Procedure for Addressing Bullying Behaviour

Mullumbimby High School

SCHOOL STATEMENT OF INTENT:

Mullumbimby High School promotes a positive school culture for learning and relationships, reflecting respect and responsibility.

- ✓ Bullying behaviour in any form is not acceptable at Mullumbimby High School.
- ✓ Everyone has the right to a safe and secure learning and working environment at Mullumbimby High School.

This Policy identifies areas of bullying behaviour and how Mullumbimby High School intends to respond to protect the rights, safety and health of school community members *(Student Welfare, Good Discipline and Effective Learning Student Welfare Policy DET 1996).*

This policy consists of three components:
1. Current research and knowledge related to bullying in the secondary school setting - definitions and rational.
2. Primary preventative strategies and school systems to encourage positive behaviour choices.
3. Responsible whole school procedures for responding to bullying behaviour.

1 (a) DEFINITION: Bullying is the systematic abuse of power.

Bullying is a form of harassment and persecution.

Bullying may be defined as a student being exposed, *repeatedly and over time*, *to intentional injury inflicted by one or more other students (Olweus 1993).*

Consequently, *bullying is not simply aggressive behaviour related to a relationship problem but repeated unfair behaviour in the context of an imbalance of power. (Rigby. K., 2010). Report: Enhancing Responses to Bullying in Queensland Schools*

In the school context, bullying is termed "peer abuse" which incorporates five key factors *(Olweus 1993; Rigby 2001,6,10):*
1. The victim is distressed by what is happening – devalues, isolates and frightens.
2. The harmful behaviour is intentional and designed to humiliate, hurt, intimidate or disempower the recipient.
3. Affects an individual's ability to achieve.
4. The behaviour constitutes a repeated pattern with the same person(s) to be targeted for mistreatment each time.
5. The recipient is unable to leave the situation easily or without permission.
6. A power imbalance exists between the person(s) carrying out the bullying and the victim.
7. Bullying has long term effects on those engaging in bullying behaviour, those who are the subjects of bullying behaviour and the onlookers or bystanders.

Addressing Bullying Behaviour must have a *whole school approach* as bullying can occur at any time across any school environment setting, throughout the school day: at school, travelling to and from school, in sporting teams and excursions.

1 (b) RATIONAL:

A core value of Mullumbimby High School is the value of positive relationships. Harassment and bullying behaviours do not encourage positive relationships.

Based on the knowledge that students who repeatedly engage in bullying are more likely to become antisocial and unpleasant adults and that bullying which continues without resolution creates cultures of tension, fear, guilt and cruelty (McGrath & Nobel, 2003), it is of paramount importance to acknowledge this social problem and develop effective and appropriate structures to prevent and resolve incidents.

Students who are being bullied may develop depressive symptoms or suicidal tendencies (Rigby 1996). Research shows student's behaviour, self-esteem and attitudes can be adversely affected by bullying. As a result of bullying:

- 51% of boys said they felt worse about themselves.
- 63% of girls said they felt worse about themselves.
- 6% of boys said they had stayed away from school.
- 9% of girls said they had stayed away from school.

Rigby, K. (1996) *Bullying Among Australian School Children*, Journal of Social Psychology

All students and members of the school community have the right to feel safe and supported by:

- A culture of immediate referral to intervene early, prevent ongoing incidents and psychological damage. A **"MUST TELL"** attitude needs to be reinforced.
- A trusted and valued support culture will be developed when incidents are dealt with swiftly and follow **an agreed procedure for intervention**.
- Consequences need to be appropriate and enforced.

