



BULLYING & HARASSMENT

Rationale

- Categories of bullying include direct physical bullying (hitting, kicking, pinching, pushing or damaging property), direct verbal bullying (name calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, racist remarks or verbal abuse), indirect verbal bullying (lying or spreading rumours, playing nasty jokes, mimicking or encouraging others to socially exclude someone) and cyberbullying (direct verbal or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technologies including harassment using a mobile phone, setting up a defamatory website or deliberately excluding someone from social spaces).
- Many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management.
- Mutual conflict involves an argument or disagreement between people but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.
- Social rejection or dislike is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.
- Single-episode acts of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If someone is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied. Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different people is not the same as bullying. However, this does not mean that single episodes should be ignored or condoned as these are unacceptable behaviours.

Policy Statement

Purpose

- To create a safe and respectful school environment and prevent bullying, cyberbullying and other unacceptable behaviours.
- To ensure the school complies with DET policy and guidelines.
- To ensure the school complies with the Child Safe Standards 1 & 2.

Definition

Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, deliberately upsets or hurts another person or damages their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion. There is an imbalance of power in incidents of bullying with the bully or bullies having more power at the time due to age, size, status or other reasons.

Cyberbullying is direct verbal or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technologies. This includes harassment via a mobile phone, setting up a defamatory personal website or deliberately excluding someone from social networking spaces.

Homophobic Bullying on the basis of sexuality is a common experience for young people who are same sex attracted or for those who may not behave according to gender stereotypes.

Implementation

- The safety and wellbeing of children is this school's highest priority.
- The school will
- promote and support a safe and respectful learning environment where bullying is



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- not tolerated
- provide clear definitions of what is and what is not bullying, including descriptions of the different subtypes of bullying
- put in place whole-school strategies as outlined in DET's anti-bullying policy.
- utilise curriculum programs will promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving e.g. You Can Do It Program! and School Values
- programs will be organised to raise children's awareness about bullying (including cyber bullying), 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
- develop a Student Engagement Policy that includes processes and strategies to prevent and respond to incidents of bullying and other forms of unacceptable behaviour
- involve children, staff and parents in updating the Student Engagement Policy
- take a whole-school approach focusing on safety and wellbeing work in partnership with parents/carers to reduce and manage bullying
- consistently respond to all incidents of bullying that have been reported to the school and ensure that planned interventions are used to respond to these incidents
- ensure that support is provided to any child who has been affected by, engaged in or witnessed bullying behaviour
- provide regular updates, within the bounds of privacy legislation, to parents/carers or caregivers about the management of incidents
- address cyberbullying as part of its *Internet/Social Media Policy*
- If a teacher feels a child 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 child. It is important that teachers document fully their interaction with the child and to verify the actions taken.
- The school leadership team and 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.
- All complaints of bullying will be heard in confidence, heard seriously and any necessary actions taken.
- Parents/carers can discuss specific questions or issues with the School by contacting classroom teachers or the school Leadership Team.
- The school will ensure the policy is easily accessible within the school community and published on the school's website.
- If circumstances warrant, the school may consider using [Bullying No Way!](#) and the [National Safe Schools Framework](#).
- For further information, including information on sexual diversity, the school will refer to the DET resources at the website below.
- Please refer also to the school's *Parent Complaints & Concerns Policy* the *Student Engagement Policy*, the *Duty of Care Policy* and the *Internet/Social Media Policy*.
- Please refer also to the Child Safe Standards.



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Version Control

September 2014

March 2015

DEECD to DET and content changes

March 2016

Content update

Ratified 10/05/16

June 2016

Formatting consistency

August 2016

Update – Child Safe Standards

Ratified 10/5/17

May 2017

Minor DET update – no need for further ratification

Ratified 14/02/2018

Review Cycle

Three-year review cycle (therefore 2017) or if guidelines change (latest DET update early September 2014).

Three-year review cycle (therefore 2018) or if guidelines change (latest DET update early September 2014).

Annual review when preparing the Annual Report or if or if guidelines change (latest DET update late February 2016).

Review 2017

Review 2017

Review 2017

Review 2020

Review 2018

Review 2019

Reference

www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/bullying.aspx