

Policies and Practices

The Policy Review Process

Vision statement and guiding principles

Prior to reviewing school behavioural expectations policies that encourage students' positive social behaviour and aim to reduce student bullying, it is important to consider how this policy links to the school's vision statement and guiding principles. The following checklist of ideas and examples were found by schools involved in the Telethon Kids Institute research to be useful when developing a vision statement and guiding principles.

Developing your whole-school community vision statement

Developing a vision statement for the safety and wellbeing of school community members accounts for their values, priorities and common understandings. The National Safe Schools Framework's over-arching vision is: *'All Australian schools are safe, supportive and respectful teaching and learning communities that promote student wellbeing.'*⁸

To develop a vision statement, the following questions may be helpful.

In five years' time:

What would it be like to be part of this school?

How would you feel as you walk into the school? What would the school look like as you move around?

What would people be saying about your school and its staff, parents and students?

Vision statements are most effective when they are worded positively. Outline what is to be achieved in simple terms that are easy to recall, and convey messages everyone can understand and relate to.

Caring and respect are the foundations of a school community that is free from bullying and harassment.

Identifying the guiding principles to achieve your vision

Guiding principles provide the foundations for the development of a comprehensive, school-wide effort to promote a safe, inclusive and supportive learning environment. The guiding principles define how the school plans to action the whole-school community vision. The *National Safe Schools Framework Guiding Principles 9* is a useful starting point.

Also consider how the school will achieve the whole-school community vision, for example:

- everyone has the right to feel safe and to be safe
- every member of our school community is treated with respect
- everyone feels part of the whole-school community and is included in its vision
- common goals are clearly articulated and prioritised
- everyone knows their role in the school and have the skills and knowledge to fulfil that role
- written documentation provides the school community with a consistent approach to addressing bullying strategies and is in place to prevent and respond effectively to situations which may impact upon the wellbeing of school community members

These ideas could be used in the formulation of principles to determine how the school could achieve its vision.

The following is an example of guiding principles developed and tested by schools involved in CHPRC research.

The school:

- ✓ affirms the right of all school community members to feel safe and supported in a school environment where diversity is valued and everyone is treated with respect, fairness and dignity
- ✓ ensures all community members understand their responsibility to ensure everyone feels physically and psychologically safe
- ✓ promotes a clear, well-defined, agreed understanding that bullying/cyberbullying is not acceptable behaviour
- ✓ promotes well-defined and agreed understanding of acceptable behaviour for all members of the school community, both online and offline
- ✓ establishes and endorses a shared responsibility between the whole-school community to prevent and report incidences of bullying/cyberbullying
- ✓ develops and consistently implements student behaviour policies which articulate programs and processes for promoting a safe and supportive environment

- ✓ encourages active participation of staff, students, families and the whole-school community to plan, implement and evaluate school policies, procedures and practices
- ✓ ensures that the roles and responsibilities of all members of the school community outlined in the policy are explicit and clearly understood, and the actions associated with these roles are consistently implemented
- ✓ recognises that leadership, which is committed to a shared vision through policy and practice, is essential for establishing a safe and supportive school environment
- ✓ focuses on evidence-based intervention and management strategies and incorporates procedures and programs which are restorative and solution focused
- ✓ implements universal, whole-school prevention and intervention programs including formal and informal activities in the curriculum, school ethos and environment, student support and family links, to ensure all members of the school community have common levels of awareness and consistent responses to bullying/cyberbullying
- ✓ provides professional learning and support for staff to implement the student behaviour policies
- ✓ regularly monitors and evaluates policies and programs so evidence-based practice supports decisions and guides improvement.