Bullying Behaviours include:

TYPE	EXAMPLE
Physical – physical contact	hitting, pushing, tripping, spitting, punching, physical posturing. Threats of retaliation if students do not behave in certain ways or hand over food or money.
Verbal	Name calling, verbal insults and put downs.
Social	Spreading of rumours or stories, alienation, exclusion, persuading others to exclude someone (also known as "relational aggression"). Deliberate untruths to damage reputation.
Psychological	Non-verbal e.g. inappropriate gestures, finger signs, rolling eyes, continual staring, laughing at comments or mistakes), Practical jokes where the victim is humiliated, turning away, deliberate ignoring and leaving out of social events, changing seats.
Cyber bullying	Emails, chat sites, chat rooms, phone calls/messages, social networking to or about the targeted student.
Sexual	Unwanted touching or sexual remarks. Intrusions into a person's personal and private life. Unwanted touching of clothed or unclothed body part. Unwanted sexual verbal comments – privately or in public.

Students who are bullied may exhibit a number of disturbing symptoms that may impact on learning, general well being and mental health:

CONTEXT	SYMPTOM
Emotional	Personality changes, mood swings, sleep disturbances, insomnia, nightmares, depression, frequent tears, and eating disorders – over/under eating.
Physical	Signs of torn clothing, unexplained injury, psychosomatic symptoms (headaches, stomach aches, nausea), negative body language, nervous habits, signs of self injury.
Social	Loss of confidence, withdrawal from friends, decreased family relationships – parents and siblings.
Behavioural	Temper outbursts, mood swings, problematic behaviour, and negative change in personality, aggression.
School	Unwillingness to go to school, truanting, withdrawal from the peer group, requesting changes in transport or classes, decline in work standards or being on task.
Home	Unwillingness to leave the home, increased time or decreased time with social networking (phone, chat rooms...), bullying behaviour towards parents and/or siblings, demanding extra money, withdrawal from the family.
Community	Unwillingness to be *out* in the community or to participate in social events.

Victorian Department of Education, Employment and Training, (2002), *Addressing Bullying Behaviour – It's Our Responsibility.*

Issues & Concerns:

According to Rigby (2001), McGrath & Nobel (2003), worldwide studies indicate that bullying is present in all schools and without resolution creates cultures of tension, fear, guilt and cruelty.

Bullies are more likely to drop out of school early, abuse drugs and alcohol and engage in other misconduct or criminal activity.

Farrington, D.P. (1993), *Understanding and Preventing Bullying* Crime & Justice: *A Review of Research*

The following issues and concerns are involved with addressing bullying behaviour and require serious and ongoing consideration in the school environment:

- The intensity of the bullying has the capacity to escalate into physical, sexual and psychological assault if effective intervention is not accessed.
- The role and power of the bystander is not clear, differs and therefore is underutilised.
- How a victim perceives the abuse will directly affect their behaviour and consequently the outcome of future incidences.
- A perception that *bullying is an accepted behaviour that has a limit.*
- The peer or mob mentality that creates the dynamics for assigning power to different personalities.
- Technology and social networking has increased the capacity of the bullying and has created challenges with traceable evidence of the behaviour and incidences.
- The victims' perception and ability to manage bullying behaviour appears to be on a continuum of assertiveness to self-harm and suicide.
- The offenders' perception of the bullying is on a continuum of humour to assault causing permanent injury or death.

2. PRIMARY PREVENTATIVE STRATEGIES AND SCHOOL SYSTEMS TO ENCOURAGE POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR CHOICES

Australian research recognises bullying as a risk factor associated with antisocial and criminal behaviour (National Crime prevention 1999).

Early intervention has been advocated as the most appropriate way to break this antisocial and criminal behaviour cycle (Tremblay & Craig 1995).

At Mullumbimby High School the following programs are in place to encourage positive behaviour choices, and to assist students if confronted with conflict or bullying behaviour.

