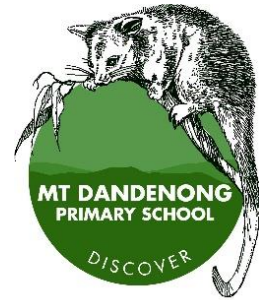# BULLYING AND HARRASSMENT POLICY

Ratified: 2017
Review: 2020

DEFINITION

A person is bullied when one or more other people expose them regularly and over time to negative or harmful actions. Bullies are people who deliberately set out to intimidate, exclude, threaten and/or hurt others repeatedly. Bullying is a clear form of harassment.

RATIONALE

- The school will provide a positive culture where bullying is not accepted, and in so doing, all will have the right of respect from others, the right to learn or to teach, and a right to feel safe and secure in their school environment.

AIMS

- To reinforce 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.
- To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up appropriately and that support is given to both victims and perpetrators.
- To seek parental and peer-group support and co-operation at all times.

DEFINITION

Types of Bullying

There are three broad categories of bullying*:*

- *Direct physical bullying* – e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property
- *Direct verbal bullying* – e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic, anti-religious or racist remarks, verbal abuse
- *Indirect bullying* – this bullying is harder to recognise and often carried out behind the bullied person's back. It is designed to harm some-one'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
  - Harming 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
Direct verbal or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technologies. This includes harassment via a mobile phone, setting up a defamatory personal website or deliberately excluding someone from social networking spaces.

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

GUIDELINES

- A school-wide approach will be taken to deal with bullying and harassment in a consistent and systematic way
- All new staff will be informed of the anti-harassment and anti bullying policy and practices at the commencement of their time at the school
- All complaints of harassment and anti-bullying will be heard in confidence and taken seriously
- Our school will organise preventative curriculum programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving
- Staff programs will occur periodically to keep staff informed of current issues/strategies for dealing with these issues
- There will be disciplinary consequences, covering a range of strategies, for those in breach of the Policy, guidelines and procedures (see Appendices A & B)

IMPLEMENTATION

- The school will implement constructive strategies to deal with harassment including: education in coping strategies; assertiveness training; problem solving and social skills; counselling and behaviour modification. These strategies will be employed in preference to punitive sanctions and negative consequences

- The Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment Policy of the school will be promoted to students, staff, parents/carers and the local community

- New staff will receive a summary of the policy as part of the school's induction process

- 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/or harassment, by thoroughly investigating all complaints while respecting the need for confidentiality, notifying parents/carers and planning interventions

- If a teacher feels a student is at serious and imminent risk from bullying (including cyber bullying) and/or harassment then it is their professional duty to pass on the information to an appropriate person in order to ensure appropriate support for the student. It is important that teachers document fully their interaction with the student and the actions taken

- The school will organize student programs to raise student awareness about bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment, to provide a forum for discussion of matters and to aid development of positive 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 professionals. The curriculum will include anti-bullying messages and strategies in line with current DET materials. Guidelines which may assist the perpetrator and the student being bullied identify their behaviours or feelings are attached as Appendix XX

- 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
- Disciplinary consequences for 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 Training (DET) guidelines

- Parents, teachers, students, new staff and the community will be aware of the school's position on bullying

The school will adopt a four-phase approach to bullying:

A. Primary Prevention:
- Professional development for staff relating to bullying, harassment and proven counter measures.
- Community awareness and input relating to bullying, its characteristics and the school's programs and response.
- To provide programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.
- A bullying survey and yard survey will be administered and acted upon twice annually.
- 'Bounce Back' program implemented across the school.
- Each classroom teacher to clarify at the start of each year the school policy on bullying.
- The curriculum to include anti-bulling messages and strategies.
- Student Representative Council, peer support delegates, staff and students to promote the philosophy of 'Respect'.
- Electives and structured activities available to students at recess and lunch breaks.

B. Early Intervention:
- Classroom teachers and principal on a regular basis reminding students and staff to report incidents of bullying.
- Parents are encouraged to contact school if they become aware of a problem.
- Public recognition and reward for positive behaviour and resolution of problems.
- Junior School Council to promote school values.

C. Intervention:
- Once identified each bully, victim and witnesses will be spoken with, and all incidents or allegations of bullying will be fully investigated and documented.
- Students and staff identified by others as bullies will be informed of allegations.
- Both bullies and victims will be offered counselling and support.
- If student bullying persists parents will be contacted and consequences implemented consistent with the school's Student Code of Conduct.
- If staff bullying persists the principal will commence formal disciplinary action.

D. Post Violation:
- Consequences for students will be individually based and may involve:-
    - exclusion from class.
    - exclusion from yard.
    - school suspension.
    - withdrawal of privileges.
    - ongoing counselling from appropriate agency for both victim and bully.
- Reinforcement of positive behaviours.
- Classroom Meetings.
- Support Structures.
- Ongoing monitoring of identified bullies.
- Rewards for positive behaviour.

