Anti-Bullying and Harassment - including Cyberbullying Policy

Date approved by School Council | 21st October, 2014

Rationale
Seaford Park Primary School is committed to providing a safe and caring environment and culture which enables positive relationships. As a community of learning that strongly supports the development of a supportive culture among students, parents and school staff, we see the management of bullying as paramount to the social, emotional and academic development of the perpetrator and the victim.

In support of the Student Wellbeing Policy and Engagement Policy, our aim is to foster the development of resilience and self esteem in students. The management of bullying and the achievement of resilience are accepted as a school community responsibility at Seaford Park Primary School. 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.

What are bullying, cyber bullying and harassment?
- Bullying is repeated oppression, physical or psychological, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group.
- Cyber-bullying consists of covert, psychological bullying, conveyed through the electronic mediums such as cell-phones, web-logs and web-sites, on-line chat rooms, ‘MUD’ rooms (multi-user domains where individuals take on different characters) and Xangas (on-line personal profiles where some adolescents create lists of people they do not like). It is verbal (over the telephone or mobile phone), or written (flaming, threats, racial, sexual or homophobic harassment) using the various mediums available.
- Harassment is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome or offensive to a person.
- Seaford Park Primary 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.
Implementation:

- Provide all students with the skills for social/emotional well-being in school, work and the world of tomorrow as part of the ‘You Can Do It’ Education Program
- Teaching students strategies that focus on resiliency, reduction of risk behaviours and promotion of help-seeking protective factors
- Promoting the rights of individuals and groups in schools - students, staff and parents to be free of bullying by others.
- Staff and students identifying students at risk and perpetrators
- Give voice to the person(s) harmed and allow the opportunity for their needs to be met and to be part of the resolution
- Give voice to the person(s) who caused the harm and allow the opportunity to make amends to those harmed
- Engage in collaborative problem solving allowing all affected to be engaged in the process
- Enhance responsibility by allowing the person(s) causing harm to reflect and understand
- Plan for restoration, ongoing accountability and future steps
- Positive peer modelling through the School’s leadership program
- If student bullying persists parents will be contacted and consequences implemented consistent with the school’s Student Code of Conduct and Expected Behaviours and Consequences
- Students, whose bullying behaviour continues, may be referred to further counselling. This may include, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) Guidance Officer and/or Social Worker
- Each classroom teacher will clarify with students at the start of each year the School’s Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy.

Links and Appendices (including processes related to this policy)

Links which are connected with this policy are:

- DEECD’s [Effective Schools are Engaging Schools: Student Engagement Policy Guidelines](#)
- DEECD’s [Safe Schools are Effective School’s](#)
- DEECD’s [Student Engagement Policy Guidelines](#)
- The school’s Internet Use Policy (re cyber-bullying)
- DEECD’s [Respectful Schools](#)

Appendices which are connected with this policy are:

- Appendix A: Anti-Bullying (including cyber-bullying) and Anti-Harassment Procedures
- Appendix B: Inappropriate Incidents Form – Template

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s three year review cycle.
Appendix A

Anti-Bullying (including cyber-bullying) and Anti-Harassment Procedures

What are Bullying, Cyber Bullying and Harassment?

Bullying
Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, who have more power at the time, deliberately upset or hurt another person, their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion.

Types of Bullying
There are three broad categories of bullying:
1. Direct physical bullying – e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.
2. Direct verbal bullying – e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.
3. 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 electronic means 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 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.
Cyber-bullying

Cyberbullying
Consists of covert, psychological bullying, conveyed through the electronic mediums such as cell-phones, web-logs and web-sites, on-line chat rooms, ‘MUD’ rooms (multi-user domains where individuals take on different characters) and Xangas (on-line personal profiles where some adolescents create lists of people they do not like). It is verbal (over the telephone or mobile phone), or written (flaming, threats, racial, sexual or homophobic harassment) using the various mediums available.

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

Why do we have a Policy on these?
To provide a safe and friendly college environment for students and staff and to encourage care, courtesy and respect for others. All persons have a legal right to protection from harassment under the Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act and the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act.

