Anti-Bullying-Behaviour Guidance Policy

Bullying can occur among children of any ages, sex or background. In most instances, children need adult assistance to deal with bullying. This includes adults taking responsibility to develop strategies for the prevention of bullying, and for dealing fairly and effectively with allegations of bullying.

NESA

Compliance Standard NESA	Section 47 of the Education Act 1990 No 8 (NSW)

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 5: RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN		
5.1.2	Dignity and rights of the child	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained.
5.2	Relationships between children	Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships.
5.2.1	Collaborative learning	Children are supported to collaborate, learn from and help each other.
QUALITY AREA 6: PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES		
6.1	Supportive relationships with families	Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
73	Educational program
123	Educator to child ratios- Centre based services
155	Interactions with children
156	Relationships in groups
168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and procedures to be followed
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available

RATIONALE

The purpose of this policy is to outline The Farmhouse Montessori School's (the school) policy on maintaining a safe and positive environment for everyone, making bullying (children being mean on purpose) less likely to occur. The School rejects all forms of bullying behaviour including online (or cyber) bullying. We work to provide a safe, inclusive, and respectful learning community that promote student wellbeing. Staff at the school encourage high levels of parental and community involvement in the school to improve student attendance, engagement, learning and behaviour. The school expects students to behave in a way and manner that is inclusive and respect other students, their teachers, school staff, and community members, and to not bully, harass, intimidate, or discriminate against anyone in our schools. The school has established strategies and practices to encourage positive student behaviour, recognise and reinforce student achievement and wellbeing, and manage disruptive student behaviour.

POLICY STATEMENT
This policy covers anti bullying within the school through any medium. It applies to all students, employees, volunteers and visitors to the school.

Definition
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 has three key features. It:

1. involves a misuse of power in a relationship
2. is intentional, ongoing and repeated
3. involves behaviours that can cause harm.
4. Bullying can be physical, verbal, or social. Bullying can be easy to see (overt), or hidden (covert), such as spreading rumours about another person or excluding them.

Bullying can also happen online using technology such as the internet or mobile devices. This is known as online bullying or cyberbullying.

A person can be bullied about many different things such as how they look, sound or speak; their background, religion, race or culture including Aboriginality; having a disability; their sex; their size or body shape or any other ways they may be different.

Some students are bullied about their academic or sporting achievements or hobbies.

Types of bullying behaviour
There are four main types of bullying behaviour:

- **physical** – examples include: hitting, pushing, shoving or intimidating or otherwise physically hurting another person, damaging or stealing their belongings. It includes threats of violence
- **verbal/written** – examples include: name-calling or insulting someone about an attribute, quality or personal characteristic
- **social (sometimes called relational or emotional bullying)** – examples include: deliberately excluding someone, spreading rumours, and sharing information that will have a harmful effect on the other person and/or damaging a person's social reputation or social acceptance
- **cyberbullying** – 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.

What Isn't 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.

Signs of Bullying
Major behavioural changes in a student may be indicative of bullying. Such behavioural changes may include:

- crying at night and having nightmares
- refusing to talk when asked "What's wrong?"
- having unexplained bruises, cuts or scratches
- an unwillingness or refusal to go to school
- feeling ill in the mornings
- a decline in quality of school work
- becoming withdrawn and lacking confidence
- beginning to bully siblings
- acting unreasonably.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to recognise signs of bullying and notify the School through a trusted staff member immediately (such as a class teacher or Principal), if they suspect their child is a victim of bullying.

The Farmhouse Montessori School's Policy

Bullying is not tolerated at The Farmhouse Montessori School.

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.
- staff establish positive role models emphasising our no-bullying culture; and
- bullying prevention and intervention strategies are reviewed on an annual basis against best
- practice.

Bullying Prevention Strategies

The Farmhouse Montessori 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 skills relating to bullying (including cyber bullying) 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. A whole school approach. We cover the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework.

(see link https://studentwellbeinghub.edu.au/educators/framework)

The following five evidence-based elements, based on the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework help schools to implement a planned whole-school approach to promote student safety and wellbeing and effectively address bullying behaviour.