Strategies to support students:

- Mullumbimby High School's web link to *On-line reporting of Bullying Behaviour.*
- Transition to High School 6-7 program. Student Information Booklet.
- Pamphlet: "Addressing Bullying Behaviour."
- Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) – school rules and behaviour expectations across the whole school environment. Social Skills lessons.
- "The Critical 1st Lesson" – Process for the 1st lesson of each class Y7-12.
- Year 7 School Camp Term 1.
- Year 7 "No Bullies Day" Term 2
- Years 7, 8, 9,10 Motivation Media – targeting adolescent social skills and pro-social behaviour.
- Cyber Safe workshops – Police Liaison Officer
- Young Women's and Men" groups
- Years 7-10 Girls the "Chrysalis" Program
- The Real Game
- Mullumbimby High School Student Welfare, Discipline and Learning Policy.
- Mullumbimby High School Addressing Bullying Behaviour Policy and Flow Chart.
- PD Health PE Syllabus and cross curriculum links with English.
- Rock and Water program Y7-10.
- Student Leadership training.
- SRC
- Student Services personnel:
  - Principal
  - Deputy Principals
  - Head Teacher Student Welfare
  - School Counsellors
  - Teacher Girls Supervisor
  - Support Teacher Behaviour
  - Home School Liaison Officer
  - Community Liaison Officer

- Referral and access to outside agencies for additional support e.g. Community Health and Byron Youth Services.

Strategies to support parents:
- Mullumbimby High School's web link to *On-line reporting of Bullying Behaviour.*
- Mullumbimby High School Student Welfare, Discipline and Learning Policy.
- Mullumbimby High School Addressing Bullying Behaviour Policy and Flow Chart.
- Parent information – Newsletters & DET Anti-bullying pamphlets.
- Parent Teacher Nights.
- Parent interviews.
- Student Services personnel support:
  - Principal
  - Deputy Principals
  - Head Teacher Student Welfare
  - School Counsellors
  - Teacher Girls Supervisor
  - Support Teacher Behaviour
  - Home School Liaison Officer
  - Community Liaison Officer

- Referral and access to outside agencies for additional support e.g. Community Health, Byron Youth Services, Mullumbimby Neighbourhood Centre.
- Early identification of students experiencing difficulty with antisocial behaviour.

Strategies to support staff: Staff must act (do something), in regards to a bullying complaint.
- Mullumbimby High School Student Welfare, Discipline and Learning Policy.
- Mullumbimby High School Addressing Bullying Behaviour Policy.
- Addressing Bullying Behaviour Staff - Staff training.
- Staff training (SDD) – "Who needs to do something?"
- Student Welfare Meetings (weekly)
- PBL Meetings(three weeks)

3. RESPONSIBLE WHOLE SCHOOL PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING TO BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

Handling of bullying complaints makes it clear to the offender that bullying behaviour is not tolerated within the school community while providing respectful support for the individuals involved. There are five principles that underpin this approach:
1. Students that bully can change their behaviour.
2. Bullying behaviour is the problem, not the person.
3. Harm caused must be acknowledged.
4. Reparation is essential.
5. Bullies and the bullied require support and care.

Morrison, B (2002), Bullying In Schools: *A restorative Justice Approach*, Australian Institute of Criminology.

Bullying behaviour needs to be substantiated.

It is essential to differentiate between *bullying behaviour and relationship problems* when responding to a reported incident of bullying.

Bullying is any action which makes another person feel threatened. It involves the inappropriate use of power by one or more persons over another less powerful person or group. *Bullying is usually an act that is repeated over time. It is a planned and persistent attempt to cause distress.*

Once bullying behaviour has been substantiated, the following processes explain the procedural responsibilities of staff for addressing bullying behaviour at Mullumbimby High School.

Three procedures follow:
1. Overview of *Reporting and Addressing Bullying Behaviour* flow chart plus student and parent information.
2. Staff responsibility for dealing with reports of bullying.
3. Staff responsibility for dealing with reports of continuing bullying behaviour.

