

# ANTI-BULLYING

## POLICY

### Definition

Bullying is repeated oppression, physical or psychological, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group. A person is bullied when they are intentionally exposed regularly and over time to negative or harmful actions by one or more other people. Bullies are people who deliberately set out to intimidate, exclude, threaten and/or hurt others repeatedly. Bullying is a clear form of harassment. It may take the form of physical bullying, verbal bullying, psychological bullying or cyber bullying.

Cyberbullying is the use of Information Technology to harm or harass other people in a deliberate, repeated, and hostile manner. Cyber-bullying ranges from posting rumours or gossips about a person to personally identifying victims and publishing materials severely defaming and humiliating them. With the increase in use of technologies, cyberbullying has become increasingly common, especially among teenagers. Awareness of cyber bullying within communities has also risen, often due to media scrutiny.

### Rationale

The school will provide a positive culture where bullying is not accepted, and in so doing, all will have the right of respect from others, the right to learn or to teach, and a right to feel safe and secure in their school environment. All persons have a legal right to protection from harassment under the Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act and the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act.

### Aims

- Reinforce within the school community what bullying is, and the fact that it is unacceptable.
- Alert everyone within the school community to the signs and evidence of bullying and to their responsibility to report bullying to staff whether as an observer or as a victim.
- Ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up appropriately and that support is given to both victims and perpetrators.
- Seek parental and peer-group support and cooperation at all times.

### Implementation

- Ensure parents, teachers, students and the community are aware of the school's position on bullying.
- Adopt a four-phase approach to bullying:

#### **A. Primary Prevention**

- Provide professional development and resources for staff relating to bullying, harassment and the strategies that counteract them.
- Require staff to include regularly within their teaching programs discussions and activities that assist students to understand the nature of bullying, the forms that it can take, its effects, students' responsibilities towards bullying and the school's position on bullying. This should be linked to the school's Values Program.
- Increase community awareness and input relating to bullying, its characteristics and the school's programs and response.
- Provide programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving, including the "Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships" values education program and the school's Positive Behaviour Support framework.
- Ensure each classroom teacher clarifies at the start of each year the school policy on bullying.

- Promote the philosophy of 'No Put Downs' throughout the school community.
- Make a range of activities available to students at recess and lunch breaks.

#### **B. Early Intervention**

- Promote processes, including confidential means, by which students can report bullying incidents involving themselves or others.
- Reassure students that concerns will be taken seriously and that all complaints will be treated confidentially.
- Ensure classroom teachers remind students on a regular basis of their responsibilities as bystanders:
  - to report bullying incidents and that reporting is not dobbing.
  - if a friend is bullying another student, to let the friend know that his/her behaviour is unacceptable.
- Encourage parents to contact the school if they become aware of a problem.
- Recognise and reward positive behaviour and resolution of problems publicly.
- Ensure that students are aware of the role of classroom and yard duty teachers in responding to bullying incidents.
- Analyse and act upon yard incidents.
- Investigate possible links between absenteeism and bullying.

#### **C. Intervention**

- Counsel those students identified through the Early Intervention strategies.
- Fully investigate and document all incidents or allegations of bullying with the bully, victim and witnesses.
- Offer counselling and support for all affected parties.
- Implement restorative practices to support all parties involved in rectifying the issue and behaving positively in future.
- Contact parents if bullying has occurred and implement consequences consistent with the school's Student Code of Conduct.

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

- Implement consequences which may involve:
  - apology, either verbal or written
  - exclusion from class, excursion or event (e.g. 5/6 sport)
  - exclusion from the yard
  - school suspension
  - ongoing counselling from appropriate personnel for both victim and bully
- Continue ongoing monitoring of identified bullies and victims and continue to implement a restorative approach
- Reward positive behaviour

Updated and ratified by School Council on ..... 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2017