1-Leadership
➢ Bullying is less likely to occur in a positive environment. Principals and school leaders play an active role in building a positive learning environment where the whole school community feels included, connected, safe and respected.
2-Inclusion
➢ Bullying is less likely in a culture that promotes inclusion. All members of the school community are active participants in building a welcoming school culture that values diversity, and fosters positive, respectful relationships. Bullying is less likely to occur in an inclusive school culture that does not tolerate aggressive and disrespectful behaviour and actively promotes supportive and caring relationships
3-Student Voice

➢ Incorporating student voice in decision-making is a key contributor to a positive school culture. Students are less likely to engage in bullying behaviour when they feel valued. Students are active participants in their own learning and wellbeing, feel connected and use their social and emotional skills to be respectful, resilient and safe

4-Partnerships

➢ Bullying is a whole of community issue which requires a whole of community response. Effective schools have high levels of parental and community involvement, which is strongly related to positive student behaviour. Families and communities collaborate as partners with the school to support student learning, safety and wellbeing.

➢ Families are the first educators of their children and have a key influence on their learning and development. Schools also have an important responsibility in teaching and shaping the lives of young people. This is why it is important for families and schools to work together in partnership

5-Support

➢ Actively involving staff, students and families in promoting positive behaviour reduces bullying behaviour. School staff, students and families share and cultivate an understanding of wellbeing and support for positive behaviour and how this reinforces effective teaching and learning.

➢ Effective whole-school approaches provide a framework for schools to promote positive behaviour for all students as well as for groups of students or individual students who require additional or individualised support.

- 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);
- 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 persistent bullies and/or victims and to implement targeted prevention strategies where appropriate;
- statements supporting bullying prevention are included in students' School diaries;
- 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; and
- promotion of student awareness and a 'no-bullying' environment by participating in events such as the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence.

Anti-Bullying Strategies for Parents

How can bullying be identified and how can parents help?

It is important to remember that bullying will be most effectively dealt with, and with the least damage to both the child being bullied and the child who is bullying, when parents and the School work together to find a solution — parents should not intervene directly but should work with the School to address bullying. The School sees its partnership with parents as essential in promoting the wellbeing, happiness and productivity of all the students in its care.

The following brief guidelines may help you help your children such that they do not become bullies or victims:

- Encourage your child to talk to you about bullying regularly. Let them know how much you disapprove of bullying and explain why. Model and encourage respect for others, emphasise seeing things from another's point of view and instil an awareness of the rights of others not to be mistreated;
- Stress how important it is that bullying is everyone's problem. No-one can be neutral about it. Encourage your child to support a student who is being bullied and to report it. If they will not talk to the School, you should do so;

- Be alert to any signs of distress, anxiety, unwillingness to attend school, regular episodes of missing or damaged equipment or clothes and inform the School of your concerns. A change in behaviour (for example becoming angry about nothing, being overly moody, talking about themselves in a derogatory fashion) can also be warning signs and should be discussed with the School.
- Communicate regularly and openly with the School.
- Take an active interest in all areas of your child's school life, encourage them to talk to you and to talk to teachers they trust and like;
- Develop resilient social skills in your child such as encouraging them to speak openly and confidently, how to negotiate and to express their own opinion without fear. Help them learn the difference between friendly banter/joking and bullying, and help them distinguish between those friends who care about their feelings and those 'friends' who do not; and
- Your child will copy what you do and it is important that you offer them a positive role model of being resilient, compassionate and respectful of others' rights.

Reporting Culture

One of the many issues surrounding bullying is reluctance on the part of victims to report incidents. Equally, authority figures (teachers, parents, other staff) and witnesses can overlook incidents, or accept them as part of the 'rough and tumble' of school life.

It is important to The Farmhouse Montessori School that it creates an atmosphere of support and care for the individual. The Farmhouse Montessori School will take steps to ensure that all staff and students know and understand what bullying behaviour is, and that they should report any incident to someone they trust – who must, in turn, report it to the school.

Students and their parents must be alert to signs of distress or agitation and to suspected incidents of bullying and report them to the School.