REPORTING & ADDRESSING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR
FLOW CHART

If **YOU** are bullied	If you know **SOMEONE** who is being bullied	If your **CHILD/STUDENT** is being bullied

YOU MUST TELL SOMEONE

Parent/Carer Friend/Teacher	The Principal Year Adviser Teacher School Counsellors Deputy Principal Head Teacher Welfare	Your Child/Student's Year Adviser Deputy Principal HT Welfare School Counsellor

WHAT WILL THEY DO?
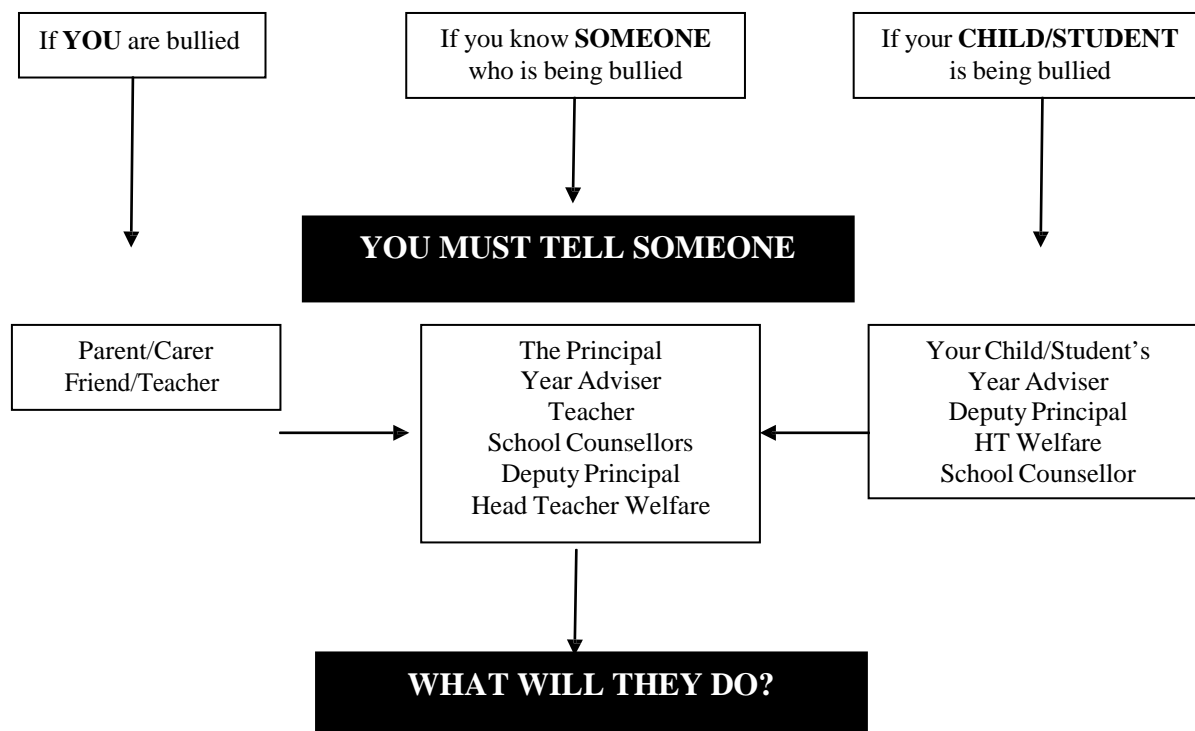
- *Interview ALL students involved in the incident – fairly.*
- *Substantiate if the incident is bullying behaviour.*
- *Discuss and decide the appropriate ACTION.*
- *Resolve the situation in an appropriate and respectful manner.*
- *Decide on the appropriate consequences.*
- *Contact parents - letters.*
- *Record the incident on RISC.*

The appropriate ACTION may include:

- *Mediation*
- *Agreement to cease bullying*
- *Letter to parents*
- *School Counsellor's support*
- *Offer of Restorative Justice*
- *Police Liaison Officer's support*
- *Principal's intervention – short or long suspension*
- *Appropriate other.*

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE BULLIED: In class

1. If you are being bullied in class report it to your class teacher. Your teacher will decide on the best place for you to be in the class. You will be asked to fill in a *Bullying Incident Report*.

2. The student and the Teacher will discuss the *Bullying Incident Report*.

3. If the Teacher substantiates that bullying probably happened they will refer the student and the *Bullying Incident Report* to the Subject Head Teacher.

