

OAKLEIGH SOUTH PRIMARY SCHOOL BULLYING AND HARRASSMENT POLICY

Rationale:

Oakleigh South Primary School is committed to providing a safe and caring environment including a culture which enables positive relationships to be formed amongst all students and staff, 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.**

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.

Implementation:

- 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, individual differences will be respected and students and staff will be enabled and supported in their pursuit of learning and teaching.
- A school-wide approach will be taken to deal with bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment in a consistent and systematic way.
- Our school will organise preventative curriculum programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving. These strategies will be employed in preference to punitive sanctions and negative consequences. 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 e.g. 'Bullystoppers' program.
- Staff programs will occur periodically to keep staff informed of current issues/strategies for dealing with these issues. 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.

- 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.
- The school leadership team 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.
- Disciplinary consequences for bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment will comply with the school's Student Engagement Policy. The principal or their nominee will provide disciplinary consequences in accordance with Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DET) guidelines.
- For breaches of the ICT Acceptable Use Agreement students and staff can face a number of consequences depending on the severity of the breach and the context of the situation. More than one consequence may apply for a given offence. Serious or repeated offences will result in stronger penalties.

Links:

- DET's Effective Schools are Engaging Schools: Student Engagement Policy Guidelines
<https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/stuman/wellbeing/segpolicy.pdf>
- DET's Safe Schools are Effective School's
<https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/stuman/wellbeing/SafeSchoolsStrategy.pdf>
- DET's Student Engagement Policy Guidelines
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/Pages/respectfulsch.aspx#mainContent>
- DET's Student Health and Wellbeing – Bullying
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/Pages/bullying.aspx>
- The school's ICT Acceptable Use Policy (re cyber-bullying)

Evaluation: This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's four-year review cycle.

This policy was ratified by O.S.P.S School Council on October 21st 2015.

APPENDIX A

ANTI-BULLYING (CYBER-BULLYING) AND HARASSMENT PROCEDURES

Bullying and Harassment

Definitions:

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

Bullying is a pattern of behaviour by one person or a group towards others which is designed to hurt, injure, embarrass, upset or cause discomfort. It can be:

- physical aggression;
- the use of put-down comments or insults;
- name calling;
- deliberate damage to the person's property or reputation;
- deliberate exclusion from activities;
- the setting-up of humiliating experiences.

Bullying is different from simple social rejection, one off aggression/nastiness and mutual conflict.

Bullying is a repeated unjustifiable behaviour that may be physical, verbal and/or psychological that is intended to cause fear, distress or harm to another. It is conducted by a more powerful individual or group against a less powerful individual who is unable to effectively resist. Bullying occurs to some extent in all schools.

The effects of bullying on both the student being bullied and the student engaging in the bullying behaviour, show a need for intervention in the social skills development in young children and the need for the creation of safe environments.

Bullying can be both direct (open and overt) and indirect (covert). Typical examples are physical bullying, practical jokes, name calling, using email, notes and phones to send abusive material, deliberate reputation damage through rumour and exposure, deliberate and repeated social exclusion, property damage etc.

Cyberbullying:

Cyberbullying is a form of bullying which is carried out through an internet service such as email, chat rooms, discussion groups, online social networking, instant messaging or web pages. It can also include bullying through social and digital technologies such as email, SMS, Facebook, Instagram etc. It may involve text and/or images (photos, drawings).

Examples of cyberbullying behaviour are:

- teasing and being made fun of;
- spreading of rumours online;
- sending unwanted messages and pictures;
- defamation.

If you are being harassed or bullied you should:

- tell the person you don't like what they are doing and that you want them to stop;
- discuss the matter with a student leader or a teacher/coordinator that you feel comfortable with. Your concerns will be taken seriously. All complaints will be treated confidentially.

The effects of harassment or bullying include:

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

If a student sees another person being harassed or bullied they should 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.

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 email,;
- 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.

Bullying can involve such things as:

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

Various processes and methods of intervention are used to address bullying and harassment at Oakleigh South Primary School. Each of the following approaches are considered to be appropriate depending on the situation. (as adapted from Ken Rigby, 2010)

The traditional disciplinary approach. Consequences are applied to a person identified as having engaged in bullying someone.

Strengthening the victim. The person being targeted is instructed or trained so as to cope more effectively with bullying behaviour; for example, through assertiveness training.

Mediation. Individuals involved in bully/victim problems are invited to meet with a trained mediator (adult or student) to explore ways of resolving the situation in a way that is acceptable to all parties.

Restorative practice. A meeting is arranged at which the person/s engaged in bullying are instructed to listen to how their 'target' feels about the treatment. They are required to reflect upon what has been happening and to act restoratively (eg by making an acceptable apology to those offended).

The support group method. The targeted person is interviewed and an account of the distress that has been experienced is communicated to those identified as the bullies. This is done at a meeting of the bullies attended also by selected students who are supportive of the target person. All present at the meeting are required to say how they will help to resolve the problem. The outcome is then carefully monitored.

The method of shared concern. The teacher / leader meets individually with the person/s suspected of the bullying and shares a concern over what has been happening to the target person. Each of the suspected perpetrators is asked to suggest ways in which they can help, and to agree to act accordingly. After discussing the situation with the target person, the teacher / leader convenes a meeting of all the suspected bullies to formulate an agreed plan to resolve the problem. At a final meeting, a solution is negotiated between the suspected bullies and the target person who has now been invited to join them.