Permeate school vision through policy documents

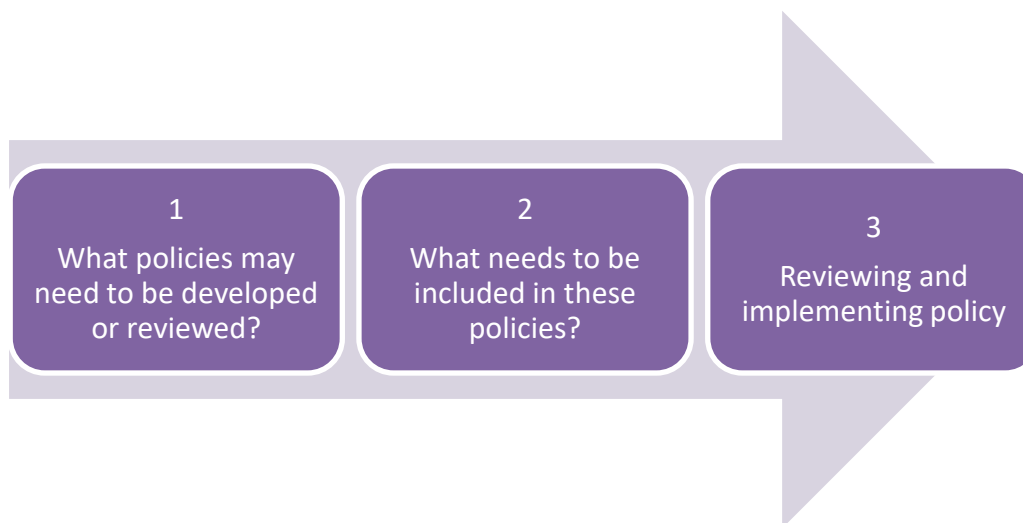


Figure 18: Policy review process

1. What policies may need to be developed or reviewed?

When considering the writing or reviewing of policy or policies that address the expected behaviours of members of the school community, it is important to consider the context for this policy relative to other related school policies. Policy documents are easier to understand and implement if the messages are consistent in all policy documents.

These policies may include:

- enrolment policy
- bullying and cyberbullying policy
- student expectations agreement
- expected behaviour policy
- excursion policy
- boarding house policies
- communication policies
- mobile phone policy
- ICT agreement
- staff guidelines
- parent expectations

2. What needs to be included in these policies?

Policies addressing the expected behaviours of school community members are closely linked to the school's overarching vision. Once the whole-school vision and guiding principles are established, the next stage is to develop policies to guide practice in the school.

The name given to the school policy outlining expected behaviours varies in each school. While these policy documents may specifically address bullying, it is critical for this document to be framed positively.

School community members are more likely to respond to a policy which expects they will behave well at all times rather than the reverse. The following section will assist in writing a school's expected behaviour policy. The policy may include:

Whole-school community agreement

Effective policies state a clear intention to take bullying involving any member of the school community very seriously and respond to it effectively. Students, teachers, parents, caregivers and members of the wider school community have a shared responsibility to create a safe and happy environment, free from all forms of bullying. A shared responsibility between all school community members to prevent bullying and actively work together to resolve incidents of bullying behaviour when they occur, is most effective when clearly articulated and described in a way that is understood by all members of the school community.

Policy rationale

A clear statement of purpose regarding bullying prevention and management is articulated in the policy. It should clearly but succinctly state what this policy is for and emphasise the school's positive goals.

Policy objectives

The objectives of an expected behaviour policy outlines the outcomes the school wishes to achieve by implementing this policy. When writing these, consider how the outcomes will be measured and whether they can be used in the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of policy implementation.

Whole-school common understandings about pro-social behaviour, bullying and cyberbullying

It is important for all members of the school community to share common understandings about what is bullying and what is not bullying. Clear definitions developed by the school community will help to clearly identify the types of social behaviours that are expected within the school and the types of behaviours that are not. These understandings will also enhance the quality and consistency of response to bullying by the school community. Common understandings typically included in a school policy include:

- definition of bullying and cyberbullying
- types and examples of bullying and cyberbullying
- information about actions that should be taken by the person being victimised and bystanders to the bullying and cyberbullying behaviour.

The following provides an example of what could be included in the school's behaviour expectations policy.

Definition of bullying and cyberbullying

Bullying is a repeated behaviour that may be physical, verbal, written and/or psychological; where there is intent to cause fear, distress or harm to another; conducted by a more powerful individual or group; against a less powerful individual or group of individuals who is/are unable to stop this from happening.

Power: A person who engages in bullying may display power through various means: physical size and strength, status within a peer group and recruitment within the peer group so as to exclude others.

