

BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

Our school is committed to providing a safe and caring environment and culture which enables positive relationships to be formed amongst all students and staff and which encourages self-esteem, cooperation, personal growth and a positive attitude to learning and teaching. A clear policy on bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment will inform the community that **bullying and harassment in any of its forms will not be tolerated**. The Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedures should be read in conjunction with Student Management Policy and Procedures and the Special Activities Policy.

Aims:

- To reinforce within the school community that no form of bullying is acceptable.
- Everyone within the school community is alerted to signs and evidence of bullying and has a responsibility to report it to staff whether as observer or victim.
- To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up and that support is given to both victim and perpetrator.
- To seek parental and peer-group support and co-operation at all times.

What are bullying, cyber bullying and harassment?

Bullying is repeated oppression, physical or psychological, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group.

Cyber-bullying consists of covert, psychological bullying, conveyed through the electronic mediums such as mobile phones, blogs and websites, on-line chat rooms, 'MUD' rooms (multi-user domains where individuals take on different characters) and Xangas (on-line personal profiles where some adolescents create lists of people they do not like). It is verbal (over the telephone or mobile phone), or written (flaming, threats, racial, sexual or homophobic harassment) using the various mediums available.

Harassment is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome or offensive to a person.

Our school will actively promote a positive and welcoming personal environment for all members of the school community. When people are bullied or harassed some effects might be anger, embarrassment, fear and humiliation, loss of self-confidence and reduced function and potential. Bullying and harassment will be addressed, including regularly at assemblies, individual differences will be respected and students and staff will be enabled and supported in their pursuit of learning and teaching.

GUIDELINES

A school-wide approach will be taken to deal with bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment in a consistent and systematic way.

All new students and staff will be informed of the anti-harassment policy and practices at the commencement of their time at the school.

All complaints of harassment will be heard in confidence and taken seriously.

Our school will organise preventative curriculum programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.

Staff programs will occur periodically to keep staff informed of current issues/strategies for dealing with these issues.

There will be disciplinary consequences, covering a range of strategies, for those in breach of the Anti-Bullying (including cyber bullying) and Anti-Harassment Policy, guidelines and procedures (see Appendix A).

PROGRAM

Constructive strategies to deal with harassment will include: education in coping strategies; assertiveness training; problem solving and social skills; counselling and behaviour modification. These strategies will be employed in preference to punitive sanctions and negative consequences.

The Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment Policy of the school will be widely promoted to students, staff, parents/carers and the local community.

A summary of the policy will be included in the Student Enrolment Package while new staff will receive extensive documentation as part of the school's induction process.

The Principal, Assistant Principal, Primary Welfare Officer and the teachers will work together to ensure the safety of all school members in situations of bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment, by thoroughly investigating all complaints while respecting the need for confidentiality, notifying parents/carers and planning interventions.

If a teacher feels a student is at serious and imminent risk from bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment then it is their professional duty to pass on the information to an appropriate person in order to ensure appropriate support for the student. It is important that teachers document fully their interaction with the student and to verify the actions taken.

Student programs will be organized to raise student awareness about bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment, to provide a forum for discussion of matters and to aid development of attitudes. Some matters will be dealt with formally in the curriculum and in peer support programs, leadership programs, extra-curricular programs and occasional activities run by outside experts and workers. The curriculum will include anti-bullying messages and strategies in line with current DET materials.

Professional development will be provided for staff relating to bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment and proven strategies to address these issues in classrooms will be shared with all staff. Communication through newsletters, assemblies and regular class discussions with teachers will occur.

The school will provide specialist resources such as books, videos, kits and off site in-service activities to assist staff in responding appropriately to bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment issues.

Disciplinary consequences for bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment will comply with the school's Student Management Policy and Procedures. The principal or their nominee will provide disciplinary consequences including suspension in accordance with Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DET) guidelines.

LINKS AND APPENDICES (including processes related to this policy)

Links which are connected with this policy are:

Bully Stoppers <http://www.schoolatoz.nsw.edu.au/wellbeing/behaviour/about-bullying>

- DET's Student Engagement Policy Guidelines
 - https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/Pages/policy_requirements.aspx
- DET's Safe Schools
 - <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/safeschools.aspx>
 - Bully Stoppers <http://www.schoolatoz.nsw.edu.au/wellbeing/behaviour/about-bullying>
- The school's Internet Use Policy (re cyber-bullying)
- DET's Schools, Students and Parents
 - <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/advice-school-students-parents.aspx>

Appendices which are connected with this policy are:

- Appendix A: Anti-Bullying (including cyber-bullying) and Anti-Harassment Procedures
- Appendix B: Melton West Bullying Prevention Matrix 2018

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed annually or more often if necessary due to changes in regulations or circumstances.