4. The Subject Head Teacher will interview the student alleged to be engaging in bullying behaviour using the *Interview Sheet Bullying Behaviour*. The Subject Head Teacher will contact your Year Adviser.

5. If bullying is further substantiated the Year Adviser will assist the student who has been engaging in bullying behaviour to sign a *Student Agreement to Cease Bullying Behaviour*.

6. If bullying is not substantiated the issue will be dealt with according to *Mullumbimby High School's Student Discipline and Welfare Policy*.

7. The student engaged in bullying behaviour will be informed of the following:
   - Bullying is unacceptable and must stop immediately.
   - A record will be made on their personal file (RISC).
   - A letter will be sent home to inform their parents *(Bullying Warning Letter)*.
   - Further incidents will be handled by the Deputy Principal and may result in suspension from school.
   - A letter will be sent home to the *bullied* student – *Bullying Incident Notification Letter*.
   - The Subject Head Teacher will interview the student (in one week) who has engaged in bullying behaviour to discuss their plan and the agreement to cease bullying.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE BULLIED: In the playground

1. If you are being bullied in the playground report the incident to the teacher on duty or your Year Adviser. You will be asked to complete a *Bullying Incident Report*.

2. The student and the teacher will discuss the *Bullying Incident Report*.

3. If the teacher substantiates that bullying has probably occurred they will refer the student and the *Bullying Incident Report* to the Head Teacher Student Welfare.

4. The Head Teacher Student Welfare will interview the student alleged to be engaging in bullying behaviour using the *Interview Sheet Bullying Behaviour*.

5. If the bullying is substantiated the Head Teacher Student Welfare will assist the student who has been engaging in bullying behaviour to sign a *Student Agreement to Cease Bullying Behaviour*.

6. If bullying is not substantiated the issue will be dealt with according to *Mullumbimby High School's Student Discipline and Welfare Policy*.

7. The student engaged in bullying behaviour will be informed of the following:
   - Bullying is unacceptable and must stop immediately.
   - A record will be made on their personal file (RISC).
   - A letter will be sent home to inform their parents, by the Head Teacher Student Welfare *(Bullying Warning Letter)*.
   - Further incidents will be handled by the Deputy Principal and may result in suspension from school.
   - A letter will be sent home to the *bullied* student – *Bullying Incident Notification Letter*.
   - The Head Teacher Student Welfare will interview the student (in one week) who has engaged in bullying behaviour to discuss their plan and the agreement to cease bullying.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE BULLIED: Cyber bullying

I you think you have been cyber bullied **DO NOT DELETE any cyber bullying messages** until it has been completely investigated. Cyber bullying is a criminal offense and may require Police intervention.
Cyber bullies break the law!

1. If you are bullied by text or online report it to the Head Teacher Student Welfare or your Year Adviser. They will ask you to complete a *Bullying Incident Report*. **Save or print the evidence.**

2. The student and the Head Teacher Student Welfare will discuss the *Bullying Incident Report*. You will be asked to provide copies of messages sent and received.

3. If bullying is not substantiated the issue will be dealt with according to *Mullumbimby High School's Student Discipline and Welfare Policy*.

4. If the Head Teacher Student Welfare substantiates that Cyber bullying has probably happened they will refer the student and the *Bullying Incident Report* to the Deputy Principal.

5. The Deputy Principal will interview the student alleged to be engaging in Cyber bullying behaviour using the *Bullying Incident Report*.

6. The student will then be asked to complete a *Student Agreement to Cease Bullying Behaviour*.

7. The Principal will be informed and the Police may be contacted for further investigation – as required. This will be the Principal's decision.

8. If Cyber bullying has been substantiated this may include an immediate suspension from school (short or long) – as deemed appropriate by the Principal and Deputy Principal.