Reporting Bullying

Students and their parents/guardians are sometimes reluctant to pursue bullying incidents, for fear that it will only make matters worse.

A key part of the School's bullying prevention and intervention strategy is to encourage reporting of bullying incidents as well as providing assurance to students who experience bullying (and parents/guardians) that:

- bullying is not tolerated within the School;
- their concerns will be taken seriously; and
- the School has a clear strategy for dealing with bullying issues.

Bullying incidents can be advised to the School verbally (or in writing) through any of the following avenues:

- informing a trusted teacher or staff member;
- informing a student's Year Coordinator; and
- informing the Deputy Principal
- informing the Principal of School.

Responding to Bullying

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

The School will:

- take bullying incidents seriously;
- provide assurance to the victim that they are not at fault and their confidentiality will be respected to the extent possible;
- appropriately investigate the situation including discussing the incident with the victim, the bully and any bystanders, as it considers necessary;
- seek to understand any concerns of individuals involved;

- maintain records of reported bullying incidents; and
- escalate its response when dealing with persistent bullies and/or severe incidents, as necessary.

Actions that may be taken when responding to bullying include:

The School will:

- notification of/consultation with parents/guardians
- offering counselling to persistent bullies/victims
- implementing effective follow up strategies
- disciplinary action, at the Principal's discretion, including suspension and expulsion depending on the circumstances.

This is not an exhaustive list of possible actions. Actions taken by the School may depend on the circumstances. The School will determine the most appropriate action to take in response to an allegation of bullying.

BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION – FURTHER INFORMATION

Anti-bullying strategies for students

Your rights and responsibilities:

It is a student's right to feel safe at school. It is the right of all students to have a safe, supportive and caring environment in which to pursue their education. It is a student's responsibility to make sure that this right is possible. Students can do this by:

- not engaging in any bullying behaviour in any form
- reporting any bullying they see, and if possible, stepping in to stop it
- telling someone who is bullying to stop, and supporting the victim
- talking to someone in authority as soon as possible.

If you are being bullied:

- The first thing to remember is**: It is not your fault**. Bullies want to hurt or belittle their victims because the bully wants to feel powerful, not because you have done something or said something;
- You should try to tell the bully to stop. This can be difficult but it is important to try. Equally, you should try to walk away ignoring any taunts or name-calling. Do not respond aggressively or with taunts of your own;
- You must tell someone. Do not think that no-one cares or that no-one wants to know about it. If you cannot tell someone on your own, find a friend to go with you. By telling someone, you immediately help to make the bully less powerful; and
- There are many people in school that you can talk to including the your classroom teacher, the Principal or the Deputy Principal or one of the other educators or support staff at the campuses.

If you see someone being bullied:

- Support the victim and tell the bully to stop. It is important to do this as it shows you care. You care for the victim and you care that the bully should not behave in that manner;
- Take the victim away from the situation. Find another group of friends to be with and let the victim know you support her/him; and
- Tell someone. The victim may not want to talk to a member of staff but it is vital that the school knows about the bullying incident. It is only by telling someone that bullying behaviour will be stopped. Support the victim and offer to go with her/him to talk to someone. If they won't, you must tell someone yourself.

What is bullying and what should you do?

Bullying can take many forms. It can happen in public or it can be hidden.

- One form of bullying is aggressive and public. Behaviour such as violence towards a student, or publicly damaging or stealing their belongings is easily seen and easily identified. If you see this, you should follow the steps outlined above, making sure you support the victim and that you tell someone;
- Another form of bullying is less openly aggressive and is partly public, partly hidden. This includes behaviour such as the repeated ridicule or put-down of a student within a group or class, or the malicious removal or damage of a student's belongings, witnessed by a small group. This is often described by the bully as 'friendly teasing' or as

something done 'in fun'. This is not the case. It is bullying. If you belong to the group you may find it difficult to stand up to your friends; however, it is important that you do not join in. You should follow the steps outlined above, making sure you support the victim and that you tell someone. Remember, if your friends can treat one girl like this, they can do the same to you; and