Date Reviewed: (School Council Endorsement)	September 10 th 2018
Date of Last Review	September 10 th 2018
Next Review Due Date	September 2019
Responsible for Review	Assistant Principal
Frequency of Review	Annually



Appendix A

Anti-Bullying (including cyber-bullying) and Anti-Harassment Procedures

What are Bullying, Cyber Bullying and Harassment?

Bullying

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, who have more power at the time, deliberately upset or hurt another person, their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion.

Types of Bullying

There are three broad categories of bullying:

1. **Direct physical bullying** – e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.
2. **Direct verbal bullying** – e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.
3. **Indirect bullying** – this form of bullying is harder to recognise and often carried out behind the bullied student's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Indirect bullying includes:
 - lying and spreading rumours
 - playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
 - mimicking
 - encouraging others to socially exclude someone
 - damaging someone's social reputation and social acceptance
 - cyber-bullying, which involves the use of electronic means to humiliate and distress

What Bullying is Not

Many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management. There are three socially unpleasant situations that are often confused with bullying:

Mutual Conflict

In mutual conflict situations, there is an argument or disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the problem. However, unresolved mutual conflict sometimes develops into a bullying situation with one person becoming targeted repeatedly for 'retaliation' in a one-sided way.

Social Rejection or Dislike

Unless the social rejection is directed towards someone specific and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others, it is not bullying.

Single-episode acts of nastiness or meanness, or random acts of aggression or intimidation

Single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If a student is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied.

Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different students is not the same as bullying. For example isolated incidences by one student to many others as a one off is not bullying.

Cyber-bullying

Consists of covert, psychological bullying, conveyed through the electronic mediums such as mobile phones, blogs and websites, on-line chat rooms, 'MUD' rooms (multi-user domains where individuals take on different characters) and Xangas (on-line personal profiles where some adolescents create lists of people they do not like). It is verbal (over the telephone or mobile phone), or written (flaming, threats, racial, sexual or homophobic harassment) using the various mediums available.

The school is working towards and will continue to show commitment to eSmart principles to support an inclusive and safe community, especially around the responsible use of technologies.

Harassment

Is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome or offensive to a person.

Why do we have a Policy on these?

To provide a safe and friendly school environment for students and staff and to encourage care, courtesy and respect for others. All persons have a legal right to protection from harassment under the *Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act* and the *Victorian Equal Opportunity Act*.

What are the effects of Bullying and Harassment?

- poor health - anxiety, depression
- lower self esteem
- reduced study performance
- missed classes, social withdrawal
- reduced career prospects

Am I bullying or harassing someone?

If you are not sure about your behaviour you can:

- check it out by asking if it is offensive or inappropriate
- stop it
- apologise
- take it seriously if someone says they are feeling uncomfortable
- talk it over with an adviser or somebody who has an understanding of the issues

What are some of the feelings victims of bullying or harassment may experience?

- *"I will ignore it and it will go away."*

If anything it will make things worse - you will give the impression that you agree with the situation.

- *"I don't want to cause trouble."*

Most causes of harassment are sorted out quite simply. By speaking up, action can be taken to address the problem.

- *"Am I to blame?"*

Victims of harassment or bullying sometimes feel that it is their fault. Victims are made to feel guilty by the offender and often blame themselves. It is your right to have a safe environment free from harassment or bullying.

- *"Am I imagining things?"*

Often our hunches are correct. Rather than put up with nagging doubts, talk to someone about your feelings.

Bullying or harassment can often make people feel:

- embarrassed or ashamed
- offended or humiliated
- intimidated or frightened
- uncomfortable

What should you do if you see another person being bullied or harassed?

Tell the person that you witnessed the incident and advise them to report it to an appropriate person. However, if your friend is harassing another person, let them know that their behaviour is unacceptable.

Bystanders who do nothing to stop bullying may be contributing to the problem by providing an audience for the bully.

