# 18. Tools for Schools: developing and / or revising a bullying prevention and response policy

This section provides some practical tools for schools for developing and / or revising bullying prevention and response policies. Developed by the Bullying Prevention Advisory Group, the tools comprise:

› a step-by-step guide to developing a bullying prevention policy

› a sample bullying prevention and response policy

› a framework that schools can use as a guide to develop their own policies for bullying prevention and response

› a sample bullying prevention and response action plan.



18.1. **Steps to developing a bullying prevention and response policy:** Below are some suggested steps for developing a bullying prevention and response policy. These are provided as a guide only and are intended to be adapted to suit the school environment.

› **Step 1: Getting ready**

- Decide to develop / revise your bullying prevention
  and response policy (this may be a standalone policy or part of an existing school policy)
- Get support and commitment from your school community including parents and whānau
- Form a bullying prevention working group
- Agree what your next steps will be

› **Step 2: Preparing the policy**

- Be informed about bullying in your school community
- Collect information about bullying behaviour in your school
- Draft the policy
- Seek feedback from the school community including parents and whānau
- Make improvements to the policy
- Decide on your priority actions for the following year
- Finalise the action plan
- Have the policy and implementation plan endorsed by your school community ie, Board of Trustees, staff, students, parents and whānau

› **Step 3: Implementing the policy**

- Raise awareness – make sure your whole school community is aware of the policy and their role in it
- Implement your bullying prevention policy

› **Step 4: Monitoring how your policy is working**

- Record information about bullying behaviour
- Monitor implementation
- Review annually

## 18.2. Sample bullying prevention and response policy:

This sample policy can be used to develop a school bullying prevention and response policy. It has been provided as a sample only and should be adapted to suit the school environment.

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## Policy Name: Bullying Prevention and Response Policy

**Policy Date:**

**Rationale or Purpose**

The _____ Board of Trustees seeks to take all reasonable steps to develop high standards of behaviour in order to fulfil the charter expectation and the requirements of NAG 5. The Board of Trustees seeks to foster and develop a safe, positive physical and emotional school environment that creates a climate of trust. Students, staff, parents and whānau share the responsibility for making _____ school a respectful and inclusive environment.

**Policy Statement**

We are committed to ensuring that our school provides an environment free from bullying behaviours. All members of our school community – Board of Trustees, school leaders, teachers, staff, students and parents and whānau should have an understanding of what bullying is; and know what to do when bullying does occur.

**Definition**

Bullying behaviour is not an individual action. Our school community agrees that:

› Bullying is deliberate
› Bullying involves a power imbalance
› Bullying has an element of repetition
› Bullying is harmful.

Bullying behaviours can be physical, verbal, or social, and can take place in the physical world or digitally.

Bullying is not an individual action. It involves up to three parties; initiators (those doing the bullying), targets (those being bullied) and often bystanders (those who witness the bullying).

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The rationale or purpose section explains "why" the policy is being written.

It will include an agreed statement and confirmation of your school community's expectations about creating a safe, positive environment and the principles underpinning your policy including legal requirements (NAG 5).

The Policy Statement is a brief statement of "what" the policy is intended to achieve. That is, the aim(s) of your policy.

Your school's agreed definition of bullying. This should include examples of types of bullying behaviours, how the definition has been developed eg, consulting with staff, parents and whānau and students.

## Bullying Prevention

We recognise that real change happens when students, staff, parents, whānau and other members of the community share responsibility for making our school a respectful and inclusive environment. We will:

› Regularly survey our school community through *Wellbeing@School* and *Kia Kaha* student or our own survey (for example by using survey monkey)

› Identify areas for improvement through the survey findings and develop a bullying prevention action plan

› Regularly promote our expectations and successes in preventing bullying (eg, in assemblies, newsletters and Facebook, reports to the Board of Trustees)

› hold termly professional learning and development on our understanding of bullying prevention and response (staff meetings, parent meetings, student council)

› Establish our Bullying Prevention Team to take responsibility for bullying prevention (to include staff, parents and whānau and students)

› Use a range of activities including curriculum based programmes to develop the ability for students to relate to each other (Kia Kaha, peer mediation, social problem solving solutions, role playing)

› Promote digital citizenship throughout ICT and promoting safe use of technology (through our ICT Use Agreements)

› Support the student-led peer to peer initiative.

