



PREVENTION OF BULLYING POLICY

RATIONALE

- Diversity is valued at Warrandyte Primary School and everyone is treated with respect, fairness and dignity.
- Warrandyte Primary School is committed to whole-school programs and procedures that strengthen the quality of relationships between people, build empathy and work cooperatively.
- Warrandyte Primary School will work in partnership with parents to reduce and manage bullying and develop a safe, caring, respectful and supportive school environment.
- Every member of the school community has the right to feel physically and psychologically safe and that ensuring this safety is everyone's responsibility.

PURPOSE

- To promote a safe and supportive environment where bullying will not be tolerated.
- To foster an environment in which parents, teachers and students feel confident that bullying will be dealt with seriously, sensitively and confidentially.
- To develop awareness in the school community of what constitutes bullying and its implications.
- To ensure that incidents of bullying are followed up and that appropriate support is provided to those concerned.
- To identify and eliminate acts of bullying.

DEFINITION

Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, upset or create a risk to another person's health and safety - either psychologically or physically - or their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion.

It is repeated and deliberate unwanted behaviour directed towards an individual where the intent is to hurt, harass or embarrass that person.

Bullying involves the psychological, emotional, social or physical harassment of one person by another. The crucial feature is that the victim feels powerless and perceives himself or herself as having been bullied.

A person is bullied when he or she is exposed regularly and over a period of time to negative actions by one or more persons. Bullies are people who deliberately set out to intimidate, exclude, threaten or hurt others repeatedly. They can operate alone or as a group.

Bullying behaviours include **physical aggression, damaging others' property, setting up people to embarrass them, using insults or put downs, teasing, deliberate isolation or exclusion, demands for money or possessions and deliberate, uninvited interference.**



There are three broad categories of bullying:

- Direct physical bullying e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging their property.
- Direct verbal bullying e.g. name calling, insults, verbal abuse.
- 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 email, text messages, chat rooms or other electronic communication 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. However, since the school has a duty of care to provide a student with a safe and supportive school environment, single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression will not be ignored or condoned.

GUIDELINES

Whole School Approach

- Parents, teachers and students will be informed of the Student Code of Conduct.
- Students will be provided with programs and strategies to develop positive communication and problem solving skills.
- Teachers will reinforce the values of fairness, respect, tolerance, consideration, honesty and friendship.
- The difference between telling and dobbing will be reinforced.
- Students will be encouraged to report incidents of bullying with a teacher.
- Parents will be encouraged to contact the school if they are aware of a problem.
- The school community needs to be alert to signs of bullying and take responsibility in reporting incidents to a staff member.



Self-help Strategies for Students

There is no clear answer about the best actions students can take when they are being bullied. It can be very difficult for very young students to stop it on their own. The student *may* be able to attempt the following strategies:

- Asking them calmly and politely to stop it and then increase this to telling them firmly and loudly to stop it.
- Consider putting on a 'protective shell' by acting unimpressed. If you feel up to it, make a funny comment.
- Consider talking to a friend and ask for support and ideas about what you could do to solve the problem.
- Role play.

Strategies that the school will utilise to stop bullying

In addition to self-help strategies, the school will utilise other appropriate strategies as soon as possible:

- Use of the thinking paper
- Record keeping of incidents
- Discussion of behaviour
- Mediation of conflict
- Exploration of possible strategies including:
 - Assertiveness training – assists the person being bullied to approach the wrongdoer with confidence and respect
 - Community Conferences – facilitated meeting with the wrongdoer, person being bullied, parents and teachers where an agreement is reached. This is appropriate for a serious issue
 - Small Group Individual Conferences – These are usually confined to a small group of students or an individual student and teacher(s) who have been involved in a less serious incident of harm. Typically small group conferences might be used to deal with low-level bullying before matters escalate. Parents, while not directly involved, are informed of the process and its outcomes
- Application of logical consequences
- Reflection time using a non-judgmental approach
- Informing and involvement of parents
- Agreement for future behaviour
- Monitoring and provision of feedback
- Support for both victims and bullies
- Implementation of discipline procedures as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct and DEECD procedures.

Any prevention and management programs that the school is considering implementing will be critically reviewed to ensure that they are theoretically sound, unbiased and evidence-based in terms of content, pedagogy and delivery.

All cases of bullying will be treated in the strictest confidence so as to minimise the impact on everyone concerned.

Strategies for parents

The school recognises that it can be very stressful and upsetting when parents discover that their child is being bullied or that their child is bullying others. Most parents initially experience anger, confusion and guilt. The attached fact sheet (Appendix A) provides useful strategies and tips for parents in dealing with incidents of bullying – Reference DEECD website: http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/stuman/wellbeing/SS_Parents-factsheet_ENGLISH.pdf.