Bullying can involve

- grabbing, aggressive staring, hitting, pinching kicking, pushing and shoving
- publicly excluding a person from your group
- knocking a person's books or belongings out of their hands or off their desk
- teasing a person because of their looks

Cyber-bullying can involve

- *Flaming* – online fights using electronic messages with angry or vulgar messages
- *Harassment* – repeatedly sending nasty, mean and insulting messages
- *Denigration* – posting or sending gossip or rumours about a person to damage his/her reputation or friendships
- *Outing* – sharing someone's secrets or embarrassing information or images online
- *Exclusion* – intentionally and cruelly excluding someone from an online group
- *Cyber-stalking* – repeated, intense harassment and denigration that includes threats or creates significant fear

Harassment is usually directed at a person because of their gender, race, creed or abilities – it can be subtle or explicit

Subtle (the most common) they include:

- offensive staring and leering
- unwanted comments about physical appearance and sexual preference
- racist or smutty comments or jokes
- questions about another's sexual activity
- persistent comments about a person's private life or family
- physical contact e.g. purposely brushing up against another's body
- offensive name calling

Explicit (obvious) they include:

- grabbing, aggressive hitting, pinching and shoving, etc
- unwelcome patting, touching, embracing
- repeated requests for dates, especially after refusal
- offensive gestures, jokes, comments, letters, phone calls or e-mail
- sexually and/or racially provocative remarks
- displays of sexually graphic material – pornography
- requests for sexual favours
- extreme forms of sexual harassment will lead to criminal prosecution

What do you do if you are being bullied or harassed?

- tell the person you don't like what they are doing and you want them to stop
- discuss the matter with a teacher you feel comfortable with, Primary Welfare Officer, Principal, Assistant Principal or a School Captain
- the school will take your concerns seriously - all complaints will be treated confidentially

How will your complaint be dealt with?

Your concerns will be taken seriously. All complaints will be treated confidentially.

School procedures for responding to a student who bullies or harasses others are set out below.

Level 1

If the bullying or harassment incident is minor or first time occurrence, teachers may elect to use one or more anti-bullying practices:

- Record incident on Sentral (Student Management Tool)
- stopping the bullying/re-statement of rules and consequences
- restorative questioning

Level 2

If the bullying or harassment continues, or in instances of severe bullying or harassing, a referral should be made to the Principal or Assistant Principal

Here, the Principal or Assistant Principal may:

- notify parents/carers
- meet with the student to develop a Safety Plan
- provide discussion/mentoring of different social and emotional learning competencies including structured learning activities
- conduct a restorative conference separately with the perpetrator and “target”

Level 3

For ‘at risk’ students (many risk factors, few protective factors) whose bullying or harassing behaviour is severe and for other non-at risk students whose bullying or harassing and other aggressive behaviour is resistant to change, an individual ‘strength building’ plan should be developed by the Inclusion and Engagement Teacher in consultation with student, parents/carers and teachers. Individual strength-building plans and associated interventions help connect the student to positive people, programs and actions in the community, school and home as well as develop the student’s inner social and emotional strengths (skills, values).

Level 4

Students whose severe bullying or harassing behaviour resists school efforts and represents a significant threat to the safety and wellbeing should be referred to outside agencies for evaluation. Primary Welfare Officer and Assistant Principals will need to be familiar with those community agencies and organisations that can offer more intensive services to the student and student’s family.

Note: The school may choose, if bullying or harassment persists or the initial incident is of such magnitude, that parents/carers will be contacted and consequences implemented consistent with the school’s Student Code of Conduct. Furthermore, the principal may commence formal disciplinary action in line with ‘**Effective Schools are Engaging Schools - Student Engagement Policy Guidelines**’ (DET) at any stage in the process depending on contextual information relating to the severity of the bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment.

		Always	Be Safe	Be Respectful	Do your best
Student being bullied	School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move away from the situation or person • Apply the 3 step rule with a strong confident voice • Be present, centred and grounded • Apply a Wheel of Choice strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play in designated areas • Play on the right equipment for your age group • Make good choices about who to spend time with, both in and out of the classroom • Present resilient body language • Tell an adult immediately <p>Prep: Emotions Echo Game p3</p> <p>1/2: Emotions Statues p3</p> <p>3/4: Emotions in the School Day p7</p> <p>5/6: What Do Emotions Look Like? P3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show forgiveness • Be polite and use manners • It's ok to spend time on your own • Act kindly • Be inclusive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay in your power • Stay positive and be confident • Use positive self-talk • Tell the other person 'I don't like that' • Participate openly and honestly in restorative conversations <p>Prep: The I Think I Can Game p14</p> <p>1/2: Alien Adventure Video</p> <p>3/4: Positive Thinking Lesson Plan</p> <p>5/6: Introducing the Concept of Self-Talk p26</p>
	Cyber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be present, centred and grounded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use technology under the supervision of adults • Tell an adult of any concerns • Keep personal details private • Record examples of evidence (screenshots) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be confident and polite online 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turn off the screen and walk away