*The above are suggestions only.*

The Bullying Prevention section is to outline "how" the policy (eg, what steps) will prevent bullying behaviour. It will include prevention-focussed activities and interventions.

## Bullying Response, for when bullying occurs

We recognise the importance of consistently responding to all incidents of bullying that have been reported in our school and ensuring that planned interventions are used to respond to these incidents and support all involved. We will support anyone who has been affected by, engaged in or witnessed bullying behaviour.

› All reported incidents of bullying will be taken seriously and followed up as appropriate

› An appropriate adult will support the affected students by:
  - reassuring that they have done the right thing in reporting the incident
  - using the assessment matrix, record a description of what happened and assess the level of severity
  - using the quick reference guide, responding to bullying incidents to activate the response and action needed

› We will involve parents and whānau as early as possible and as appropriate

› All more serious incidents will be escalated to senior management and we will seek advice and involvement from outside agencies

› We will provide appropriate support for targets, bystanders and initiators of bullying behaviour

› We will regularly monitor all incidents of bullying and identify patterns of behaviour.

The Bullying Response section is to outline "how" you will respond (eg, what steps you will take) when bullying behaviour has occurred or has been reported. It will include actions and interventions to follow up with initiators, targets and bystanders following an incident.

### Raising Awareness

We recognise the importance of good communication between home and school to promote consistent messages and to ensure that any reported bullying can be recognised and responded to effectively. We will regularly raise the awareness of our school community's approach to bullying and celebrate our positive school culture, for example through parent evenings, assemblies, class-based activities, and displays.

Our interaction with our wider school community will include reports to the Board of Trustees, school newsletters, and information (including the policy) on the school's website. We will make the policy available in multiple formats (in print, on the web and in school notices and newsletters) and ensure it is translated into other languages as necessary.

### Evaluation and Review

We will review and revise this policy annually to ensure that the school's bullying prevention practices are recognised and celebrated. This will include an annual meeting to monitor, review and modify the policy and action plan (to reflect changes with the school, survey findings, incident reviews). We will track and monitor all bullying related incidents and regularly report this information to the school community. We will regularly gather data from the school community (eg, *Wellbeing@School* and *Kia Kaha* student surveys) and report on the effectiveness of this policy and _____ school community's commitment to bullying prevention and response.

The Raising Awareness section outlines how you will communicate the policy to ensure it is widely known about and readily accessible to all staff, students, parents, family and whānau, and the community.

The Evaluation and Review section. You should review your policy on a regular basis. This may be annually or as legislation or regulations change.

18.3. Framework that can be used for developing a bullying
prevention and response policy:

**Section One: Your School's Culture, the Rationale for the Policy and Definition of Bullying**

A safe, positive physical and emotional school environment is important for student achievement and wellbeing and enables all students to be included.

Outline your school's expectations, the principles underlying this policy (including NAG 5) and your school's agreed definition of what is and what is not bullying behaviour (including descriptions of the different types of bullying behaviours).

*For example:*
› Agreed statement and confirm your school community's expectations about creating a safe, positive environment
› Principles underpinning the policy including legal requirements (NAG 5)
› Agreed definition of bullying in your school and how this definition will be promoted
› Descriptions of types of bullying behaviours.

**Section Two: Preventive Approach and Response**

Real change happens when students, staff, parents, whānau and other members of the community share responsibility for making a school a respectful and inclusive environment.

Outline your school's approach and activities in place to prevent and respond to bullying when bullying behaviour occurs. Include strategies for developing and implementing whole school bullying prevention programmes.

*For example:*
› Regularly surveying your school community and using the information to identify areas for improvement (eg, *Wellbeing@School* and *Kia Kaha* student surveys)
› Bullying prevention action plan based on gaps and issues identified as part of the survey findings
› Promoting your expectations and successes in preventing and responding to bullying
› Professional learning and development to reach a common understanding of recognising and responding to bullying
› Having staff identified and trained to specifically take responsibility for bullying
› Providing appropriate guidance and counselling for students
› Outlining strategies to prevent bullying eg, curriculum-based programmes, social problem solving solutions, student-led initiatives, parent / whānau involvement, collaboration with community providers.

**Section Three: Responding When Bullying Occurs**

It is important to consistently respond to all incidents of bullying that have been reported and ensure that planned interventions are used to respond to these incidents.