- A third form of bullying is hidden but equally harmful and hurtful. This is behaviour where a student is deliberately excluded or isolated from a group, where, for example, malicious and unfounded rumours and gossip are spread. This form of 'anonymous' bullying is the most difficult to identify; however, as a student you can do something about it. The most important thing you can do is not join in this form of behaviour. You should not repeat rumours or gossip you hear. You should not exclude someone from your group or your activities because someone else says you should. It can be very difficult to stand up to your friends, but it is important to remember that everyone should be treated with respect and courtesy, no matter who they are. The steps outlined above should be followed, making sure you support the victim and that you tell someone. Remember, if your friends can treat one girl like this, they can do the same to you. One thing is certain, as a student, you cannot be neutral about bullying. If you see any form of bullying occur and do nothing, you are condoning it.

Cyberbullying

What is cyberbullying?
- Cyberbullying is the use of technology by one person as a means to scare, belittle or exclude another. A cyberbullying incident can be direct or indirect. Direct cyberbullying can be a malicious or hurtful text-message or email sent to a specific victim. Indirect cyberbullying can be a message, URL, or photograph spread widely by text or email, damaging an individual's reputation or inciting gossip.
- Cyberbullying is not time or place specific. It can happen 24 hours a day, at home, at school, on holiday. The victim can feel they are never safe from the bully.
- Cyberbullying is often anonymous. As cyberbullying is often conducted from the safety of a student's home, it is possible that the cyberbully may be in a different class, year group or even a different school. Cyber bullies can hide behind technology with great ease.
- Cyberbullying can employ a wide variety of means including instant messaging, message boards, text, email, chat rooms, personal and social networking sites. Any student with access to a mobile phone and computer/internet can be involved in cyberbullying.

How is the school addressing cyberbullying?
- The school sees no difference between bullying in person and bullying by electronic or technological means;
- The school does not allow students to have mobile phones during the school day. Students with smart watches have to either place these in their bags or hand them into the office.
- The school will generally seek to investigate any reported incidents of cyberbullying, noting that any cyberbullying incidents that take place outside school hours or off school property can be difficult to investigate and prove.

What can parents do to combat cyberbullying?
- Talk to your child about cyberbullying and make sure they are aware of what it is. Being open and direct is very important in helping them to stay safe;
- Computers with internet access should be located publicly in the home. If you can see what your child is looking at, which sites they are accessing, how often they are instant messaging, you are in a stronger position to be aware of their online habits;
- Encourage a sensible and mature approach to the internet. Do not let them respond to jibes or taunts. Ensure them knows you are always there to help and support them.
- If your child receives messages or emails that are malicious or bullying in intent, make sure they do not delete them. Keeping the text/email is the first step in tracking down the bully. Encourage them to block senders and to change email addresses if needed. If they use instant messaging or go to chat rooms, encourage them to use a different name/nickname;

- If you think your child is being cyberbullied, signs to look out for include: refusing to answer their mobile phone, or conversely, constant and nervous checking for messages; distress after using the computer; a seemingly unwarranted need to change their mobile number; secretive online habits such as changing screens whenever you walk by; and
- Become as IT literate as possible. Internet and mobile phone technology can appear to be mystifying and rather frightening. Only by acquiring the knowledge to understand it and use it well, are you able to help your child become a sensible IT user.

What can students do if they are being cyberbullied?

- First of all, tell someone. It is very important that you do not suffer in silence;
- Do not delete the text message or email – you must show it to your parents or to a teacher – and it is only by keeping the evidence that the bully may be tracked down;
- Block any senders who are malicious or unkind. If you receive hurtful email, change email addresses and only give your new address to people you trust; and
- Never give out your mobile phone number or email address to someone you don't know or to someone you don't trust. Never give out your real name or your email address while in a chat room.
- If you're not comfortable to talk to someone face to face, contact Kids Helpline. You can call them for free on 1800 55 1800.

Report it

- The Office of the eSafety Commissioner has information about:
- How to block, delete or report anyone who is harassing you online
- Online safety issues and what you need to know to protect yourself.
- If you feel physically threatened, call the police.

