

**Policy created:** 2010

**Reviewed:** 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2020, 2022

**Monitoring, evaluation and reviews:** occurs annually, overseen by the principal.

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## Anti-bullying Policy

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations, an approved provider must ensure that policies and procedures are in place in relation to staffing (reg 168) and take reasonable steps to ensure those policies and procedures are followed (reg 170).

Under NESA requirements we renew registration through our setting demonstrating that we continue to satisfy requirements for registration under section 47 of Education Act 1990 No 8 (NSW).

### Policy Statement

We provide a complete Montessori program which considers the emotional, intellectual, physical, and social development of the total child by addressing the uniqueness of each in a nurturing, emotionally secure and academically excellent environment. We use the proven effectiveness of Montessori education to guide a broad spectrum of children, successfully nurturing each child on their journey. Montessori started from one fundamental assumption, that the goal of Montessori education is the formation of the child's whole personality. As an authentic Montessori setting, we are committed to anti-bullying, peace and collaboration.

### Background

We ensure all families and staff attending our school understand that any type of conduct or action that is not asked for and not wanted, and that might be reasonably expected to cause offence, humiliation or intimidation is harassment. Harassment, which can include bullying in any form or combination of physical, verbal, visual, social or psychological, interferes with this environment and will not be tolerated.

We all share a responsibility to foster, promote and restore right relationships. This policy builds on various other policies of the school to provide clear procedures and strategies to prevent, reduce and respond to bullying. The school rejects all forms of bullying behaviour, including online or cyberbullying. To improve student attendance, learning and behaviour, the school encourages parent and community involvement. Montessori schools establish relationships which are grounded in love, compassion, reconciliation and justice. In witnessing these values, we reject ideas, beliefs and behaviours which marginalise or victimise people.

### Definition

There is general consensus that Bullying behaviour:

- is deliberate and often repeated

- intends to cause fear, distress, hurt or harm to another
- is action by a more powerful individual/group over a less powerful individual/group
- Bullying: Intentional, repeated behaviour by an individual or group of individuals that causes distress, hurt or undue pressure on individuals.
- Physical: Fighting, pushing, shoving, hitting, gestures, touching
- Verbal: Name calling, teasing, offensive language
- Visual: offensive notes, pictures or drawings
- Social: excluding from groups, racism and sexism
- Psychological: making someone feel sad, belittled or alone, spreading of rumours
- Extortion: threatening to take someone's possessions, food or money etc
- Property: stealing, hiding, damaging or destroying property etc
- Cyber: any form of bullying which is carried out through electronic means such as phones, emails, texts, messaging, chat rooms and social networks.

### **School responsibilities**

- We will take all reports of bullying and harassment seriously
- Our staff will initially promote a positive resolution for all children involved
- Our staff will contact all those involved if further resolution is required

### **Procedural Fairness Statement**

Procedural fairness must be observed in all aspects of grievance handling process. In practice procedural fairness involves:

- Ensuring that there is proper investigation of the facts
- Informing relevant parties of any allegations made against them, as appropriate
- Ensuring that all parties are informed of the procedures under which the grievance is being handled and are given a copy of the relevant policy and guidelines
- Ensuring that all parties are heard and those who have had complaints made against them are given an opportunity to respond
- Ensuring that all relevant submissions and any mitigating factors are given due and proper consideration before any conclusions are reached or any action is taken
- Advising all parties that if the grievance is of such a serious nature that disciplinary action may result, then the facts revealed during an investigation into the grievance may be used in any subsequent disciplinary proceedings
- Impartiality on the part of investigator and/or decision, which means the investigator/ decision maker, must exclude themselves if there is any bias or conflict of interest.

These procedures usually require that the person raising a grievance must be willing to be identified, unless the facts of the matter are not in dispute, or the matter involves allegations of corruption, mal-administration or serious waste or child abuse. If in doubt about the requirements of procedural fairness, advice should be sought from the principal or Board Chair.

### **Legislative requirements**

Our policy is consistent with, and refers to, legislative requirements for dealing with complaints under both Education and Care Services National Law and Education Act (1990) (NSW).

<b>Regulation</b>	<b>Description</b>
Regulation 168	Our education settings have policies and procedures as detailed in 'Policies and Procedures Policy' (Policy Folder – office/Google Drive).
Regulation 170	Our settings do take reasonable steps to ensure that all staff and volunteers follow the policies and procedures of our settings. We manage this by annual training, staff handbook.
Regulation 171	Our settings policies and procedures are kept available and accessible for the educational setting community and for inspection in the office and Google Drive.
Regulation 172	Our settings notify parents within 14 days of change to policies or procedures relating to settings provisions, family ability to utilise setting, fees charged, fees collected. Additionally, our approved provider, if we consider that the notice period would pose a risk to the safety, health or wellbeing of any child enrolled at our settings, will ensure that parents of children enrolled at the service are notified as soon as practicable after making a change. We manage this by having a notification board visible in the office and train staff annually regarding this requirement.
Regulation 173	Prescribed information to be displayed. For the purpose of section 172 (f) of the Law, the following matter and information are prescribed in the case of a centre-based service, a notice stating that a child who has been diagnosed as at risk of anaphylaxis is enrolled.
Regulation 176	We display times to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority in the office. They include a notice must be provided within 7 days of the relevant event or within 7 days of the approved provider becoming aware of the relevant information. In the case of the death of a child, as soon as practicable but within 24 hours of the death, in case of any other serious incident or complaint, within 24 hours; in any other case, within 7 days of the event.
Section 54A Education Act	Publish the school's complaint handling procedures regarding allegations of staff misconduct or reportable conduct.