Outline your school's responses to ensure that support is provided to any student who has been affected by, engaged in or witnessed bullying behaviour. Support the whole school community to recognise and respond appropriately to bullying when it occurs. Provide clear advice on the roles and responsibilities of students, parents, caregivers and teachers for preventing and responding to bullying behaviour.

*For example:*

› Responding to the incident (how do we identify and address incidents of different severity? What are your procedures for when bullying occurs?

› How do we monitor and identify patterns of behaviour?

› What do we do if the behaviour occurs outside of school?

› When responding to cyberbullying, we focus more on the behaviour involved and less on the digital technology used

› When and who will provide support and advice (both from within the school community and other agencies)

› How we will work with the targets, bystanders and initiators of bullying behaviour

› Escalating incidents to senior management and other agencies

› Communicating with parents and caregivers about the bullying incident/s and promoting your successes in your safe school culture

› Regularly recognise your efforts in bullying prevention and response and review strategies/initiatives.

## Section Four: Communicating the Policy

The school community needs to be aware of, and involved in, school bullying policies. Good communication is needed between home and school so that any reported bullying can be recognised and responded to effectively.

Outline how you will ensure the policy is widely advertised and readily accessible to all students, parents, family and whānau, and the community.

*For example*

› Regular activities to raise the awareness of your school approach to bullying and celebrate promoting a positive school culture eg, parent evenings, assemblies, class-based activities, displays

› Regular communications to the wider school community, eg, reports to Board of Trustees, school newsletters, information (including the policy) on the school's website

› Making the policy available in multiple formats (in print, on the web and in school notices and newsletters)

› Ensuring it is concise and written in plain English (and translated into other languages where necessary).

## Section Five: Evaluation and Review

Regularly review and revise this policy to ensure that the school's bullying prevention practices are recognised and celebrated.

Outline how your school will undertake to find out if the policy is working.

*For example*

› Meeting regularly to monitor, review and modify the policy and action plan (to reflect changes with the school, survey findings, incident reviews)

› Celebrating your effectiveness of promoting your school's culture

› Tracking and monitoring of all bullying related incidents and regularly report to school community

› Regularly gathering data from the school community (eg, *Wellbeing@School* and *Kia Kaha* student surveys)

› Reporting on the effectiveness of the policy and the school's commitment to bullying prevention and response to the school community

› Seeking continued feedback.

## 18.4. Sample bullying prevention and response action plan:

**Strategic aim:** To provide a safe physical and emotional school environment, free from bullying behaviours, where students feel valued and respected

**Annual aim:** To embed bullying prevention in teaching and learning opportunities

**Target:** Reduce the number of major / severe bullying incidents reported in the annual survey

**Baseline data:** Our annual school safety survey – during 2013 we surveyed all students, staff and parents and whānau. The findings showed that Year 8 students experienced bullying the most frequently.

| Actions to achieve target | Led By | Resourcing Timeframes | Indicators of progress Including Monitoring and Review |
|---|---|---|---|
| **School wide culture and practices** | | | |
| Repeat survey annually and compare trends and patterns in data with last year. Share results with staff, students, parents and whānau. | Senior Leadership Team | Nil Term 1 | Data is showing a steady decrease in the number of serious bullying incidents. We recognise the rates of reported bullying may increase due to the increased awareness of bullying in our school community. |
| As part of our self review we will revisit our school vision statement and ensure we have clear, positive definitions that all staff, students parents and whānau can understand. We involve the school's digital citizenship group around cyberbullying issues. | Bullying Prevention Team | Term 1 | All staff, students and parents and whānau are aware of our school's expectations regarding bullying and what to do when it occurs. We have a shared understanding and can describe what bullying might look like. |
| **Teaching and Learning** | | | |
| Develop teaching / lessons plans on teaching social skills into everyday school life. | Bullying Prevention Team | Term 1 and 2 | A year long teaching schedule is complete and teachers are able to use lesson plans to explicitly and implicitly teach social skills. |
| Revise and refine our bullying procedures on what to do when bullying occurs. | Bullying Prevention Team | Term 3 | We have a streamlined approach to working with those that initiate bullying behaviours, those that are targets of bullying behaviour and those that witness bullying behaviour. |
| **Community Partnerships** | | | |
| Raise awareness of our successes with our bullying prevention and response activity and initiatives. Displays to ensure our messages are clearly articulated. | Bullying Prevention Team | Terms 1-4 | Staff are in regular contact with parents and whānau and parents feel confident that issues will be dealt with appropriately when they do occur. |