


Melton Primary School

No. 430



"Onward with pride"

We have the right to be safe and we have the right to learn at school.

Ban Bullying Policy

Rationale:

It is the policy at Melton Primary School not to tolerate bullying in any form.

All members of our School Community are committed to ensuring a caring and safe environment, which promotes personal growth, learning and positive esteem.

We believe all members of our School Community have the right to a safe environment. These rights have concurrent responsibilities including accepting individuals and treating all with respect.

Bullying

Bullying is when someone is subjected to behaviour repeated over time, which is hurtful, threatening or frightening.

Types

- Physical: Includes fighting, pushing, shoving, gestures, spitting, standing over or invading someone's personal space.
- Verbal: Includes name calling, teasing, offensive language, spreading rumors, putting down or belittling people, picking on or ridiculing people because of their gender, culture, race, physical appearance, religious or social background.
- Deliberate Act: Includes offensive notes, damaging people's property and stealing.
- Telephone: Involves repeatedly phoning and or texting a person with the intention to harass or cause discomfort.
- Extortion: Includes stand over tactics, threats to "get" people, making suggestive comments of any form or sexual abuse.
- Exclusion: Includes leaving people out of certain activities on purpose.

Racial discrimination of any kind is a form of bullying.

Bullying prevention at Melton Primary School requires a Whole School Approach involving staff, student and parent participation.

Anti-bullying programs are included in the curriculum across the school.

School responsibilities

- At our school it is a right and responsibility to report bullying.
- After consultation with those involved action will be taken to ensure that the bullying stops. With staff, students and parents working together we can create a more caring, tolerant, healthy and harmonious school environment where all members of the school community are valued.
- There will be disciplinary consequences, covering a range of strategies for those in breach of this policy
- all forms of bullying are prohibited at Melton Primary School, discuss with students
- staff are aware of bullying and are able to identify and look for signs of occurrence among the students
- students are aware of the consequences of bullying (student code of conduct)
- all cases of bullying are reported to an Assistant Principal / Principal and responded to promptly

- there will be disciplinary consequences, covering a range of strategies for those in breach of this policy
- Constructive strategies to deal with harassment will include: 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.
- A summary of the policy will be included in the Student Enrolment Package while new staff will receive extensive documentation 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 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 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 to verify the actions taken.
- Student programs will be organized to raise student awareness about bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment, to provide a forum for discussion of matters and to aid development of 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 workers. The curriculum will include anti-bullying messages and strategies in line with current DET materials e.g. 'The Friendly Schools' and 'No Blame Approach to Bullying' programs.
- This policy will run in conjunction with the cyber bullying policy.

Links

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 (re cyber-bullying)
- DET's [Respectful Schools](#)

Cyber Bullying

Rationale:

Young students have embraced the use of information and communication technologies to maintain contact with friends and make new ones. They send e-mails, create their own websites, post intimate personal news in blogs (online interactive diaries), send text messages and images via mobile phones, message each other through IMs (instant messages), chat in chat rooms, post to discussion boards, and seek out new friends in community sites. While most interactions are positive, there are increasing reports of these technologies being used to harass and intimidate others. This has become known as *cyber bullying*.

Definition

- *Cyber bullying* is when someone is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed, or otherwise targeted by another child, pre-teen or teen using the Internet, interactive and digital technologies or mobile phones. It has to be a minor on both sides, or at least have been instigated by a minor against another minor. Cyber-bullying consists of covert, psychological bullying, conveyed through the electronic mediums which may include but are not exclusive to: 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.
- www.stopcyberbullying.org

Staff responsibilities:

- all forms of cyber bullying are prohibited at Melton Primary School
- staff are aware of cyber bullying and are able to identify and look for signs of occurrence among the students
- students are aware of the consequences of cyber bullying (student code of conduct)
- a code of conduct is in use for technology, including computers and mobile phones, whilst on the school premises
- there is supervision of technology that is effective for monitoring and deterring cyber bullying
- we will inform all new students and families of this policy and the practices.
- all cases of cyber bullying are reported to an Assistant Principal / Principal and responded to promptly
- there will be disciplinary consequences, covering a range of strategies for those in breach of this policy

Student responsibilities:

- hand in mobile phones to the office before school and collect them at the end of the day
- do not participate in cyber bullying
- do not use mobile phones, cameras or other digital devices to record audio and visual material that is not authorised as part of the school curriculum program
- do not breach the privacy of students, staff and members of the school community through any unauthorised recording or filming
- do not disseminate inappropriate information through digital media or other means
- report incidents of cyber bullying to a member of staff

- advise students being victimised by cyber bullying to talk to an adult
- offer to speak to an adult on behalf of the student who is being victimised by cyber bullying

How students can protect themselves from cyber bullies

- Do not give anyone access to your passwords or provide people you don't trust with your phone number.
- Be careful which websites you post personal information on.
- Do not open e-mails or read text messages from unidentified names or phone numbers.

What students are to do if they feel they are a victim of cyber bullying

- Do NOT respond
- Tell a teacher / an Assistant Principal / Principal right away
- First and foremost, save *original* evidence (e-mails, instant messages, etc.)

Appendices relating to these policies

- Appendix A: Anti-Bullying (including cyber-bullying) and Anti-Harassment Procedures

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

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 Coordinator, Student Welfare Coordinator or peer mediator, 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.

Level 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 Incident Report Form should be completed and submitted to the student welfare coordinator or principal/assistant principal.

Level 2

If the bullying or harassment continues, or in instances of severe bullying or harassing, a referral should be made to the Student Welfare Coordinator.

Here, the Student Welfare Coordinator (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”

Level 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).

Level 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. Student Welfare Coordinators 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*’ (DET) at any stage in the process depending on contextual information relating to the severity of the bullying (including-cyber bullying) and harassment.

To be reviewed at school council Nov 2021