**The principles that inform our policy include:**

All decision-making should be carried out in accordance with the principles of our setting's Anti-bullying policy.

- Children's safety, health and wellbeing is our key priority. In line with regulatory requirements, we notify the regulatory authority of any complaints alleging the occurrence of a serious incident or contravention of the Education and Care Services National Law.
- Our families are integral to our settings. We welcome their input into all aspects of our operation, including any complaints they may have.
- We welcome complaints as an opportunity to enhance the quality of our education and care practices. We reflect on each complaint received, identifying any issues or areas of improvement for our setting.

**Key terms**

We provide definitions of our key terms that may not be used every day to help with ease of access:

<b>Term</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
ACECQA – Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality	The independent national authority that works with all regulatory authorities to administer the National Quality Framework, including the provision of guidance, resources and services to support sector to improve outcomes for children.
Approved Provider	Board – Southside Montessori Association
Responsible Person (must have written consent)	Approved provider/person with management/control, nominated supervisor, a person in day-to-day charge and is present at a centre-based setting at all times. An approved provider does not have to appoint a person in day-to-day charge if a nominated supervisor/s is to be responsible person.
Nominated Supervisor (must have written consent)	Person nominated by the Approved Provider.
Educational Leader (must have written offer/consent)	Person/persons appointed by the Approved Provider
NESA	NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales. NESA is responsible for accrediting registered non-government schools in school years for a period of time corresponding to period of registration of school
Registration renewal	Registration is a non-government school’s licence to operate. The main purpose of registration is to ensure that the requirements of the Education Act are being, or will be, met.
Complaint	Expression of dissatisfaction made to or about an organisation, related to its products, settings, staff or handling of complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.
Complaints handling	Effective resolution of a problem before it becomes worse and providing a remedy.
Investigation	A formal/systematic inquiry to establish facts about complaints by collecting, documenting, examining and evaluating evidence. An investigation is not an end in itself. Throughout an investigation, the investigator should keep an open mind about possible outcomes of the investigation, such as education, compliance action, or decision not to pursue a matter.

### **Links to other policies**

Related policies and procedures include:

- Injury, incident, trauma and illness
- Providing a child safe environment
- Staffing
- Interactions with children
- Enrolment and orientation
- Governance and management of the service
- Child Protection Policy (regarding reportable conduct)
- Unlawful discrimination, harassment or bullying
- Complaints and grievances
- Anti-bias
- Duty of care
- Codes of conduct

### **Induction and ongoing training**

Induction training at our setting consists of school operations overview, human resources, salary, time keeping and sick leave procedures, record keeping, safety and accident prevention, leave entitlements/provisions, personal conduct and safety, professional development and training and introduction to the workplace.

Induction training is carried out as needed. To ensure and assist managers, coordinators, educators and other staff to fulfil their roles effectively our settings provide a checklist of all areas to be covered and who is in charge of that area (Staff Induction Checklist)

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## Anti-bullying Procedures

### Preventing bullying

We believe that prevention strategies through education that involve the whole school community (students, staff and parents) are more likely to reduce bullying. Therefore, we recognise that we all share the responsibility to prevent bullying.

### Bullying warning signs or signs of bullying include:

- Not wanting to go to school
- Anger and tears
- Low self-esteem and depression
- Complaining of headaches and stomach aches

### Strategies to prevent bullying:

- Grace and courtesy lessons – giving children the vocabulary, actions and steps required for them to build awareness and responsiveness of those around them
- Montessori peace educational program which contains the children's study of peoples of the world, through to learning about the fundamental needs of humans. Emphasis is placed on the family of human kind and the interrelationship of all life. Montessori children begin to realise that they are not separate from the rest of the world but are an integral part of creating a harmonious world.
- Practical life curriculum develops the children's care of the person and their immediate environment.
- Cooperation is a key component to the Montessori philosophy. There is no focus on competition or focus on comparison by teachers on students.
- Regular whole school training of staff and routine staff development initiatives
- Explicit teaching of positive behaviours embedded within the curriculum addressing positive relationships, conflict resolution, resilience, bystander action etc.
- Regularly recognising and acknowledging students who demonstrate appropriate behaviours that promote and restore encouraging positive relationships within each class by the staff
- Open classrooms to attract and encourage parent's involvement and direct observation of classroom interactions
- Prompt and efficient supervision before school, at times of lunch and after school interactions, by staff members
- Multi-age classrooms where social interactions are the basis and are fundamental to student's relationships.

