



Bullying Prevention Policy

RATIONALE

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 Prevention (including cyber bullying) and harassment will inform the community that bullying and harassment in any of its forms are unacceptable at Knox Park Primary School. All persons have a legal right to protection from harassment.

DEFINITION

Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological aggressive behaviour by a person or group directed towards a less powerful person or group that is intended to cause harm, distress or fear in person or online.

AIM

- Reinforce within the school community that no form of bullying is acceptable.
- Ensure everyone within the school community is alert to signs of bullying and reports bullying to staff whether as observer or victim.
- Create awareness of what bullying is and understanding what bullying is not.
- Ensure that reported incidents of bullying are investigated and dealt with appropriately.
- Implement effective whole school strategies to minimise the development of bullying behaviours.

IMPLEMENTATION

A. Primary Prevention:

- Professional development for staff relating to bullying, harassment and proven counter measures.
- Restorative Practices (see school website) used to build and maintain relationships between students.
- Students to be taught 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, complemented by clear processes for reporting suspected bullying.
- 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.
- The Social and Emotional Resilience 'Bounce Back' Program (<http://www.bounceback.com.au/>) to be implemented across the school.
- A Buddy System will be introduced across the school, complemented by a peer mediation program.
- Teachers will be trained in cyber-safety. Cyber-safety awareness information sessions will be provided for parents and cyber-safety will form part of each child's ICT curriculum.

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B. Isolated, Infrequent or Less Serious Incidents:

- All reported instances of suspected bullying or inappropriate behaviour must be responded to by staff.
- Parents are encouraged to contact the school if they suspect a bullying or behaviour problem.
- 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 Code of Conduct**, including the proper reporting and recording of the incident on the staff Compass Portal.
- Parents are to be contacted if their child is alleged to have been bullied or experienced inappropriate behaviour, or if their child appears to have behaved inappropriately or bullied someone else.
- Appropriate and proportional consequences may include a verbal apology, writing a letter of regret, completing a Behaviour Incident booklet, loss of privileges etc.
- Public recognition and reward for positive behaviour and resolution of problems will occur through our weekly assembly awards.

C. Repetitive or Serious Incidents:

- Serious incidents and/or repetitive incidents of bullying or unacceptable behaviour must be reported, responded to by staff and documented on the staff Compass Portal.
- Serious incidents are those that include physical assault, sexual assault, criminal activity involving theft or serious damage of property, serious threats or homophobic bullying etc.
- All such incidents or allegations will be properly investigated and documented on the staff Compass Portal. Depending upon the nature of each incident, they may be also be reported to and investigated by police, reported to the Student Critical Incident Advisory Unit, and/or reported to the Department's Security Service Unit.
- The school may contact support professionals such as Welfare officers, Welfare coordinators or Councilors and/or Student Support Officers for assistance and support.
- Students, staff and parents identified by others as bullies will be informed of allegations.
- Both bullies and victims will be offered counselling and support.
- All repetitive or serious incidents must be brought to the attention of the principal class members of the school.
- The most appropriate staff member will contact parents of the targeted child. Principal class members will contact alleged perpetrators unless advised by police etc not to do so.
- Regional office will provide support as appropriate, and the principal will monitor the investigation and review the situation until matters are appropriately resolved.
- Consequences of repetitive or serious incidents may include criminal charges, suspension, expulsion, loss of privileges, counselling, conciliation or any other consequences consistent with the school's **Student Code of Conduct**.
- A management strategy for all parties will be developed in consultation with the students and parents involved.



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- Parents or community members who bully or harass or abuse staff 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 Incident:

- 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 the school's three-year review cycle or as Departmental guidelines dictate.

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APPENDIX ONE

What is Bullying?

Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological aggressive behaviour by a person or group directed towards a less powerful person or group that is intended to cause harm, distress or fear.

Types of bullying behaviour

- verbal or written abuse - such as targeted name-calling or jokes, or displaying offensive posters
- violence - including threats of violence
- sexual harassment - unwelcome or unreciprocated conduct of a sexual nature, which could reasonably be expected to cause offence, humiliation or intimidation
- homophobia and other hostile behaviour towards students relating to gender and sexuality
- discrimination including racial discrimination - treating people differently because of their identity
- Cyberbullying - either online or via mobile phone.

What is not Bullying?

There are also some behaviours, which, although they might be unpleasant or distressing, are not bullying:

- mutual conflict - which involves a disagreement, but not an imbalance of power. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.
- single-episode acts of nastiness or physical aggression, or aggression directed towards many different people, is not bullying.
- social rejection or dislike is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

What is Cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is bullying that is carried out through the internet or mobile phones. Cyberbullying is bullying using digital technologies including mobile phones, email and social media tools.

Types of cyberbullying

- pranking - repeated hang ups, anonymous, mocking or threatening phone calls.
- image sharing - forwarding or sharing unflattering, altered or private images without permission.
- sexually explicit images - people of any age, who forward or share images of a sexual nature of a person under 18 need to be aware that this is a criminal offence (child pornography) that may result in prosecution.
- text and email - sending insulting or threatening text messages or emails.
- personal online information - publishing online someone's private, personal or embarrassing information without permission, or spreading rumors online.
- identity theft - assuming someone's identity online and negatively representing them in a way that damages their reputation or relationships.
- hate sites - creating hate sites or implementing social exclusion campaigns on social networking sites.

Other types of cyberbullying

It is also cyberbullying when a student, or students, uses technology to run a multi-step campaign to bully another student. For example, setting another student up to be assaulted, video-recording their humiliation, posting the video-recording online and then sending the website address to others.

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/prinprevent.aspx>

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