Frequency: Bullying is not a random act—it is characterised by being repetitive. Students who are bullied not only have to endure the humiliation of the bullying, but many live in fear of its re-occurrence.

Intent to harm: People who engage in bullying and cyberbullying behaviour usually deny any intent to harm others and may not always be fully conscious of the harm they cause. Causing physical and emotional harm, however, is usually a deliberate act. It puts the person who is bullied in a position of oppression by the person who is engaging in the bullying.

Cyberbullying is when, over a period of time, an individual or a group use information and communication technologies to intentionally harm a person, who finds it hard to stop this bullying from continuing.

Figure 19: Definition of bullying and cyberbullying

Bystanders to bullying and cyberbullying

A bystander is someone who sees the bullying or knows that it is happening. Bystanders can be identified in the following categories:

- *Supporters* – support the person bullying, either by helping them to bully the other person or by encouraging the person bullying
- *Spectators* – gather or deliberately stay to watch the incident (sometimes from concern and sometimes for enjoyment)
- *Witnesses* – are aware that the incident is occurring (know about the bullying or see it from a distance)
- *Defenders* – support the person being bullied, either directly, or indirectly.

It is expected that all students in the school would take some positive action to support the person being bullied directly (for example, by inviting the person being bullied to join their group, or letting them know what happened was wrong) or indirectly (for example, by asking an adult for help).

Figure 20: Definition of a bystander

Types and examples of bullying and cyberbullying

Physical bullying- *repeatedly and deliberately*

- Bumping, pulling, shoving or tripping someone
- Throwing things at someone to hurt, annoy or upset them
- Hitting, punching or slapping, pinching, biting or scratching someone
- Touching someone who doesn't want to be touched

Verbal bullying- *repeatedly and deliberately*

- Calling people names or offensive nicknames
- Making racial comments about someone and their family
- Rude comments or jokes about someone's religion
- Teasing someone or being sarcastic in a way that is hurtful and upsetting
- Comments about the way someone may look or behave that are hurtful
- Nasty comments about someone's sexual orientation, perceived or otherwise

Threatening- *repeatedly and deliberately*

- Making someone feel afraid that they are going to be hurt
- Pressuring someone to do things they don't want to do
- Aggressive gestures or looks that make someone afraid
- Forcing students to do hurtful or embarrassing things
- Forcing someone to give you money, food or belongings

Property abuse- *repeatedly and deliberately*

- Damaging someone's belongings
- Stealing someone's money
- Taking things away from someone
- Taking or hiding someone's belongings

Emotional bullying- *repeatedly and deliberately*

- Ignoring someone or keeping them out of group conversations (known as exclusion)
- Leaving someone out by encouraging others not to have anything to do with them
- Spreading lies or stories about someone to try to get others to dislike someone
- Making things up to get someone into trouble
- Staking someone by continually following them or giving unwanted attention, e.g. staring

Cyberbullying- *repeatedly and deliberately*

- Ignoring someone or sending nasty messages through social media
- Sharing electronic images of people without their permission
- Sending harassing, abusive or offensive messages online, e.g. through social media or by phone
- Making silent or abusive phone calls
- Spreading rumours online, e.g. through social media or by phone

Figure 21: Types and examples of bullying and cyberbullying

Rights and responsibilities of the school community

Individual and shared responsibilities of students, families and school staff when addressing bullying behaviour are best understood when outlined in the school policy. For example, an acknowledgement can be made that it is the responsibility of the whole-school community to encourage positive social behaviour and discourage bullying.

Rights

A statement of the rights of students, staff and families with respect to bullying at school, including:

- a declaration of the rights of individuals in the whole-school community to be free of bullying
- a statement of rights of students, staff, families and the wider school community with respect to pro- social behaviour and types of bullying

Responsibilities

A statement of the shared responsibilities of staff, students and families to model positive social behaviours and to prevent and respond to reports and observations of bullying.