- Consequences for staff will be individually based and may involve:-
    - counselling
    - a period of monitoring
    - a formal support group
    - disciplinary actions

LINKS AND APPENDICES (including processes related to this policy)

This policy has been drafted utilizing DET's Schools Policy Advisory Guide
Links which are connected with this policy are:

- DET's Effective Schools are Engaging Schools: Student Engagement Policy Guidelines
- DET's Safe Schools are Effective School's
- DET's Student Engagement Policy Guidelines
- The school's Internet Use Policy , eSmart Policy, Cyber-Safety Policy, Behaviour Management Policy, Student Welfare, Wellbeing & Engagement Policy
- DET's Respectful Schools

Appendices which are connected with this policy are:
- Appendix A: Types of Bullying
- Appendix B: Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment Procedures

APPENDIX A

TYPES OF BULLYING

	DIRECT	**INDIRECT**
Physical	- Hitting, slapping, punching - Kicking - Pushing, strangling - Spitting, biting - Pinching, scratching - Throwing objects	Getting another person to harm someone
Non-Physical	- Mean or hurtful name calling - Hurtful teasing - Demanding money or possessions - Forcing another to do homework or commit offences such as stealing	Spreading nasty rumours; Trying to get other students to not like someone
Non-Verbal	- Threatening and / or obscene gestures - Frequent use of negative body language	Deliberate exclusion from a group or activity; Removing and hiding and / or damaging others' belongings
Cyberbullying	- Mean or hurtful emails, - text messages, multi-media - messages, chat room - conversations or hurtful content being posted to social media sites, such as Facebook - Prank telephone calls	Having someone else do it for you
Racial / Religious / Sexual / Disability	- Inappropriate touching and / or actions - Inappropriate suggestions, conversations and / or - comments	

APPENDIX B

Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment Procedures

Adult Bullying

Our site does not tolerate abuse / bullying / harassment of or between students, staff and parents

Bystander Bullying

What is a Bystander? A bystander is someone who sees the bullying or knows that it is happening to someone else. Bystanders can be identified in the following categories:

Supporters—Support the person bullying, either by helping the child to bully the other person or by encouraging the person bullying

Spectators—Gather or deliberately stay to watch the incident (sometimes from concern and sometimes for enjoyment)

Witnesses—Are aware that the incident is occurring (know about the bullying or see it from a distance)

Within each group there may be potential victims who are afraid they could be bullied next and this may influence their decision-making when deciding what to do.

What Can I Do?

If Bullying is happening to you or someone else:

- Tell the student who is bullying to stop. State quite clearly that the behaviour is unwelcome and offensive
- Ignore them and walk away
- Be a friend to the person being bullied
- Encourage the person being bullied to inform someone
- Seek help. Talk about it to someone you trust
- Report it to a member of staff, a trustworthy friend or buddy. Feel confident that an incident can be solved
- Talk it over openly with your parents—they can help you make a decision
- DO NOT retaliate with physical or verbal abuse
- If you are experiencing bullying on the way to or from school, tell your parents and walk home with a friend
- Write a description of the event and place it in the class meeting agenda or give it to the teacher

Do You Bully?

- Do you tease, abuse or hit others?
- Do you call people names?
- Do you belong to a group which hurts or insults others?
- Do you stand silently watching others being hurt?

  If you answered yes then… this will happen:

If You Are Bullying:

Step 1—You will be counselled by your classroom / yard duty teacher. You will be given the

opportunity to resolve the situation and discuss the issue with the person you bullied. The name of the perpetrator and victim will be recorded.

Step 2—If you persist you will be referred to a member of the administration team. You may be required to attend a counselling program and your parents will be notified.

Step 3—If you are found to be bullying again a consequence will be applied. This may include:

- in school isolation (recess and lunch)

- letter home to parents and a parent interview

- counselling program

- loss of privileges

- suspension

Step 4—If bullying continues your parents will be phoned and required to come to school.

Severe cases involving bullying are accelerated through these stages.

How Can You Help?

As Parents You Can:

- Be aware of signs of distress in your child.
- Assist you child to discuss the problem with a teacher.
- Discourage any planned retaliation, either physical or verbal, if your child is bullied by discussing positive strategies they can use.
- Be positive about your child's qualities and encourage your child to be tolerant and caring.

As Staff You Can:

- Adopt positive classroom management strategies and incorporate anti-bullying messages in the curriculum.

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- Provide positive role models for students.
- Actively counteract bullying behaviour.
- Respond appropriately to any reported incident of bullying.
- Be obviously present during recess and lunchtimes when you are on duty, as a deterrent to possible incidents of bullying.

Responses to Bullying

- We use the 'Restorative Practise' approach to deal with incidents of bullying. Restorative Practise creates opportunities for those involved in a conflict to work together to understand, clarify and resolve the situation and work together towards repairing the harm caused.
- A copy of the process used and questions asked is available at the front office.
- This process occurs on the first occasion. Continued incidents will result in referral to an administrator for the possible application of behaviour management consequences.

Promoting Positive Behaviours

- At Mt Dandenong Primary School we aim to promote positive behaviours around the issues of bullying and harassment in a number of ways including:
  - The implementation of the 'Runde' program throughout the year.

  - Peer Mediation.

  - Staff training and development.

  -Our Healthy Living program.

  -Use of the Bounce Back Program

  - Promoting the School Values

Grievance Procedure

- If you are unhappy with the outcome of an incident, please refer to and work through the Mt Dandenong Primary School complaints resolution procedure.
- Copies of these are available from the front office.