staff, and parents/guardians.
- bullying prevention strategies are implemented within the school on a continuous basis with a focus on teaching age-appropriate skills and strategies to empower staff, students and parents/guardians to recognise bullying and respond appropriately.
- bullying response strategies are tailored to the circumstances of each incident.
- we establish procedures for reporting and responding to child safety concerns, including when the behaviour may be an indicator of child abuse and other harm.
- staff establish positive role models emphasising our no bullying culture.
- bullying prevention and intervention strategies are reviewed on an annual basis against best practice.

This Policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions. It also applies outside of school hours and off school premises where students have been involved and there is a clear and close connection to the school.

2.0 Rationale

Schools exist in a society where incidents of bullying behaviour may occur. Preventing and responding to bullying behaviour in learning and working environments is a shared responsibility of all staff, students, parents, caregivers, and members of the wider school community. In practising Islamic values, we do not accept ideas, beliefs and behaviours which marginalise or victimise people. All members of the school community contribute to the prevention of bullying by modelling and promoting appropriate behaviour and respectful relationships.

3.0 Bullying and Cyberbullying - Definitions

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

Bullying can take many forms, all of which will cause distress. Examples of bullying include:

- **Physical bullying** which involves physical actions such as hitting, pushing, obstructing, or using one's physical presence, or physical bodily acts, to hurt or intimidate someone or threaten violence. Damaging, stealing, or hiding personal belongings is also a form of physical bullying.

- **Verbal/written bullying** examples include name-calling or insulting someone about an attribute, quality, or personal characteristic.

- **Social (sometimes called relational or emotional bullying)** examples include deliberate acts of exclusion, spreading rumours or sharing information to have a harmful effect on the other person and/or damaging a person's social reputation or social acceptance.

Cyberbullying is the misuse of power within a relationship to repeatedly threaten or harm another person using technology.

Cyberbullying behaviour may include:

- abusive texts and emails
- hurtful messages, images, or videos
- imitating others online
- excluding others online
- humiliating others online
- spreading nasty online gossip and chat
- creating fake accounts or 'avatars' to trick someone or
- humiliate them.

Cyberbullying can occur on internet services, social media and electronic services that enable communication including, but not limited to, instant messaging, chat services, email communications, online games, SMS, and MMS. It can be verbal or written and can includes images, videos and/or audio. These behaviours can also be an indicator of child abuse and other harm.

Bullying can be illegal if it involves intimidation, stalking, physical violence, threats of violence or damaging property.

4.0 What Is Not Bullying?

There are many negative situations which, whilst being potentially distressing for students, are not bullying. These include:

- **Mutual Conflict Situations** which arise where there is disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Mutual conflict situations need to be closely monitored as they may evolve into a bullying situation.
- **One-Off Acts** (of aggression or meanness) including single incidents of loss of temper, shouting, or swearing do not normally constitute bullying.

5.0 Anti-Bullying Plan

At Al Noori Muslim School, there are clear procedures in place for the reporting and investigation of incidences of bullying. Our anti-bullying plan is developed collaboratively with students, school staff, parents, caregivers, and the community and includes strategies for:

- developing a shared understanding of bullying behaviour.
- maintaining a positive climate of respectful relationships where bullying is less likely to occur.
- developing and implementing programs for bullying prevention.
- embedding anti-bullying messages into each curriculum area for every year group.
- developing and implementing early intervention support for students who are identified by the school as being at risk of developing long-term difficulties with social relationships.
- educating students on how to behave as responsible bystanders.
- developing clear procedures for reporting incidents of bullying to the school and responding to them promptly and effectively.
- providing support to any student who has been affected by bullying behaviour.
- contacting the Child Wellbeing Unit or Community Services and/or Police Youth Liaison Officer where appropriate.

5.1 Reporting Bullying

1. If a student believes that he/she or another student is being bullied, the student is encouraged to report the concern immediately.
2. A student can report his/her bullying concern to the Class Teacher, Primary Coordinator, Head of Department Coordinators, Welfare Coordinators, School Counsellors, Deputy Principals, or staff member that the student feels comfortable with.
3. The person receiving the complaint will report it to the Primary Coordinators, Welfare Coordinators or Deputy Principals for action.

4. Any reported bullying incident will be followed up sensitively and actions will be taken and documented.

Al Noori Muslim School encourages students to reject all forms of bullying and to report any bullying concerns immediately. This will support the school's positive culture.

5.2 Complaints to the eSafety Commissioner About Cyberbullying Material Targeted at a Child

Where Cyberbullying Material is targeted at a child under the age of 18 years, a complaint can be made to:
- the provider of a social media service, relevant electronic service, designated internet service (as defined in the Online Safety Act 2021 (Cth)) - see The eSafety Guide for information about providers. The eSafety Guide | eSafety Commissioner
- the eSafety Commissioner under section 30 of the Online Safety Act 2021 (Cth).

Complaints to the eSafety Commissioner can be made through the online portal by the child, their parent or guardian, or an adult authorised by the child to make the complaint. The eSafety Commissioner has the power to investigate the complaint and to issue a removal notice.

For the eSafety Commissioner to investigate cyberbullying, the harmful content must have first been reported to the service or platform used to send, post, or share it – at least 48 hours before it is reported to eSafety.