<p>Student bullying others</p> <p>Includes: Assistants that actively join in</p> <p>Supporters who quietly encourage bullying</p>	<p>School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be present, centred and grounded • Follow the school-wide positive behaviours • Use your Safety Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop • Make good choices about who to spend time with, both in and out of the classroom • Share your feelings with a trusted adult 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge mistakes and own up • Treat others as you'd like to be treated • Accept that you have hurt someone and they may no longer want to be friends • Learn to appreciate differences • Show empathy towards others • Respect yourself <p>Prep - 2: Empathy Lesson Plan</p> <p>3/4: making Apologies p24</p> <p>5/6: We Have A Problem, How Can We Deal With It? P34</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay in your power- think • Accept that you are responsible for your actions • Learn how to work and play with others • Accept that we win some and we lose some • Let go of grudges <p>Prep: What Does Being Brave Look Like/ p10</p> <p>1/2: Acts Of Friendship p5</p> <p>3/4: Building team strengths through co-operative games p8</p> <p>5/6: What are character strengths p15</p>
	<p>Cyber</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think before you post • Be present, centred and grounded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep personal details private • Be aware of the public nature and permanency of posting online • Only use your login 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate with others how you want to be treated • Acknowledge mistakes and own up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be polite online • Accept that you are responsible for your actions
<p>Upstanders/ Defenders</p> <p>Silent bystanders</p>	<p>School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be present, centred and grounded • Ask the student if they need help • Tell an adult/seek help <p>Prep: My Helpful People p28</p> <p>1/2: How Do I Ask For Help? P44</p> <p>3/4: Help Seeking Scenarios p45</p> <p>5/6: I Wonder If I need Help With Thus? P49</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak in a calm voice • Ensure your own safety- move away • Look for the closest adult immediately • Debrief after an incident- be honest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay in your power • Be polite and use manners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be inclusive • Apply the 3 step rule with a strong confident voice • Remind the student of the school-wide positive behaviours
	<p>Cyber</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let adults know immediately • Be honest and communicate/show evidence of what you witnessed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the 'victim' to report the incidences of bullying

		Always	Be Safe	Be Respectful	Do your best
Staff	School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to both sides of the story before you respond • Keep clear and detailed records/notes of the incident and upload onto Sentral ASAP- ensure relevant parties are made aware • Ensure all incidences are followed up and the outcome is communicated as needed i.e student and parent, as necessary • Direct repeated incidences/patterned behaviours to the appropriate P-2 or 3-6 AP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Praise the person being bullied for coming forward • Encourage them to continue to confide in a trusted adult • Check history and consult with colleagues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult school policy to ensure you are handling the situation correctly • Stay rational and impartial • Ensure a restorative approach is used • Use your knowledge of the child to understand where the behaviour might be coming from • Communicate with relevant parties eg. students, parents, teachers, other staff as necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop strong relationships with students • Ensure implementation of Quality Start program at the beginning of the year • Actively model and teach Berry St strategies, School Wide Positive Behaviours and School Values to build student capacity and resilience-ongoing
	Cyber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closely supervise students when using technology • Provide Acceptable Use Agreements and remind students of their responsibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unpack and teach students what acceptable use of technology looks like • Watch students' program/site choices and model their safe use • Teach students how to judge trustworthiness and look for signs of inappropriate online behaviour • Be open and accessible for students with issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Praise students for reporting any concerns • Respect confidentiality • Respect that students make mistakes and can learn from them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model safe and respectful online behaviours during the Quality Start program • Teach anti-bullying strategies • Promote eSmart

Parents	School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the incident with your child • Approach the situation calmly and objectively • Inform the school within reasonable timeframes • Be aware of the school anti-bullying and what the accurate definition of what bullying is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay in control and model correct behaviour and language for your child • Say NO to fighting and physical or verbal retaliation • Trust in the school's response and inform them if it continues • Follow any procedures set in place by the school • Make clear rules and consequences for your child • Seek help for your child 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect confidentiality for all parties • Be an active listener to the issue • Be open to other viewpoints • Send your child to school so that they can learn to deal with the issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide accurate details • Discuss positive goals/strategies for your child to apply • Explain why bullying is unacceptable
	Cyber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closely supervise your child when using technology at home • Carefully read your child's Acceptable Use Agreement and be aware of appropriate digital technology use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop safe behaviours around the use of technology at home • Set boundaries and limit use of technology (time, sites, etc) • Chat with your child about what they are doing online • Inform the school of any issues or concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Praise your child for reporting any concerns • Respect confidentiality • Respect that children make mistakes and can learn from them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach your child about cyber bullying • Attend any cyber bullying sessions/training provided by the school or community • Be proactive • Keep communication open

