

B8.2 Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures

PART 1: ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

MUSEC School is committed to providing a safe, respectful and supportive environment in which every student is free from bullying. Bullying in any form is not accepted. This policy applies to the students, staff, parents and carers of Macquarie University Special Education Centre (MUSEC) School.

MUSEC School educates children with a diagnosed disability, including autism, intellectual disability and/or speech and language disorder. This policy is applied in the context of each student's special educational needs.

This policy is made under the Education Act 1990 (NSW) and meets NESA requirement B8.2 Schools must provide for student welfare (*NSW Registered and Accredited Individual Non-government Schools Manual*, Feb 2026, p. 57–59). It is structured around the four components of the NSW Anti-Bullying Framework – Preventing, Responding, Partnering and Implementing (*NSW Anti-Bullying Framework*, NSW Government, 2025) – and is published on the MUSEC School website.

From 2027, all NSW schools must have anti-bullying policies and procedures aligned with the Framework and publish them on their website (*NSW Anti-Bullying Framework*, NSW Government, 2025).

Definition of 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 be carried out by an individual or a group, in person or online (cyberbullying), and can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert).

Single incidents, and conflict or mutual disagreements between equals, are not defined as bullying, but are still addressed under the School's student behaviour procedures.

Bullying behaviour may take the following forms:

- Physical – hitting, kicking, pushing, spitting, or taking or damaging belongings.
- Verbal – name-calling, teasing, threats, or ridicule of a person's appearance, characteristics or background.
- Social – excluding others, spreading rumours, or damaging reputation or relationships.
- Online (cyberbullying) – harmful messages, images or behaviour shared through digital devices or platforms.

Assessing intent in the MUSEC context

Student behaviour towards others may result from anxiety, impulsivity, or medical or communication difficulties rather than an intent to bully. Before treating a behaviour as bullying, staff determine – using direct observation and measurement – whether the behaviour is intentional and involves a deliberate misuse of power. Where it is not, the behaviour is managed under the School's student behaviour and welfare procedures. In every case, students are kept safe and free from harm.

PART 2: ANTI-BULLYING PROCEDURES

These procedures follow the four components of the NSW Anti-Bullying Framework (*NSW Anti-Bullying Framework*, NSW Government, 2025): Preventing, Responding, Partnering and Implementing. Prevention and support operate at three levels – universal support for all students (Tier 1), targeted support for students who are more vulnerable (Tier 2), and intensive, individualised support for students with complex or persistent needs (Tier 3).

Preventing

- Teaching respect, inclusion and positive relationships through the School's welfare and social-skills programs.
- Explicitly teaching students, in ways suited to their needs, how to recognise bullying and how to respond and report safely.
- Supervising students and maintaining a safe physical and online environment.
- Promoting a whole-school culture of positive behaviour and citizenship.

Responding

When bullying is reported or observed, the School responds promptly and fairly:

1. The matter is triaged. Any situation involving violence, a significant threat of harm, or a child-protection or criminal concern is acted on immediately to ensure student safety.
2. Staff gather the facts through direct discussion with the students involved, applying procedural fairness.
3. Affected students are provided with support, normally within two school days of the matter being raised.
4. Proportionate action is taken, which may include time-out, restorative conversations, a Behaviour Support Plan developed with parents and carers, or suspension where necessary.
5. Students who engage in bullying are supported to understand the impact of their behaviour and to learn alternative ways to respond. Responses are trauma-informed and address the underlying motivation for the behaviour.
6. Parents and carers are informed of significant incidents and the actions taken.

Urgent matters

Where there is a risk to a student's safety, staff act immediately and notify the Principal without delay. The Principal makes any required notification to external authorities or NESA. Single serious incidents are acted on even where the conduct is not repeated.

Partnering

- Working in partnership with students, parents and carers to resolve incidents and support those involved.
- Drawing on internal and external services, including counselling and specialist support, where appropriate.
- Communicating the School's anti-bullying approach to the school community.

Implementing

- Recording all reports of bullying, the response taken and the outcome.
- Monitoring records to identify patterns and students who may need further support, and following up to check that actions have worked.
- Providing staff with ongoing professional learning to recognise and respond to bullying – including subtle, covert and online behaviour – and to engage with students and families in a trauma-informed and culturally aware way.
- Applying this policy consistently with the School's related policies, including behaviour management, student welfare, child protection, and complaints.
- Reviewing this policy at least annually, and after any significant incident, and publishing the current version on the School website.

Roles and Responsibilities

Who	Responsibilities
Students	Treat others with respect and help create a safe, inclusive environment. Tell a trusted staff member if they are bullied or see someone being bullied, at school or online. Use the strategies they are taught to respond safely to conflict and bullying.
Parents and carers	Support the School's anti-bullying approach and reinforce respectful behaviour at home. Watch for signs their child may be affected and report any suspected bullying to the School. Work in partnership with staff to support their child and any agreed plan.
Staff	Model respectful behaviour and deliver programs that build positive relationships. Assess whether a behaviour is bullying or is driven by disability-related factors, recording observations using direct measures. Respond to, record and monitor incidents, and communicate with parents and carers as required.
Principal	Oversees implementation of this policy, including triage of urgent matters and procedural fairness. Ensures incidents and actions are documented, monitored for patterns, and reviewed. Makes notifications to external authorities or NESA where required.