

Bullying and Harassment Policy

Date approved by School Council	<i>18th November 2014</i>
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Rationale

Seaford Park Primary 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 (including cyber bullying) and harassment will inform the community that bullying and harassment in any of its forms will not be tolerated.

Aims

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.

This policy is written to promote and build resilience in all students at Seaford Park Primary School and as such should be read in conjunction with the Student Engagement and Inclusion Wellbeing Policy and Codes of Conduct. The school will address prevention practices in the management of bullying by:

- Reinforcing within the school community what bullying is, and the fact that it is unacceptable
- Everyone within the school community to be alert to signs and evidence of bullying and to have a responsibility to report it to staff whether as observer or victim
- Ensuring that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up appropriately and that support is given to both victims and perpetrator.
- Seeking parental and peer-group support and co-operation at all times
- Fostering a culture of open communication where students, parents and teachers are welcome to voice concerns or opinions in the appropriate forums

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.

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, cyber bullying and harassment 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 and/or harassment 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 and/or harassment 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
- Disciplinary consequences for bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment will comply with the school’s Welfare and Discipline Policy. The principal or their nominee will provide disciplinary consequences including suspension in accordance with Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) guidelines.
- Each classroom teacher will clarify with students at the start of each year this Bullying and Harassment Policy
- There will be disciplinary consequences, covering a range of strategies, for those in breach of the Bullying (including cyber bullying) and Harassment Policy, guidelines and Anti-bullying and Anti-harassment procedures (see Appendix A).
- Appendix A of the policy will be included in the Student Enrolment Package while staff will receive extensive documentation as part of the school’s induction process.
- 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 eg eSmart program.

Evaluation

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

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 Schools](#)

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: Reporting on Incident of Bullying / Harassment – Template
- Appendix C: Formal Referral of Student who has bullied / harassed other to Student Welfare Coordinator – Template

Appendix A

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

What are Bullying, Cyber Bullying and Harassment?

Bullying

Definition of 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 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.

Cyber-bullying

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.

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 peer support leader or 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 and issue a warning
- restorative conversation /re-statement of rules and consequences
- walk with yard duty teacher as a think time detention
- community service eg sweeping Shadowlands
- if the student does not take control over his/her behaviour, his/her name and action should be recorded in the yard duty book.

Stage 2

If the bullying or harassment continues, or in instances of severe bullying or harassing, the following consequences apply:

- name and action recorded in the yard duty book
- lunch / recess supervision
- conduct a restorative conference separately with the perpetrator and "target"
- reflection activity completed
- parents informed of student behaviour by letter

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, the following consequences may apply

- referral to the Student Wellbeing Committee
- referral to SSSO and / or social skills program
- behavioral management plan developed

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 Student Wellbeing Committee members 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 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

Reporting on Incident of Bullying / Harassment – Template

Staff member recording incident: _____

Date: / ___/

Name of student(s) who appears to have instigated bullying

Year/Class: _____

Name(s) of target(s) _____

Name(s) of witnesses

Did you observe the incident?

YES

No

If 'No' who reported the incident to you? _____

Brief description of incident (what was allegedly said or done to the student who appears to have been bullied?)



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What form(s) of bullying took place? Verbal Physical Indirect
Cyber

Other Please detail: _____

Was the incident of bullying: Mild Severe

Describe how you responded (Did you use a school anti-bullying practice?)

Describe how student responded to your intervention

Where / when / time incident took place:

Location: _____

When: before school recess lunch in class _____ after school

Time: ____ : ____ : am/pm

Date incident took place: / __ / _____

Additional comments:

Appendix C

Formal Referral of Student who has bullied / harassed other to Student Welfare Coordinator – Template

(This form may be completed by a classroom teacher, year level coordinator, school administrator or Student Welfare/Wellbeing Coordinator)

Staff member recording incident: _____

Date: / ___/

Position: _____

Name of student being referred: _____

Year/Class: _____

History of incident(s) of bullying (dates, description)

Have parents/guardian been notified?

YES

No

If 'No' why not? _____

Have they attended a conference?

YES

No

If 'No' why not? _____

Are they willing to participate?

YES

No

If 'No' why not? _____



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What appears to be the reason for the student's bullying behaviour (family, peer, school, personal, other)?

What practices have been tried?

Impact

What has been the student's attitude towards student(s) who have been targets? (e.g., any concern or remorse expressed)?



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A brief description of academic performance of student over past year or more.

Distinguishing 'at risk' factors of student (e.g. limited English: economic disadvantage of family; ADHD)