Examples

Schools have a responsibility to inform staff, students, families and the wider school community about the expected behaviour policy including:

- providing families and students with clear information about strategies that promote appropriate behaviour and the consequences for inappropriate behaviour
- providing students with strategies to respond assertively (not aggressively) to incidents of bullying behaviour, including responsibilities as bystanders to bullying situations
- communicating to families the important role they play in encouraging prosocial behaviours and resolving incidents of bullying behaviour involving their children
- outlining how the school leadership team will support, promote, enact, maintain and review the policy and procedures

Students, staff and families have a shared responsibility to:

- promote positive relationships that respect individual differences in the school community
- acknowledge their responsibility as role models of positive, caring and respectful behaviour
- be familiar with the school's expected behaviour policy and procedures
- be observant of signs and symptoms of bullying
- report incidents of bullying
- actively work together to resolve incidents of bullying behaviour when they occur
- support families to be open in their discussions about bullying in the school, being observant of signs of bullying, treating reports of bullying seriously, supporting their children in developing positive responses to incidents of bullying consistent with the

school's expectations, and support the school to effectively address bullying through the strategies outlined in the school's policy documents

- respond in an appropriate, timely and consistent manner to incidents of bullying by recording and following up incidents of bullying in accordance with the school's policy documents

Preventing and responding to bullying and cyberbullying behaviour

Preventing bullying and cyberbullying behaviour

The following checklist of bullying and cyberbullying prevention strategies can be consistently implemented through the school's behavioural expectations policies:

Whole-school ethos

- ✓ The school has an ethos that enables safety, care, support and respect for all school community members.

Student behaviour policy

- ✓ A whole-school behavioural expectations policy is developed and implemented to encourage the promotion of positive social behaviour and the prevention and establishment of effective responses to bullying and cyberbullying.

Staff professional learning

- ✓ All school staff members have a consistent understanding about bullying and cyberbullying and how to respond to situations.

Orientation

- ✓ The behavioural expectations policy is promoted during the orientation and provided to all new students, parents, staff, relief staff and other school community members, including externally contracted staff such as bus drivers, providers of extra-curricular activities.

Classroom

- ✓ The classroom environment and curriculum is used to establish common understandings about bullying and cyberbullying and how to respond effectively, while building positive social skills, online and offline, with students.

Peer support

- ✓ The peer group is encouraged to provide support for students being bullied and fosters positive peer group influence to discourage bullying and cyberbullying.

School physical environment

- ✓ The school provides a safe, well supervised school environment with opportunities for positive social interaction, both online and offline, which promote support and respect.

Family links

- ✓ Families are actively involved in the school and its response to bullying.

Responding to bullying and cyberbullying behaviour

The following seven-step response plan provides an outline of actions that need to be considered by schools once they identify students who have been involved in bullying.

Responding to a bullying incident	
R E C O N C I L E	<p>5. Selection of restorative technique Discuss restorative technique options with relevant staff, families and students. Determine which technique to use based on the school policy (see the Triage Guide (see below) to determine technique, e.g. the Shared Concern method, Co-LATE model, Motivational interviewing, Support Group method, Individual Behaviour Plans. Agree on the plan to be implemented.</p> <p><i>Proactive policies and practices toolkit 3.A, 3.B, 3.C and 3.G)</i></p>
	<p>6. Implement plan Implement the agreed plan of action. Reinforce positive behaviour. Ensure all vested parties (as determined in report phase) have a copy of the agreed plan and are working together to reinforce positive behaviours.</p>
	<p>7. Additional support Bullying incidences appear to resurface. Check in with all parties involved in the incident at regular predetermined interval. Offer additional support to those students who are experiencing difficulties adhering to the bounds of the agreed plan.</p>

Figure 22: Responding to a bullying incident

Triage for restorative responses to bullying behaviour

The Friendly Schools Plus triage response plan is a guide to help school staff determine under what circumstances one response to bullying behaviour may be chosen instead of another. In many

circumstances the decision will be based on the schools' values and policies related to student behaviour and the schools' capacity, and in particular, its resources and staff skills. If the school's culture and policies are more discipline based then it is more likely it will select a disciplinary model of response, whereas schools with a culture and policies related to caring for students may be more likely to choose a restorative response. The triage proposed below has assumed the use of a more caring approach—one that is more restorative. However, in severe or extreme bullying cases, legal or firm disciplinary action may be the necessary duty of care, no matter what the school's approach.