9. The student engaged in bullying behaviour will be informed of the following:
   - Bullying is unacceptable and must stop immediately.
   - Where DET devices have been used for Cyber bullying, students must lose internet and computer network access privileges or have DET laptops confiscated for a period of time.
   - A record will be made on their personal file (RISC).
   - A letter/s will be sent home to inform their parents, by the Deputy Principal *(Bullying Warning Letter and Suspension Letter)*.
   - Further incidents will be handled by the Deputy Principal or Principal and may result in suspension from school.
   - A letter will be sent home to the *bullied* student – *Bullying Incident Notification Letter*. .
   - The Deputy Principal will interview the student (in one week) who has engaged in bullying behaviour to discuss their plan and the agreement to cease bullying.

WHAT TO DO IF BULLYING DOES NOT STOP!

1. Report the repeated bullying behaviour to the Deputy Principal.

2. The Deputy Principal will ask you to complete a *Bullying Incident Report*.

3. The Deputy Principal will interview the alleged bully using the *Interview Sheet Bullying Behaviour*.

4. The Deputy Principal will interview the student making the bullying complaint.

5. Serious consequences for the bullying behaviour and intervention will be activated.

Access the Mullumbimby High School's web site and then access the **On-line Bullying Behaviour Report** link.

Mullumbimby High School
On-line Bullying Report

Thank you for reporting bullying! We WILL do something!

✓ This report is confidential.
✓ A Deputy Principal will contact you immediately on receiving this report.
✓ The following information will help us to attend to this report immediately:

Are you:

1. A student who needs to report a bullying incident?	☐ Yes	☐ No
2. A student who knows another student who is being bullied?	☐ Yes	☐ No
3. A parent who is concerned that their child/student is being bullied?	☐ Yes	☐ No

4. Other (please explain) _____

Briefly explain the bullying problem.