5.3 Responsibilities and Delegations

School staff have a responsibility to:

- modelling appropriate behaviour at all times.
- dealing with all reported and observed incidents of bullying in accordance with this policy.
- ensuring that any incident of bullying that they observe or is reported to them, is recorded appropriately.
- being vigilant in monitoring students that have been identified as either students who persistently bully or are persistently bullied.
- considering whether the behaviour gives rise to concerns that the student exhibiting the behaviour and/or the student subject to the behaviour may be experiencing child abuse or other harm, and, if so, follows the school's procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns.
- acknowledging the right of parents/carers to speak with the school if they believe their child is being bullied.

Students have a responsibility to:

- behave appropriately, respecting individual differences and diversity.
- behave as responsible digital citizens.
- follow the school Anti-Bullying Policy.
- behave as responsible bystanders.
- report incidents of bullying according to the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

Parents and caregivers have a responsibility to:

- support their children to become responsible citizens and to develop responsible online behaviour.
- be aware of the school Anti-Bullying Policy and assist their children in understanding bullying behaviour.
- support their children in developing positive responses to incidents of bullying consistent with the school Anti-Bullying Policy.
- report incidents of school related bullying behaviour to the school.
- work collaboratively with the school to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur.

6.0 Bullying Prevention Strategies

Al Noori Muslim School recognises that the implementation of whole-school prevention strategies is the most effective way of eliminating, or at least minimising incidents of bullying within our community.

The following initiatives form part of our overall bullying prevention strategy and our strategy to create a 'no-bullying' culture within the school:

- A structured curriculum and peer group support system, that provides age-appropriate information and social and emotional competencies relating to bullying (including cyberbullying) and bullying prevention, to students over the course of the academic year.
- Education, training and professional development of staff in bullying prevention and response strategies.
- Appropriate sharing among staff of information about cyberbullying incidents.
- Regular provision of information to parents/guardians, to raise awareness of bullying as a school community issue to equip them to recognise signs of bullying, as well as to provide them with clear paths for raising any concerns they may have relating to bullying directly with the school.
- Promotion of a supportive environment that encourages the development of positive relationships and communication between staff, students, and parents/guardians.
- Promotion of responsible bystander behaviour amongst students, staff, and parents/guardians.
- Reporting of incidents of alleged bullying by students, bystanders, parents/guardians, and staff are encouraged, and made easy through the establishment of multiple reporting channels (as specified below).
- Students are supported by their teachers, pastoral care staff and the school leadership when they report a bullying incident and during the processes that follow the submission of the report.
- Regular risk assessments of bullying within the school are undertaken by surveying students to identify bullying issues that may ordinarily go unnoticed by staff.
- Records of reported bullying incidents are maintained and analysed, in order to identify students who persistently intimidate or bully and/or students who are persistently bullied and to implement targeted prevention strategies where appropriate.
- Statements supporting bullying prevention are included in student communications.
- Education of staff, students, and parents/guardians on health conditions to promote understanding and to reduce stigma and fear.
- Anti-bullying posters are displayed strategically within the school.

- Promotion of student awareness and a 'no-bullying' environment by participating in events such as the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence.

7.0 Responding to Bullying

Bullying behaviours vary enormously in their extent and intent and, as a consequence, each incident needs to be dealt with on its facts.

In all circumstances the School:

- takes bullying incidents seriously.
- takes seriously and monitors single incidents of conflict or fights between students, that do not ordinarily amount to bullying, for signs of ongoing behaviour, which may be an indicator of bullying.
- provides assurance to the student being bullied that they are not at fault and their confidentiality will be respected.
- ensures that teachers, pastoral care, and school leadership staff support the student being bullied through the reporting process and the corresponding investigation and resolution processes.
- engages a Student Council, or similar, to instigate anti-bullying initiatives.
- ensures that student leaders support the school's anti-bullying policy and promote anti-bullying behaviours
- takes time to properly investigate the facts including discussing the incident with the student being bullied, the student who was bullying and any bystanders.
- keeps parents and guardians of both the student who was bullied and the student who did the bullying, informed of the situation as and when appropriate to do so.
- takes time to understand any concerns of individuals involved.
- maintains records of reported bullying incidents.
- will escalate its response when dealing with students who persistently bully and/or for severe incidents, even if these are not necessarily repetitive.
- considers whether the behaviour gives rise to concerns that the student exhibiting the behaviour and/or the student subject to the behaviour may be experiencing child abuse or other harm, and, if so, follows the Child Protection Program.

8.0 Bullying Support Services

School Liaison Police are NSW Police officers who work with schools to reduce crime, violence, and anti-social behaviour. Our School Liaison Police Officer/s are at Bankstown Local Area Command and can be contacted on (02) 9783 2199.

Al Noori Muslim School also provides access to Counselling Services (Student).

The Office of the eSafety Commissioner provides resources, advice and strategies for parents, schools, and children on how to deal with cyberbullying for people under the age of 18.

9.0 Implementation

This Policy is implemented through a combination of:

- staff training.
- student and parent/carer education and information.
- involvement of external bodies and authorities as and when appropriate.
- effective incident reporting and recording procedures.
- effective management of bullying incidents when reported.
- the creation of a 'no-bullying' culture within the school community.
- effective record keeping procedures.
- initiation of corrective actions where necessary.