Try this first

The simplest of these techniques is called the Co-LATE model (See *Proactive policies and practices toolkit 3.G*). This technique can easily be used by all school staff to encourage students to feel safe and listened to by adults. The Co-LATE model was tested as part of the KIT+ Project conducted by the CHPRC and was found, qualitatively, to be very useful for encouraging students to talk with teachers and other adults about any issue, but particularly bullying. Co-LATE has value as an immediate response to students' who report bullying, prior to them engaging in more formal counselling.

What next?

While every student and situation is different in many ways, the following general triage guide may help school staff to decide which restorative method with which to begin. The diagram

has attempted to profile the students (both targets and perpetrators who may benefit the most from these techniques). Students may also require a behavioural expectations plan to support positive behaviour change. A small proportion of students, however, will require psychological treatment beyond the scope of school services, especially in schools with limited access to qualified counselling staff. These students need to be linked via their families to these services as soon as possible.

Possible restorative approaches for students who bully others	
Restorative approach	Triage checklist – perpetrator
<p>The Shared Concern method (Proactive policies and practices toolkit 3.A) Age: upper primary and lower secondary students For cases that are low to moderate severity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • willingness to change behaviour • groups of students identified as bullying others • feels remorse, capacity for empathy • also bullied by others (bully/victim) • multiple targets • agreeable to participating in a series of meetings
<p>Support Group method (Proactive policies and practices toolkit 3.B) Age: middle to upper primary students For cases that are low to low-moderate severity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • currently or previously a friend of target • girls bullying girls • target has other supportive friends • feels remorse, has capacity for empathy • influenced by group norms and normative expectations • agreeable to participating in a series of meetings
<p>Motivational interviewing (Proactive policies and practices toolkit 3.C) Age: all secondary students For cases that are low to moderate severity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • does not feel remorse, limited capacity for empathy • also bullied by others (bully/victim) • popular and/or high self-esteem • willing to talk about behaviour • multiple targets • agreeable to participating in a series of meetings

Figure 23: Possible restorative approaches to students who bully

Possible restorative approaches for students who are a target of bullying	
Counselling approach	Triage checklist – target
<p>The Shared Concern method (Proactive policies and practices toolkit 3.A) Age: upper primary and lower secondary students For cases that are low to moderate severity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provocative target • multiple perpetrators and/or bullied for extended length of time • also a perpetrator (bully/victim) • lower self-esteem • agreeable to participating in a series of meeting
<p>Support Group method (Proactive policies and practices toolkit 3.B) Age: middle to upper primary students For cases that are low to low-moderate severity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • currently or previously a friend of perpetrator • girls bullying girls • target has other supportive friends • agreeable to participating in a series of meetings
<p>Motivational interviewing (Proactive policies and practices toolkit 3.C) Age: all secondary students For cases that are low to moderate severity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high motivation to take action to stop bullying • willingness to help themselves • multiple perpetrators and/or bullied for extended length of time • provocative target • also a perpetrator (bully/victim) • agreeable to participating in a series of meetings

Figure 24: Possible restorative approaches to students who are targets of bullying

3. Reviewing and implementing policy

The policy review process will assist school communities to reflect on current practices and determine the need to review, refine or improve specific aspects of the policy. The process involves using data from a number of sources as shown in Figure 27, to objectively review the whole-school processes and environment. Some schools will already have effective policies and procedures in place to respond to bullying situations while other schools will still be planning and developing these areas.

It is important for schools to conduct a review involving their school community to effectively:

- understand the problems associated with bullying and cyberbullying
- develop common commitment to the reduction of bullying and cyberbullying
- motivate the community to support and promote positive behaviours
- develop a plan of action specific to the school’s needs