Anti-bullying resources

The more the School community know about bullying and how to deal with it, the more effective we will be in counteracting it. Bullying is not the sole preserve of schools but is throughout our communities and can continue when we are adults. If we are able to demonstrate to the students in our school that we will not tolerate it and if we aim to equip them with the skills to deal with while they are at school, we will have helped them deal with it in the future also. To this end the following are some useful resources, which may help increase our knowledge and understanding of this difficult subject.

Youth Liaison Officers

Youth Liaison Officers are NSW Police Force members who are responsible for administering the Young Offenders Act 1997 (NSW). They are responsible for delivering cautions, referring children to youth justice conferences and implementing strategies to reduce crime by juveniles in the community.
We also organise to have them come and speak to the student about Cyber-bullying.

Implementation

This policy is implemented through a combination of:

- staff training
- student and parent/guardian education and information
- effective incident reporting 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.

Appendix 1

WHAT IS BULLYING	HOW CAN I TELL IF MY CHILD IS INVOLVED IN BULLYING	IF YOUR CHILD IS BEING BULLIED	IF YOUR CHILD HAS SEEN BULLYING	IF YOUR CHILD IS BULLYING OTHERS
BULLYING IS DEFINED BY THREE KEY FEATURES	*YOU MAY NOTICE YOUR CHILD*	*REASSURE YOUR CHILD*	*ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD TO TALK BOUT WHAT HAPPENED*	*FOCUS ON POSITIVE SOLUTIONS*
• it involves a misuse of power in a relationship	• doesn't want to go to school or participate in school activities	• Listen calmly and get the full story	• not knowing what to do or not wanting to make the situation worse	• understand the effect of their behaviour
• it is intentional, ongoing and repeated	• changes their route to school or becomes frightened of walking to school	• Reassure your child	• not knowing if their actions will make a difference	• take responsibility for their behaviour
• it involves behaviours that can cause harm	• drops in academic performance	• Ask your child what they want to do – and what they want you to do	• feeling worried about their safety if they intervene	• learn to repair the harm their behaviour has caused
	• changes sleeping or eating patterns	• Contacting your child's school	• feeling worried about the impact of taking action on their friendships	• develop their social and emotional skills – especially conflict resolution
	• has frequent tears, anger, mood swings or anxiety	• Discuss and practise strategies to respond to bullying	• being anxious that they will be bullied as a result of intervening.	• treat others with respect.
	• takes money from home	• Ignoring the person doing the bullying.	• Let them know you take their concerns seriously.	• Talk to your child
	• has unexplained bruises, cuts or scratches	• Telling them to stop and then walking away.	• Ask your child what they want you to do.	• Explain why bullying is unacceptable
	• loses or brings home damaged belongings or clothes	• Pretending you don't care; act unimpressed or not bothered.	• Don't jump in to solve the problem	• Consider what else might be happening for your child
	• asks for extra pocket money or food	• Moving to somewhere safe.		
	• arrives home hungry			

Source

- **Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).**
- **Guide to the National Quality Standard. (2017).**
- **NSW Government Anti Bullying policy**
- Compliance Standard NESA   Section 47 of the Education Act 1990 No 8 (NSW)
- Farmhouse-**Bullying, Discrimination and Harassment Policy**

Policy Review Date		
Policy Review Date	**Modification**	Next Review Date
May 2018	New Logo Added Updated to include "self-regulation concepts and terminology	**2019**
6/3/2019	Appendix 1 added	**2020**
Nov 2020	• realignment of content within the policy • deleted content that was repeated in different sections or moved into a different section • changed order of some points • additional definitions added • rewording of some points • notification to regulatory authority added • additional information added for clarity: -Appropriate Playground behaviour • further sources included • sources updated and checked for currency	**2022**
March 2021	• Inserted actions and procedures around behaviors of a serious nature. • Inserted reasons for anonymous reporting of incidents to parents.	**2022**
31 October 2024	• NESA, NQA & Regulations tables inserted. • What is Bullying Table inserted • Sources table updated • Student wellbeing link inserted	**2026**