



# Bullying Policy

## **Definition**

The definition for the purpose of this policy is... *Bullying is when a person is intentionally exposed regularly and over time to negative or harmful actions by one or more other people. Bullies are people who intimidate, exclude, threaten and/or hurt others repeatedly. Bullying is a clear form of harassment and may be;*

- *Emotional-being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (eg. hiding books, threatening gestures)*
- *Physical- pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence*
- *Racist- racial taunts, graffiti, gestures*
- *Verbal- name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing*
- *Sexual- unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comment*
- *Homophobic/transphobic- name calling/exclusion etc based on gender identity and/or sexual preference*
- *Cyber bullying- misuse, mobile threats by messaging or texts, misuse of a camera or video facilities.*

*Bullying may occur in person or through mediums such as mobile phones and the Internet.*

**What Bullying is not:** Many inappropriate behaviours are not examples of bullying even though they are unpleasant. Examples of this include single episode mutual disagreements or acts of random aggression or intimidation.

## **Purpose:**

The school will provide a positive culture where bullying is not accepted, and in so doing, all will have the right to expect respect from others, the right to learn or to teach, and the right to feel safe and secure in their school environment. All students should be safe from bullying and feel included at school. Students who don't feel safe or included at school cannot learn effectively.

## **Aim:**

- To reinforce within the school community what bullying is, and the fact that it is unacceptable
- Everyone within the school community to be alert to signs and evidence of bullying and to have a responsibility to report it to staff whether as observer or victim
- To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up appropriately and that support is given to both victims and perpetrators
- To seek parental and peer-group support and co-operation at all times

## **Implementation:**

- Parents, teachers, students and the community will be aware of the school's position on bullying
- Our school will combat bullying by providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment based on promoting inclusion and celebrate diversity
- The school will adopt a four-phase approach to bullying

### **A. Primary Prevention**

- Professional development for staff relating to bullying and harassment (including homophobic and transphobic bullying and the like) and proven counter measures
- Each classroom teacher to clarify with students the types of bullying, as well as the consequences and impact of bullying

- Community awareness and input relating to bullying, its characteristics and the school's programs and response.
- The provision of programs that promote inclusiveness, resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving will form an integral part of our curriculum.
- 'Respectful Relationships' curriculum implemented across the school
- Electives and structured activities available to students at lunch breaks
- Anti-bullying messages and posters will be displayed around the school
- A 'buddies' program will be implemented between junior and senior classes.
- Teachers will be trained in cybersafety. Cybersafety awareness programs will be provided for students and parents and cybersafety will form part of each child's curriculum. Cybersafety information will regularly be included in the newsletter

## **B. Early Intervention**

- The principal will remind staff at the commencement of each year to report any bullying issues that affect them, other staff members or their students.
- On a regular basis, classroom teachers are to remind students to report incidents involving themselves or others, and that reporting is not dobbing
- Reports can be made directly to a teacher, the school wellbeing officer, principal or through the 'Speak Out' link on the school website (on the Student Links page)
- The school will reinforce with children the importance of appropriately reporting incidents of inappropriate behaviour involving themselves or others, and the imperative that staff respond appropriately and proportionally to each allegation consistent with the school's Student Engagement Policy and Child Safe Code of Conduct, including the proper reporting and recording of the incident on our School Wide Positive Behaviour Handbook and policy
- Parents encouraged to contact their child's teacher if they become aware of a problem
- Public recognition and reward for positive behaviour and resolution of problems

## **C. Intervention**

- Serious incidents and/or incidents of bullying or unacceptable behaviour must be reported, responded to by staff and documented.
- Serious incidents are those that include physical assault, sexual assault, criminal activity involving theft or serious damage of property, serious threats or racial, homophobic/transphobic bullying etc.
- All such incidents or allegations will be properly investigated and documented. Depending upon the nature of each incident, they may be also be reported to and investigated by police, reported to the DET's Student Critical Incident Advisory Unit, and/or reported to the Department's Emergency and Security Management Unit.
- The school may contact support professionals such as Welfare officers, Welfare coordinators or Counsellors and/or Student Support Officers for assistance and support.
- Once identified, each bully, victim and witness will be spoken with and offered counselling and support.
- Students and staff identified by others as bullies will be informed of allegations.
- All serious incidents must be brought to the attention of the principal.
- If student bullying persists, parents will be contacted and consequences implemented consistent with the school's Student Engagement Policy.
- A management strategy for all parties will be developed in consultation with the students and parents involved.
- Consequences for students will be individually based and may involve:-
  - removal to another class
  - exclusion from yard
  - withdrawal of privileges
  - formal apology
  - behaviour contract
  - school suspension

- school expulsion
- The severity of the incident, level of remorse and previous behavioural history of the bully will affect severity of discipline.
- If staff bullying persists, the principal will commence formal disciplinary action.
- Consequences for staff will be individually based and may involve:-
  - counselling
  - a period of monitoring
  - a formal support group
  - disciplinary actions
- Parents or community members who bully or harass or abuse staff or other students will be provided with official warnings, and if necessary referred to the police, and/or have Trespass restrictions placed upon them by the principal consistent with the Summary Offences Act.

#### **D. Post Violation**

- It is important that appropriate strategies are put in place after the incident has been resolved for all students involved. Appropriate strategies may include:-
  - conciliation meetings between all parties
  - ongoing monitoring of students involved.
  - identification of an agreed key contact staff member for each student involved.
  - follow-up meetings regarding each child's management strategy.
  - ongoing communication with parents.
  - counselling from appropriate agencies of support officers etc for both parties.
  - reinforcement of positive behaviours and appropriate behaviour strategies.

#### **Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed as part of our 3 year cycle by school council. It will be brought to the attention of all staff in the first few weeks of each term

The policy was ratified by School Council on 23/4/2017

#### **References:**

Kidhelpline: 1800 551800

#### **Safe Schools:**

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/Pages/safe-schools-coalition.aspx>