What are the effects of Bullying and Harassment?
- poor health - anxiety, depression
- lower self esteem
- reduced study performance
- missed classes, social withdrawal
- reduced career prospects

Am I bullying or harassing someone?
If you are not sure about your behaviour you can:
- check it out by asking if it is offensive or inappropriate
- stop it
- apologise
- take it seriously if someone says they are feeling uncomfortable
- talk it over with an adviser or somebody who has an understanding of the issues

What are some of the feelings victims of bullying or harassment may experience?
“I will ignore it and it will go away.” - If anything it will make things worse - you will give the impression that you agree with the situation.
“I don’t want to cause trouble.” - Most causes of harassment are sorted out quite simply. By speaking up, action can be taken to address the problem.
“Am I to blame?” - Victims of harassment or bullying sometimes feel that it is their fault. Victims are made to feel guilty by the offender and often blame themselves. It is your right to have a safe environment free from harassment or bullying.
“Am I imagining things?” - Often our hunches are correct. Rather than put up with nagging doubts, talk to someone about your feelings.

Bullying or harassment can often make people feel:
- embarrassed or ashamed
- offended or humiliated
intimidated or frightened
uncomfortable

What should you do if you see another person being bullied or harassed?
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.

Bullying can involve
• grabbing, aggressive staring, hitting, pinching, kicking, pushing and shoving
• publicly excluding a person from your group
• knocking a person’s books or belongings out of their hands or off their desk
• teasing a person because of their looks

Cyber-bullying can involve
• Flaming – online fights using electronic messages with angry or vulgar messages
• Harassment – repeatedly sending nasty, mean and insulting messages
• Denigration – posting or sending gossip or rumours about a person to damage his/her reputation or friendships
• Outing – sharing someone’s secrets or embarrassing information or images online
• Exclusion – intentionally and cruelly excluding someone from an online group
• Cyber-stalking – repeated, intense harassment and denigration that includes threats or creates significant fear

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 e-mail
• 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
What do you do if you are being bullied or harassed?

- tell the person you don’t like what they are doing and you want them to stop
- discuss the matter with a teacher that you feel comfortable with
- the school will take your concerns seriously - all complaints will be treated confidentially

How will your complaint be dealt with?
Your concerns will be taken seriously. All complaints will be treated confidentially. School procedures for responding to a student who bullies or harasses others are set out below.

Stage 1
If the bullying or harassment incident is minor or first time occurrence, teachers may elect to use one or more anti-bullying practices:

- stopping the bullying/re-statement of rules and consequences
- restorative questioning
- think time detention
- private conference
- shared control discussion

If the student does not take control over his/her behaviour, an Inappropriate Incident Form (yellow form) should be completed and submitted to the principal/assistant principal.

Stage 2
If the bullying or harassment continues, or in instances of severe bullying or harassing, a referral should be made to the principal/assistant principal.

The principal/assistant principal (or another who has responsibility for student welfare) may:

- meet with the student to develop a behaviour contract
- provide discussion/mentoring of different social and emotional learning competencies including structured learning activities
- conduct a restorative conference separately with the perpetrator and “target”

Stage 3
For ‘at risk’ students (many risk factors, few protective factors) whose bullying or harassing behaviour is severe and for other non-at risk students whose bullying or harassing and other aggressive behaviour is resistant to change, an individual ‘strength building’ plan should be developed by the student welfare coordinator in consultation with student, parents/carers and teachers. Individual strength-building plans and associated interventions help connect the student to positive people, programs and actions in the community, school and home as well as develop the student’s inner social and emotional strengths (skills, values).

Stage 4
Students whose severe bullying or harassing behaviour resists school efforts and represents a significant threat to the safety and wellbeing should be referred to outside agencies for evaluation. The principal/assistant principal/welfare coordinator will need to be familiar with those community agencies and organisations that can offer more intensive services to the student and student’s family.
Note: The school may choose, if bullying or harassment persists or the initial incident is of such magnitude, that parents/carers will be contacted and consequences implemented consistent with the school’s Student Code of Conduct. Furthermore, the principal may commence formal disciplinary action in line with ‘Effective Schools are Engaging Schools - Student Engagement Policy Guidelines’ (DEECD) at any stage in the process depending on contextual information relating to the severity of the bullying (including-cyber bullying) and harassment.
Appendix B

INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR NOTIFICATION

Date: ....................

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We are disappointed that……………………..................has chosen to break the following school rules or class norms today.

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…………………………………………………………………………………………………………
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The unacceptable behaviour involved:

……………………………………………………………………………………….………………
…………………………………………………………………………………..………………………………
………………………………………………………..

As per the School Council approved Wellbeing Policy the following consequence will apply.

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………..

We would appreciate you reinforcing with your child that this behaviour is not acceptable at school.

Thank you for your co-operation,

Teacher Signature: …………………………..

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Parent Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have received this notice and have had follow up discussions on my child’s behaviour.

I would like to discuss this further with my child’s teacher. Yes/No

Parent signature ………………………….. Date…………………………

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Student Name …………………………..