Whole-school community review of policy

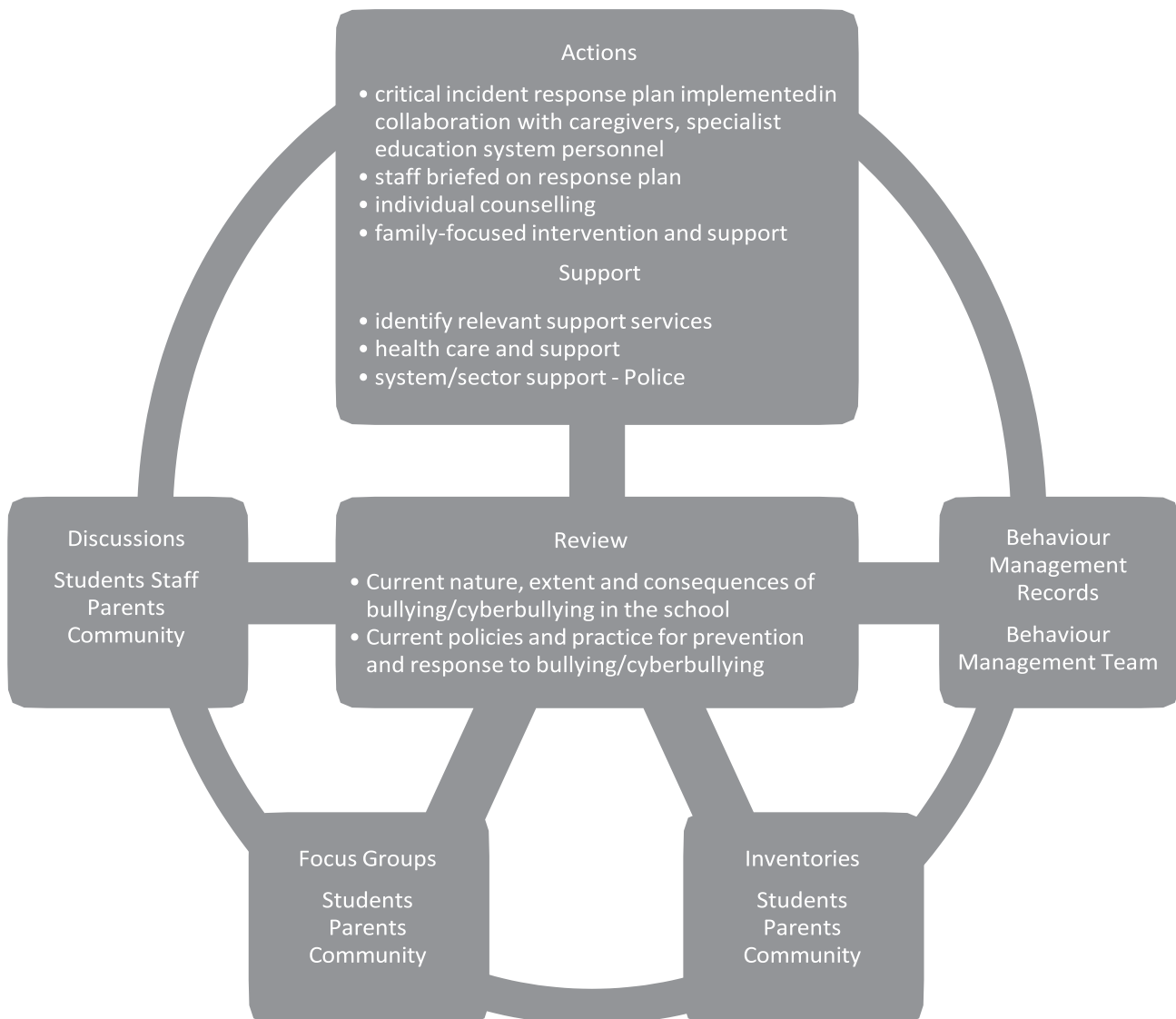


Figure 25: Whole-school community policy review

3.1 Gathering information

The development of the whole-school plan for addressing bullying and cyberbullying can be part of an ongoing, collaborative planning and review process, including specific methods of:

- monitoring the whole-school policy which includes input from students, families, staff, education officers and community agencies, and a timeline for review and modification, e.g. *annual review*.
- maintaining awareness raising activities to regularly reaffirm the school's philosophy on prosocial behaviour and bullying
- keeping action on bullying a high priority
- identifying resources (including staff and time) committed to support the recommendations from this process

Collecting and analysing appropriate data on the nature and extent of bullying and cyberbullying

A variety of methods of data collection will provide the most thorough understanding of the current school climate. It is useful to collect the following information from students, staff, families and the broader school community:

- the nature and extent of bullying
- the impact of bullying on students
- which students are most affected
- what is being done by the school to encourage positive social behaviour and reduce bullying
- the outcomes of the school's response to bullying
- satisfaction with the school's response to bullying

These data can be used to inform the review of the school policy to ensure it is understood, relevant to students' current behaviours and experiences.