Your name (optional): _____ **Year /Grade :** _____

Email: _____ **Phone:** _____

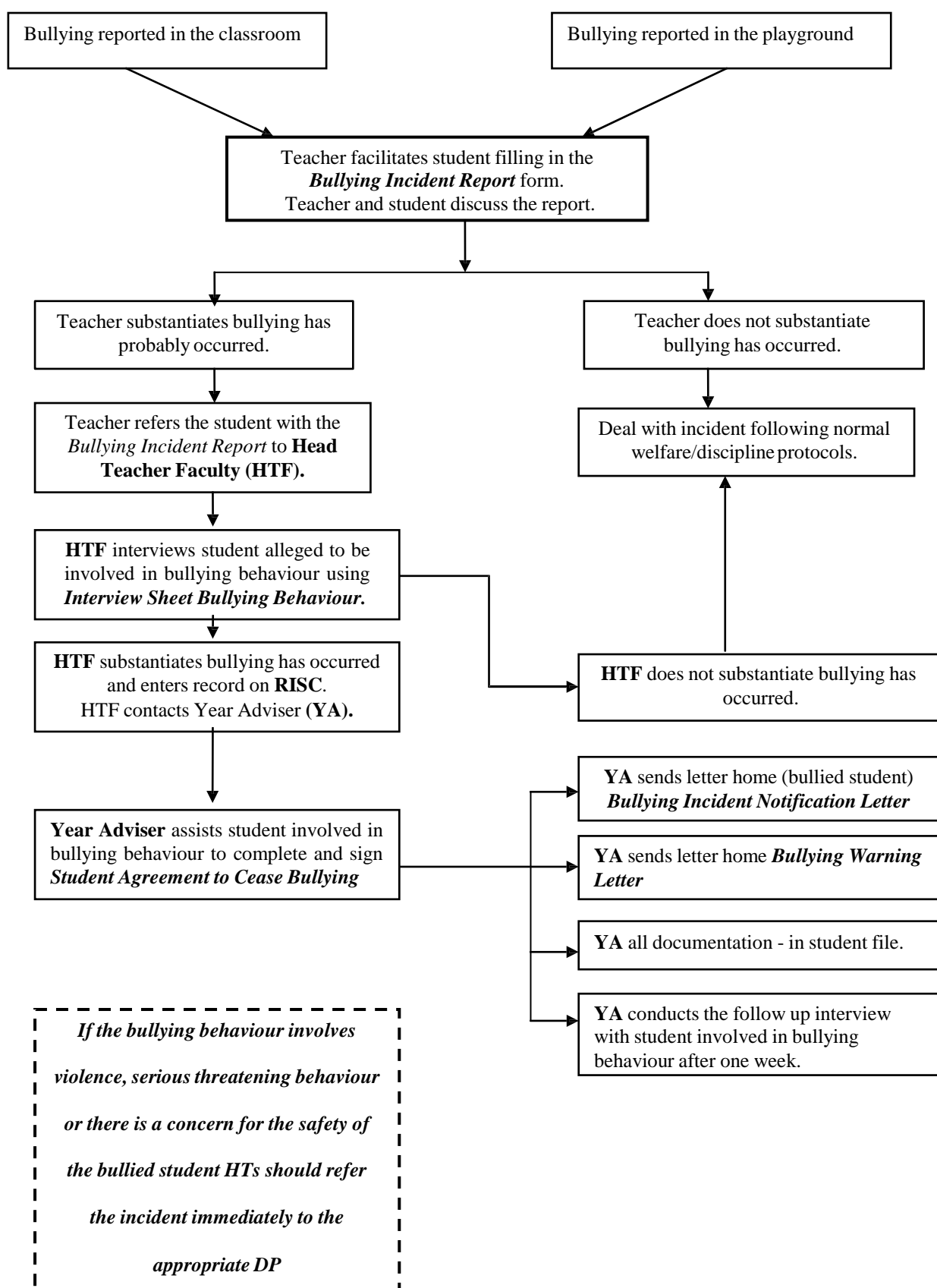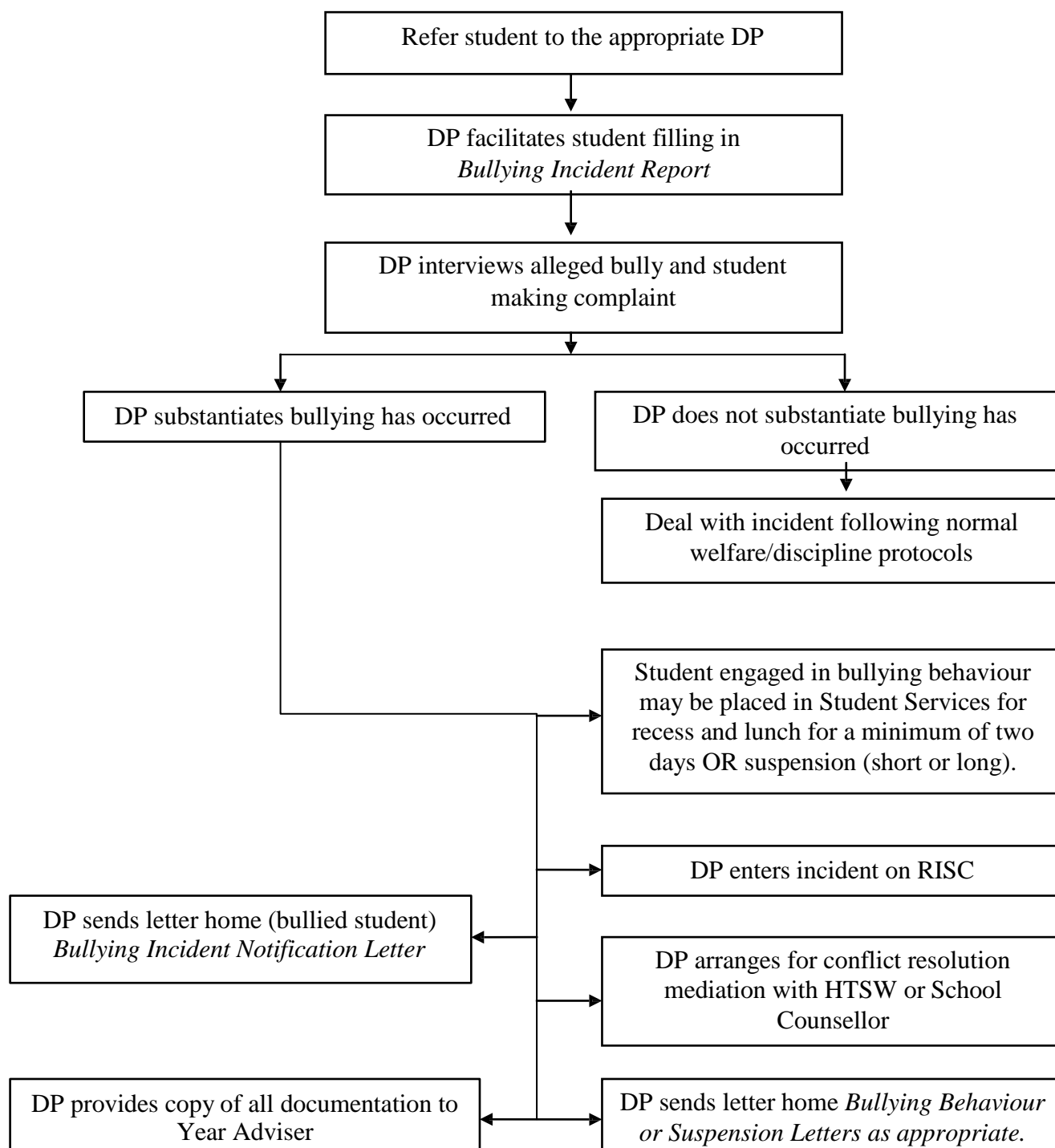### By submitting this information I agree that this information is true