**Students are encouraged to:**

- Take some positive action to stop bullying if they observe an incident, to speak up and influence the behaviour of peers
- Report the bullying incident to a staff member as soon as possible
- Make it clear to their peers that bullying is not accepted

**Staff are expected to:**

- Take some positive action to stop the bullying when they observe an incident
- Pass on information about any reported or observed bullying behaviours to the principal or coordinator

**Parents are encouraged to:**

- Listen to their child and encourage their child to speak to their teacher
- Organise a meeting with their child's teacher to discuss their concerns

**Responding to bullying**

Bullying is viewed as a major breach of the school rules and behavioural expectations and therefore follow up action will align with our school policies that relate to quality relationships.

Any reports of bullying will be investigated, and appropriate action will be taken promptly. The response to bullying will include:

- where appropriate informing parents and involving them in any action and follow up
- guidance and other support for the recipient of the bullying (e.g., as appropriate re-skilling and re-teaching of strategies, resilience and social skills, counselling, conflict management skills, social networking etc)
- guidance and support for 'bystanders', 'supporters' and witnesses of the bullying (e.g., intervention strategies etc)
- age appropriate and consistent sanctions for the student who is the bully (e.g., counselling, parent contact)
- interventions and support for the student who bullied included in a Behaviour Guidance Plan (e.g., specific interventions developed to reduce the bullying behaviour, teaching of replacement behaviours, reinforcers etc).

**Investigating bullying/following up:**

In discerning appropriate responses to bullying, the collective welfare of the school community will be balanced with the individual needs of the student (refer to Child Protection Policy).

Counselling support for students involved in instances of bullying or suffering stress and anxiety can be sought locally.

See Complaints and Grievances Policy and Procedures for details and steps taken.

**Police involvement**

Contact for advice and/or reporting made by the principal at the point that the principal requires further information or considers a matter serious enough for reporting, and after consulting with the Board.

If required contact the police:  
Youth Liaison Officer  
193 Belmore Street  
RIVERWOOD 2210  
Phone: 02 9717 5399

## **Mobile Phones and Cyberbullying**

### Mobile Phones

Using mobile devices to bully and threaten other students or staff are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Students are reminded that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile device to menace, harass, or offend another person and almost all calls, text messages or emails can be traced.

### Cyberbullying

In 2015 the Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner was established which administers the cyberbullying complaints scheme under the *Enhancing Online Safety for Children Act 2015*.

The Act allows children suffering from serious cyberbullying to contact the Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner to have content removed if social media companies do not remove the offending content after it has been reported to them.

*"The complaints scheme commenced on 1 July 2015. Much of the time we anticipate we will work with social media services to take down material without the need to contact schools. We recognise that schools have long been the first point of contact by cyberbullying complaints so we hope the scheme will be of assistance to you, your staff, students and their families.*

*There will still be times when a complaint will best be resolved by the Office working with schools and the Act me to share information with you for that purpose. In those circumstances it is my intention to make direct contact your school and seek help to resolve the problem. I have attached an overview of the information we would provide in these circumstances.*

*The Office provides a range of resources to support schools in resolving cyberbullying and I invite you to visit [www.esafety.gov.au/principals](http://www.esafety.gov.au/principals) for further information. It may also be feasible for the Office to offer tailored workshops in cases where a school is experiencing systemic cyberbullying issues.*

*The Office has also absorbed the Australian Communications and Media Authority's Cybersmart program and associated educator materials, professional development resources and information for children and their families. These resources can be found on the Office's website [www.esafety.gov.au](http://www.esafety.gov.au). I encourage you to share this URL with your school community."*

## **Children's eSafety Commissioner**

### Resolving complaints with schools

#### What information we will give you?

When we notify a complaint to a school principal, we may provide information about:

- (a) The name of the student who is the target of the cyberbullying
- (b) A summary of the cyberbullying material
- (c) Suggested options to help resolve the complaint in accordance with your school policies
- (d) Action taken by us to date with respect to the complaint

We will also advise you of any conditions that apply to the use of the information supplied by us (see below).

#### What actions should schools take?

If we notify you about a cyberbullying complaint concerning students in your school, you can help resolve the complaint by undertaking to do the following (to the extent you are capable of doing so):

- (a) Acknowledge receipt of the notification within 24 hours to an email address provided by us
- (b) Inform us of the types of actions the school proposes to take and the time period for that action to be taken by email within five working days of the notification
- (c) Meet any conditions placed on information that has been disclosed
- (d) Inform us of the outcomes of the action you have taken within three weeks form receipt of the notification
- (e) Talk to us if you feel that you are unable to resolve the complaint and/or that you have a serious concern that the bullying will continue so we can discuss any further assistance we may be able to provide

#### Disclosure of information – conditions

When we disclose information to you, amongst other things we may ask you to:

1. Only discuss the information with the students involved and – with the student's consent – their parents or guardians
2. Only disclose the information to third parties with the consent of the affected students or as required by law
3. Comply with applicable privacy laws and policies in relation to the personal information disclose.