Strategies for Preventing Cyber Bullying

Warrandyte Primary School will raise awareness in the school community about:

- The seriousness of cyber bullying, its impact on those being bullied, and how this bullying behaviour is unacceptable;
- The need to inform the school if the student is being cyber bullied, or if the student is aware that another student is being cyber bullied;
- **Prevention methods such as protecting students' phone numbers and not responding to SMS messages;**



- Advising students that cyber bullying is a criminal offence;
- Following the DEECD guidelines on The Cybersafe Classroom
Ref: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/elearningsupportservices/www/classroom/cybersafety.htm>

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Student Code of Conduct
- School Values
- Internet and Email Usage

REVIEW

Teaching staff will be responsible for the implementation and evaluation of this policy. This policy will be reviewed by the school council at least every 5 years, or earlier in special circumstances, and is scheduled for review in 2014.

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A Strategy For Parents

Discovering that your child is being bullied or that your child is bullying others is very stressful and upsetting. Most parents initially experience anger, confusion and guilt.

The following information has been developed to provide you with useful strategies in dealing with incidents of bullying.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, who have more power at the time, deliberately upset or hurt another person on more than one occasion. Bullying includes physical bullying such as hitting; verbal bullying such as name calling; and indirect bullying such as spreading rumours.

Bullying is Not

- a situation where there is mutual conflict – i.e. a balance of power where students are both upset and usually want a resolution to the problem.



- Social rejection or dislike (unless it is a repeated act and directed towards a specific person).
- Single episodes of nastiness or meanness or random acts of aggression or intimidation.

How do I know if my child is being bullied?

Some of the signs that a child is being bullied include:

- an unwillingness or refusal to go to school
- feeling ill in the mornings
- wagging school
- doing poorly in their school work
- becoming withdrawn, starting to stammer, lacking confidence
- crying themselves to sleep, having nightmares
- asking for money or starting to steal (to pay the bully)
- refusing to talk about what's wrong
- having unexplained bruises, cuts, scratches
- beginning to bully other children or siblings
- becoming aggressive and unreasonable

Adapted from Kidscape, available at www.kidscape.org.uk/parents/signsof.shtml



What can I do if my child is being bullied?

Step 1: Listen carefully to your child and show concern and support.

Step 2: Give sensible advice – don't encourage your child to fight back; this will most likely increase the bullying.

Step 3: Assist your child to develop positive strategies including:

- 'saying leave me alone' and calmly walking away
- avoiding situations that might expose them to further bullying
- making new friends.

Step 4: Ask your child the following questions to understand if there is a repeated pattern:

- What, where and when did the incident happen?
- Who was involved on each occasion?
- Did anybody else see it and, if so, who?
- What solutions have been tried so far?
- The names of any teachers who are aware of the problem.

Step 5: Work with your child's school to solve the problem. Schools take their responsibilities in relation to bullying behaviour very seriously and they have more success when parents work with the school to solve the bullying problem.

Remember, if you were not aware that your child was being bullied, then perhaps your child's teachers did not know about it either.

You should:

- Make an appointment with your child's teacher and make notes of the points you want to discuss before the meeting.
- At the meeting try to stay calm and present information in a way that makes it clear that you and the school are working as partners in trying to fix this problem.

The school will need time to investigate and to talk to teachers and, perhaps, other students.

Step 6: You can make a follow-up call to see what has been done or alternatively ask the school when you can expect them to get back to you.



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Step 7: Work with the school to establish a plan for dealing with the current situation and future bullying incidents. Before you leave, ask for clarification about the next steps in the plan.

Step 8: If needed, ask for the school counsellor to become involved.

Step 9: Encourage your child to report any further bullying incidents to a teacher they trust at the school.

What I should NOT do if my child is being bullied?

- Do not directly approach any other student who you believe may have been involved in bullying your child.
- Do not try to sort the issues out with their parents. This usually doesn't work and makes the situation much worse.

What if my child is bullying others?

- Respond calmly and non-defensively, and commit to working with the school to manage the problem in a helpful way.
- See the situation as an opportunity for your child to learn important developmental lessons.

What I should NOT do if my child is bullying others?

- Do not directly approach the bullied student or their family or try to get other parents to take your child's side.

What I can do to reduce bullying at school?

- Report all incidents of bullying to the school, not just incidents that happen to your own child.
- Let your child know how much you disapprove of bullying and why.

- Any type of bullying at home should be avoided, and respect for others should be modelled and encouraged.
- Talk to your child about the qualities associated with caring friendships and discourage them from staying in 'friendships' where they are mistreated or not respected.

Useful websites

Safe Schools are Effective Schools
www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing/safeschools/bullying/index.htm

Student Code of Conduct
www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing/welfare/conduct.htm

Bullying. No Way!
www.bullyingnoway.com.au



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