Information can be gathered from general observations of the relationships and social interactions within the school community. However, the use of an anonymous questionnaire (especially online) can be a useful way to collect information about the bullying and cyberbullying experiences of students. The examples described are ways schools have collected data from students, parents and staff to help inform the development and review of the school's policies. For more information about questionnaire development, please see *Building capacity toolkit 1.A*

Questionnaires

Questionnaires can be excellent sources of data to inform planning decisions. If possible, it is a good idea to use a pre-existing survey that has been tested for validity (how accurately each question measures what it was trying to measure) and reliability (how consistently each question is perceived by the group of respondents). It is useful to repeat the survey each year to track social behaviours, both online and offline,

within the school community. Longitudinal data (data collected in consecutive years) will provide valuable trend information compared to cross-sectional data (one-off data collection).

Student behaviour records

Analysis of student behaviour records that describe the name of the students, the time, the location, the consequences and follow-up for each reported incident of bullying, will identify the kinds of behaviours and behavioural trends that may be occurring in the school. This information can be used to propose prevention and response strategies for the future, as well as provide insight into possible behaviours that may have been overlooked without data.

The types of student behaviour record information that can be analysed includes:

- Who are the students who repeatedly get into trouble?
- What is the nature of their bullying and cyberbullying behaviour?
- How serious were these behaviours?

- Is there a trend in the type of behaviours and year levels or gender involvement?
- When (time of day) do students most often bully?
- What months or days of the week are office referrals most common?
- Where does the bullying and cyberbullying behaviour most often take place?
- Did these behaviours result in referral to the case management team or administration team?
- Are there behaviours handled differently by some teachers (for example, handled in their classrooms), while other teachers use referrals to case management teams?
- Who refers students most often?
- Is there consistency in response across the school?
- Are there consequences that seem to reduce referrals? If so, what?
- Do these consequences work differently for different groups of students, (for example, boys and girls, younger or older?)
- Is there a sequence of responses that work best?
- How have bystanders been involved?

Focus groups

A focus group is a group interview involving approximately 8 to 12 participants that is used to collect qualitative information through group discussion of the issues. The one to two hour discussion is facilitated by a moderator who asks carefully constructed non-leading questions that encourage group discussion and interaction. Open-ended questions work best, for example: “What sort of consequences should be given to students who break the rules with regard to their use of technology?” Simple scenarios to accompany the questions are sometimes helpful. Parents are more likely to attend school focus groups when they are specifically invited (principal sends a letter of invitation), if the focus group is hosted as a breakfast or dinner meeting, and/or engaging students to encourage parents to attend.

Intercept interviews

Parents waiting for their children after school or at sports carnivals or events may be willing to provide a random selection of responses. Students can also be trained to conduct interviews with peers or adults, which may result in more candid and honest responses. It may be useful for interviewees to have a digital recorder so they don’t have to worry about taking notes while listening.

3.2 Review of current school policy and practice

Decide at a school level how often the policy will be reviewed to determine the success of elements of the policy documents. Some areas to consider when reviewing a policy are:

- Who will be involved in the policy review?
- What specific areas of the policy will be examined based on the information gathered (for example, types or rates of pro-social behaviour or bullying and cyberbullying among specific year groups, gender groups and so on)?
- Which areas in the policy may become priorities for the following year?
- How will the review recommendations be implemented?
- How will the review recommendations be communicated?

- Is the date for the next policy review written into the policy?

Strategies for consultation and collaboration

As school policies related to pro-social behaviour and bullying need to be owned by the school community and represent the beliefs and values of the school community, it is ideal for all members of the whole-school community to have an opportunity to contribute to its development or review. Students need to also be included in the feedback process. Each participant needs to feel respected and valued for their contribution to the policy development process. Indicate a realistic deadline for feedback and where possible, hold meetings to discuss the content. Schools that consult widely in the development of their behavioural policies achieve better policy compliance.

