

Bullying Prevention POLICY

Definition:

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

Types of bullying behaviour

There are some specific 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 and discrimination against people with disabilities and/or medical conditions.
- **cyberbullying** - either online (email, chat rooms, discussion groups, instant messaging) or via mobile phone.

What is not bullying? There are also some types of behaviour, 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. (DET website)

Rationale:

- Bullying in any form is unacceptable. In shaping the culture of PPPS we have strong values, policies, procedures and strategies in place for responding to bullying and unacceptable behaviour.
- The school will provide a positive culture based on our values of *a fair go for all, respect, care, trust, honesty, and personal achievement* where bullying is not accepted. This culture aims to ensure that all will have the right of respect from others, the right to learn or to teach, and the right to feel safe and secure in their school environment at all times.
- Empowering students to help prevent bullying is essential. This will be facilitated by our emphasis on living by the school values, and through implementation of evidence based bullying prevention programs appropriate to their age, that ensure students have both a voice and meaningful involvement in school based activities that address and respond to bullying.

Aims:

- To reinforce within the school community what bullying is, including cyber bullying, and the fact that it is unacceptable.
- To alert everyone within the school community to the signs and evidence of bullying, and to the fact that everyone has a responsibility to report it to staff, whether they are an observer or a victim.
- To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying, including cyber bullying, are investigated appropriately and that support is provided to both victims and perpetrators.
- To seek parental and peer group support and cooperation at all times.

Implementation:

- Our school has adopted a zero tolerance position on bullying.
- Teachers will be regularly reminded of their duty of care regarding protection of students from all forms of bullying.
- Parents, teachers, students and the community to be made aware of types of cyber bullying, and its legal and hurtful ramifications.
- Our school will combat bullying by providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment based on our values.
- The school will adopt a three-phase approach to dealing with bullying.

A. Primary Prevention:

- 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. In particular, assertiveness training and bystander training that builds skills in children to challenge and/or report unacceptable behaviour will be central to our curriculum.
- Continue to promote our school values and the You Can Do It capabilities as an integral part of life at Plenty Parklands. Cybersafety will form part of each child's ICT curriculum.
- Recognition of positive behaviour and a focus on examples of students living by the values.
- Professional learning for staff relating to all forms of bullying including cyber bullying, harassment and proven counter measures.
- Community awareness of the school's programs and approach relating to bullying and its characteristics and the school's programs and response.
- Educate the school community about the seriousness of cyber bullying, its impact on those being bullied, how cyber-bullying occurs and consequences of cyber bullying.
- Each classroom teacher to clarify with students at the start of each year the school Bullying Prevention policy, including cyber-bullying.
- The curriculum to include bullying prevention messages and strategies e.g. 'The Friendly Schools' and 'No Blame Approach to Bullying', Bullying; No Way! programs.
- Junior School Council, peer support delegates, staff and students to promote the philosophy of 'No Put Downs'.
- When appropriate all students to be provided with individual and confidential computer and network passwords in years 3-6. Processes to be put in place to ensure tracking of student activity on the school's computer equipment and network. Firewalls to be installed to eliminate outside traffic into the school's network and intranet.
- The use of mobile phones by students will be limited to outside school hours with consequences to be implemented for any students who use mobile phones inappropriately.

B. Intervention:

- Once identified each student responsible for the behaviour, victim and witness will be spoken with, and all incidents or allegations of bullying will be fully investigated and documented.
- The school will reinforce with children the importance of appropriately reporting incidents of inappropriate behaviour involving themselves or others, and the imperative that staff responds appropriately and proportionally to each allegation, consistent with the school's values and policies.
- Students and staff identified by others as cyber bullies will be informed of allegations.
- Parents are to be contacted
 - if their child is alleged to have been bullied or experienced behaviour that is deemed to have the potential to evolve into bullying, or
 - if their child bullied someone else or has behaved in a manner that is deemed to have the potential to evolve into bullying.
- Appropriate and proportional consequences may include a verbal apology, writing a letter of regret, loss of privileges and access, etc.
- Recognition for positive behaviour and resolution of problems as appropriate.
- Both students responsible for the behaviour and victims will be offered counselling and support when deemed appropriate. This may be with PPPS staff or referred to educational support services/external agencies.
- Removal of cyber-bullies from access to the school's network and computers for a period of time.
- If student bullying persists parents will be contacted again and consequences implemented consistent with the school's values and policies.
- Consequences of repetitive or serious incidents may include loss of privileges, counselling, conciliation or any other consequences consistent with the school's values and policies. It may also include suspension, expulsion and/or criminal charges.

C. Post Incident:

It is important that appropriate strategies be in place after the incident has been resolved for all students involved.

Appropriate strategies may include:

- ongoing monitoring of students' behaviour including use of ICT when appropriate .
- 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 support officers etc. for both parties.
- reinforcement of positive behaviours and appropriate behaviour strategies.
- Incidents to be recorded, electronically using Compass to enable accurate tracking over years.

Evaluation: This policy will be reviewed to reflect best practice and to be in line with any changes to legislation or DET policy.

Ratified by School Council in