

# YARRA ROAD PS

## Anti-Bullying and Harassment POLICY

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Yarra Road Primary School is committed to implementing a culture of child safety, inclusive of all school environments, in and outside of school hours and practices zero tolerance of child abuse.

### RATIONALE

Yarra Road Primary School is committed to providing a safe and caring environment and culture that enables positive relationships to be formed amongst all students and staff and that encourages our values of *Respect, Responsibility, Excellence, Confidence and Resilience*. Clear expectations and reinforcement of these core values are seen as preventative measures against bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment, and will inform the community that **bullying and harassment in any of its forms will not be tolerated.**

### PURPOSE

- To explain what bullying and harassment are, and the fact that they are unacceptable and will not be tolerated
- To ask 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 an 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 cooperation at all times.

### DEFINITIONS

**Bullying** is when a person, or a group of people, repeatedly upset or hurt another person or damage their property, reputation or social acceptance. Bullying may be direct physical, direct

verbal, indirect or cyber bullying. Bullying is not a one-off disagreement between two or more people or a situation of mutual dislike.

This table describes the categories of bullying.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Includes (but not limited to)</b>
Direct physical bullying	Hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching and pushing or damaging property
Direct verbal bullying	Name calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, homophobic or racist remarks, or verbal abuse.
Indirect bullying	Action designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>□ Indirect bullying includes:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ lying and spreading rumours</li><li>○ playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate</li><li>○ mimicking</li><li>○ encouraging others to socially exclude someone</li><li>○ damaging someone's social reputation or social acceptance</li></ul></li></ul>
Cyberbullying	Direct 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. It can be verbal or written.

Harassment	Is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome and which is reasonably likely to humiliate, offend, intimidate or distress a person. For example, teasing a student because of their speech impediment.
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### **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:* involves an argument or disagreement between people but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.

*Social rejection or dislike:* is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

*Single-episode acts:* of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If someone is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied. Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different people is not the same as bullying. However, this does not mean that single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression should be ignored or condoned as these are unacceptable behaviours.

### **GUIDELINES**

Yarra Road Primary School will not tolerate bullying (including cyberbullying) or harassment.

Yarra Road Primary School is strongly committed to a whole school approach to eliminating all types of bullying, as this is offensive, unwelcome and socially unacceptable. This will be taken in a consistent and systematic approach, with a focus on student safety and wellbeing.

All staff will be informed of the anti-harassment policy and practices at the commencement of their time at the school.

All complaints of harassment will be heard in confidence and taken seriously.

Preventative curriculum programs will be incorporated into our teaching and learning programs, such as Respectful Relationships, Mateship that promotes resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving as well as reinforcing the schools values of *Respect, Responsibility, Excellence, Confidence and Resilience*.

There will be disciplinary consequences, covering a range of strategies, for those in breach of the anti-bullying (including cyberbullying) and anti-harassment policy, guidelines and procedures.

The school is committed to a Restorative Justice approach to student management.

- The school must act in partnership with parents to eliminate bullying.
- Targets of bullying must be supported and perpetrators assisted to change their behaviour with appropriate counselling.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

- Constructive strategies to deal with harassment will include: education in coping strategies; problem solving and social skills and counselling. These strategies will be employed in preference to punitive sanctions and negative consequences.
- The school leadership team and the teachers will work together to ensure the safety of all school members in situations of bullying (including cyberbullying) 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 cyberbullying) 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 organised to raise student awareness about bullying (including cyberbullying) 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-curricula 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. Circle Time and Respectful Relationships

- Disciplinary consequences for bullying (including cyberbullying) and harassment will comply with the school's Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy. The principal or their nominee will provide disciplinary consequences including suspension in accordance with DET guidelines.
- All complaints of harassment and bullying should be treated seriously and be dealt with promptly by staff.
- A preventative and early intervention program focussing on areas such as social skills, peer support and peer mediation training must be established.
- Perpetrators need to have guidance to observe the key rights of others, as well as their responsibility to observe school rules and make the school environment pleasant and secure.
- Continued inappropriate behaviour needs to be referred to the Principal, Assistant Principal or Student Welfare Coordinator. Parents must be notified and invited to participate in a series of meetings designed to achieve compliance with the school's Code of Conduct. □ Involvement of student welfare support services may be sought.
- All teachers will ensure that classroom rules deal with bullying. Students will be encouraged to report and be aware of who they should contact and how to use assertiveness to deal with bullying.
- Victims of bullying require counselling, ongoing support and protection from further threatening behaviour. They need reassurance that unacceptable behaviour results in consistent application of effective consequences.
- The school will allocate resources for the training of staff in issues pertinent to combating bullying and resolve conflict.
- Student's right and responsibilities should be regularly discussed in classrooms.
- Staff will be provided with appropriate professional learning experiences on bullying.

### **Student Support**

If students believe they are being bullied they may contact their teacher in the first instance, or a staff member that they would prefer to discuss the matter with.

If any staff member feels a student is at risk from bullying and harassing behaviours they should discuss their concerns with the Principal or Assistant Principal in order to ensure appropriate support for the student. It is important that staff fully document any actions taken in response to student bullying and/or harassment (See Appendix B).

## LINKS AND APPENDICES (including processes related to this policy)

Links which are connected with this policy are:

- DET's Student Engagement Guidance
- The school's Acceptable ICT Use Agreement (re: cyber-bullying)
- DET's Bully Stoppers: Make a Stand, Lend a Hand
- DET's Vulnerable Students □ DET's School Complaints Guidelines

Supporting links:

- Bully Free World: Special Needs Anti-bullying Toolkit • Australian Human Rights Commission - Human rights in the school classroom
- Safe Schools Coalition Victoria
- Racism. No way! anti-racism education for Australian schools
- Victoria Police Youth Resource Officer
- Kid's Helpline

Appendix which are connected with this policy are:

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

## EVALUATION

Policies and procedures will be evaluated regularly.

**This Policy was last ratified by School Council in 2017**

## Appendix A

### Anti-Bullying (including cyberbullying) and Anti-Harassment Procedure

How will your complaint be dealt with?

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.

Note: If at any time bullying or harassment persist or is sufficiently serious, the principal may contact parents/carers and commence formal disciplinary action in accordance with the School's Student Engagement Policy/Student Code of Conduct. Furthermore, the principal may commence formal disciplinary action in line with DET's Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance at any stage in the process depending on contextual information relating to the severity of the bullying (including cyberbullying) and harassment.

#### Level 1

If the bullying or harassment incident is minor or a first time occurrence, teachers may elect to use one or more of the following:

- Stopping the bullying/ re-statement of rules and consequences/ reminder of Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Restorative questioning
- Think time detention
- Private conference

If the student does not take control of his/her behaviour, the Student Welfare Coordinator/Year Level Coordinator/ Assistant Principal/ Principal should be notified.

#### Level 2

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

- Provide counselling support to the victim
- Meet with the perpetrator to develop [a Behaviour Support Plan/ other type of behaviour modification strategy document] and meet with parents of the student to discuss strategies
- 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 behaviour management plan should be developed by the teacher in consultation with the student welfare coordinator and parents/carers. Individual behavior management 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.

Further concerns

If (after following the appropriate steps) parents still feel that their complaint has not been addressed satisfactorily, they can then contact the regional office.