This form can now be submitted to the deputy principal in one of three ways
1) By email using the "Submit by Email" button below
2) By saving this form for your records and sending as an attachment via email to cassandra.morrison@det.nsw.edu.au
3) By printing this form and handing it in to the school.

STAFF RESPONSIBILITY FOR DEALING WITH REPORTS OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

Bullying reported in the classroom

Bullying reported in the playground

Teacher facilitates student filling in the **Bullying Incident Report** form.
Teacher and student discuss the report.

Teacher substantiates bullying has probably occurred.

Teacher does not substantiate bullying has occurred.

Teacher refers the student with the *Bullying Incident Report* to **Head Teacher Faculty (HTF).**

Deal with incident following normal welfare/discipline protocols.

HTF interviews student alleged to be involved in bullying behaviour using *Interview Sheet Bullying Behaviour.*

HTF substantiates bullying has occurred and enters record on **RISC**.
HTF contacts Year Adviser **(YA).**

HTF does not substantiate bullying has occurred.

Year Adviser assists student involved in bullying behaviour to complete and sign *Student Agreement to Cease Bullying*

YA sends letter home (bullied student) *Bullying Incident Notification Letter*

YA sends letter home *Bullying Warning Letter*

YA all documentation - in student file.

YA conducts the follow up interview with student involved in bullying behaviour after one week.

If the bullying behaviour involves violence, serious threatening behaviour or there is a concern for the safety of the bullied student HTs should refer the incident immediately to the appropriate DP

STAFF RESPONSIBILITY FOR DEALING WITH REPORTS OF <u>CONTINUED OR SERIOUS (GROSS)</u> BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

Refer student to the appropriate DP

DP facilitates student filling in
Bullying Incident Report

DP interviews alleged bully and student making complaint

DP substantiates bullying has occurred

DP does not substantiate bullying has occurred

Deal with incident following normal welfare/discipline protocols

Student engaged in bullying behaviour may be placed in Student Services for recess and lunch for a minimum of two days OR suspension (short or long).

DP enters incident on RISC

DP sends letter home (bullied student) *Bullying Incident Notification Letter*

DP arranges for conflict resolution mediation with HTSW or School Counsellor

DP provides copy of all documentation to Year Adviser

DP sends letter home *Bullying Behaviour or Suspension Letters as appropriate.*

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