Feedback on the draft policy can be obtained by:

- making copies available at the front administration and advertising in the school newsletter and at assemblies that the policy is available to be reviewed
- distributing copies to all staff (teaching and non-teaching)
- presenting the draft policy at various meetings of different groups (staff meetings, student council, school council, P&C or P&F)
- approaching community reference groups or individuals and requesting their feedback
- attaching and distributing by mail or email a short questionnaire with the draft policy

Consider involving those groups that may have difficulty giving feedback, by personally contacting those families who may lack confidence approaching the school. For example, where possible have the policy translated for those families who speak English as a second language. Seek out those that may be opposed to what is being proposed and involve them directly in the process of review. Where possible, identify issues early in the review process that may be controversial and engage appropriate community members who can help to resolve these issues.

Incorporating the feedback

Collate the feedback from school community members and identify the main points and general themes of the responses. It may be necessary to investigate some of the responses further and gather more information or advice to address any concerns raised in the feedback.

Feedback collected from the school community could be incorporated into a second draft. Inform the school community that the policy is being rewritten to incorporate their feedback. Issues for further discussion may need to be raised at staff and parent meetings and assemblies. Circulate the second draft among the leadership or pastoral care team, students, staff and interested members or groups from the school community. There may be a number of iterations following this procedure, as new feedback is collated and incorporated into a workable document. This process works well for schools developing new mobile phone or social media use policies for the school, where there can be many vested and opposing interests

Have the policy endorsed

Endorsement of the policy allows the school community to confirm that they are aware of, and understand the policy. This process is more likely to lead to whole-school ownership and therefore implementation of, and compliance to the policy. Once the final draft policy is produced, the school's project team can determine who is most appropriate to endorse the policy. It is best to have a range of people from the school community to endorse the policy. Consider endorsement from the school board or council, school management team, student council, staff, and P&C or P&F groups.

Implementing the policy

Publishing the policy

After developing or reviewing the behaviour policies it is important it is published and distributed to all staff, students, parents and community members in a way that is easily accessed and understood. Most schools develop a detailed, formal policy as the official master document that is available to all school community members. It is worthwhile working with students to develop simplified versions in online or offline brochure or pamphlet format that present key information in an easy-to-read layout for other students and families. Students can help to present the policy in language they understand.

Disseminating the policy

Schools may consider officially launching the policy during a bullying or positive social behaviour awareness campaign, such as a Bullying Awareness week, or by contacting the local community newspaper to publish an article. Provide a date on which the policy will come into effect and make copies available in the library and school office. Consider putting abridged versions (perhaps developed by students) of the policy into the school diary, on the web portal and other places accessed by the school community.

The orientation of new staff, students and families is an ideal time to disseminate policies. This ensures everyone arriving in the school has a copy and an understanding of the school's position and action on key issues.

In summary, school dissemination strategies might include:

- sending key policies home with all students at the start of the school year
- including key policies in 'orientation packs' or information provided to all new students and their families
- including key policies on the school website and in student diaries and handbooks
- increasing the awareness of all staff (including library, canteen and all other support staff) by explaining key policies at the start of a new school year
- discussing students' rights and responsibilities at the first assembly of the year; with students, staff and families present if possible
- providing key policies to all relief staff and new staff who start during the year

While structured activities raise general awareness of the school's key policies, it is important that brief, regular reminders of the policy are incorporated into whole-

school activity. Strategies to raise awareness about policies related to encouraging pro-social behaviour and reducing bullying may include:

- discussing at assemblies school expectations regarding pro-social behaviours
- discussions and learning activities addressing bullying in classes
- developing a process for school administration staff to track incidents
- offering training to staff in strategies to encourage pro-social behaviours and reduce bullying
- enhancing the peer support or buddy system in the school
- reviewing how students are recognised and rewarded for supportive behaviour
- up-skilling teachers in positive uses of technology and other cyberbullying prevention strategies
- discussing with staff how the positive messages in the behavioural policies can be addressed in every learning area
- discussing the behavioural expectations for the whole-school community at parent nights

Policy into practice

Adopting any policy where changes to school operations are necessary is best accomplished in stages. Plans to implement the policy can be made public so the community has ample time to prepare for the upcoming changes.