



PARK ORCHARDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Policy and Procedures: Bullying and Harassment

RATIONALE:

Park Orchards Primary School is committed to providing a safe and respectful teaching and learning environment where bullying and harassment is not tolerated. Park Orchards Primary School believes that all staff and students have the right to be treated with respect, the right to learn or to teach, and the right to feel safe and secure in the school environment. A clear bullying (including cyberbullying and harassment) policy and procedures will inform the community that bullying and harassment in any of its forms will not be tolerated.

1. PURPOSE:

To create a safe and respectful school environment and prevent bullying, cyberbullying and other unacceptable behaviours.

DEFINITIONS:

Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, deliberately upset or hurt another person or damage their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion. There is an imbalance of power in incidents of bullying with the bully or bullies having more power at the time due to age, size, status or other reasons.

This table describes the categories of bullying.

Category	Includes
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. Indirect bullying includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lying and spreading rumours ○ Playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate ○ Mimicking ○ Encouraging others to socially exclude someone ○ Damaging someone's social reputation or social acceptance
Cyberbullying	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.

NB: Many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management.

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.

VRQA 4.1(a) Student Safety

2. GUIDELINES:

All members of the school community are expected to play an active role by reporting incidences of bullying, and harassment. A school-wide approach will be taken to deal with bullying, and harassment in a consistent and systematic way, including:

- Promoting and supporting safe and respectful learning environments where bullying is not tolerated
- Putting in place whole-school strategies and initiatives
- Developing a Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy and Procedures that includes processes and strategies to prevent and respond to incidents of bullying and other forms of unacceptable behaviour
- Involve students, staff and parents in updating the Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy and Procedures
- Work in partnership with parents to reduce and manage bullying
- Take a whole-school approach focusing on safety and wellbeing

3. IMPLEMENTATION:

We have adopted a three-phase approach to bullying. This approach involves primary prevention, managing incidents and what to do post incident

Primary Prevention:

- Provide professional development, resources, and preventative strategies for staff on bullying and harassment
- Parents are encouraged to contact the school if they suspect a bullying or behaviour problem
- The school will reinforce with students the importance of appropriately reporting incidents of inappropriate behaviour involving themselves or others
- Provide access to a range of programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving on site or through external agencies
- Explicit teaching of interpersonal skills and developing resilience to bullying and harassment will be undertaken by classroom teachers
- Teachers are to make students aware of their responsibilities regarding the Bullying and Harassment Prevention Policy and Procedures
- Promote safe and friendly behaviours through student representative council, poppy tribes, the big and little buddies program and student leadership
- Monitor yard behaviour and continue evaluation to inform planning and to ensure prompt responses to incidences of unsafe or disrespectful yard behaviour
- Make a range of activities available to students at recess and lunch breaks
- Provide recognition for positive action and appropriate behaviour utilising awards including:
 - Bucket Filling Awards
 - Student of the Week
 - Principal's Awards
 - Aussie of the Month

Managing Bullying Incidents:

All incidents or allegations of bullying or harassment will be properly investigated and documented by staff. The school has clear guidelines to responding to bullying incidents. Should repeated incidences of bullying occur, the following actions will be taken:

- Restorative practices to be carried out with victims and students carrying out the bullying
- The Principal and Assistant Principal will be informed
- Parents of all students involved will be notified
- Incident to be logged using the school tracking processing and recognising the privacy of all parties
- A consequence will be given in accordance with the whole school behaviour management plan
- In grave instances, an Individual Behaviour Management plan will be created and further action, e.g. suspension, may be enacted
- The intervention of School Support Services will be used as necessary

VRQA 4.1(a) Student Safety

- Depending upon the nature of each incident, the incident may also be reported to police, reported to the Student Critical Incident Advisory Unit, and/or reported to the Department's Emergency and Security Management Unit by following the Department guidelines for managing complaints and misconduct

Consequences:

- Appropriate and proportional consequences may include a verbal apology, writing a letter of regret, completing a reflection process, loss of privileges
- Consequences of repetitive or serious incidents may include criminal charges, suspension, expulsion, loss of privileges, counselling, conciliation or any other consequence consistent with the school's Student Code of Conduct
- Parents or community members who bully or harass or abuse staff will be provided with official warnings, and if necessary, referred to the police, and/or have trespass restrictions placed upon them by the Principal Class Team consistent with the Summary Offences Act
- **Corporal punishment is prohibited in all Victorian schools. Corporal punishment must NOT be used at the School under any circumstances.**

Other Policy and Procedures which underpin this policy:

- Behaviour Management Policy & Procedures
- Duty of Care Policy & Procedures
- On Site Supervision Policy & Procedures
- Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy & Procedures
- Student Welfare Policy & Procedures

Related Legislation

- Education and Training Reform Act 2006

Relevant Resources

- <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/what.aspx>
- <https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/WhatIsBullying/DefinitionOfBullying>
- <http://www.beyondbullying.com.au/what.html>

4. EVALUATION

- This policy will be reviewed every four years and following significant incidents if they occur

Appendix A: About Bullying and Harassment

This policy was ratified by School Council ...

Nov 2017

APPENDIX A: ABOUT BULLYING AND HARRASSMENT

EXAMPLES OF BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

	Direct	Indirect
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hitting, slapping, punching • Physical contact (e.g. purposely brushing up against another’s body) • Unwelcome patting, touching, embracing • Kicking • Pushing, strangling, grabbing • Spitting, biting • Pinching, scratching • Throwing things (e.g. stones) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting another person to harm someone
Non-Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mean and hurtful name calling • Offensive staring and leering • Offensive gestures, jokes, comments, letters, phone calls or emails • Unwanted comments about physical appearance • Racist or smutty comments/jokes • Offensive name calling • Hurtful / “friendly” teasing • Demanding money or possessions • Forcing another to do homework or commit offences such as stealing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spreading nasty rumours • Trying to get other students to not like someone
Non-Verbal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threatening and/or obscene gestures • Displays of sexually graphic material 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliberate exclusion from a group or activity • Removing and hiding and/or damaging other’s belongings
Cyber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covert, psychological bullying, conveyed through the electronic mediums 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliberate exclusion from social network groups

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

Bullying and harassment can often make people feel:

- Embarrassed or ashamed
- Offended or humiliated
- Intimidated or frightened
- Uncomfortable

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:

Such as 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 episodes of nastiness or physical aggression:

These 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.

STUDENT AND COMMUNITY ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO INCIDENTS OF BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

Students who are bullied should:

- Tell/inform the person you don't like what they are doing and that you want them to stop
- Tell a teacher, Principal/Assistant Principal and give full details of the event
- Tell their parents/carers and give them full details of the event

Student witnesses to bullying should:

- Model appropriate behaviour using the POPS Values and Tribes Agreements
- Seek teacher assistance and document the incident if requested

Parents should:

- Listen sympathetically to reports of bullying
- Speak to relevant school personnel (not the alleged student/s concerned); and
- Cooperatively work with the school in seeking an improved solution

Parent witnesses should:

- Limit their responses to the incident they have witnessed to appropriate verbal intervention.
- Seek teacher assistance and document the incident if requested

SCHOOL ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO INCIDENTS OF BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

The School will:

- Promptly attend to and report instances of bullying behaviour
- Inform/involve the Principal and Assistant Principal
- Treat all parties with respect and dignity
- Treat information regarding bullying confidentially
- Protect the bullied child from further harm
- Record what happened
- Assure the student bullied that the incident will be dealt with
- Teachers or the Principal or Assistant Principal to talk individually to bullying students first
- Follow up meetings with students who have been bullied. The student who was bullied may receive additional support and there may be additional assertiveness training
- Where necessary, speak to class without using names in for example circle time, small group meetings, class meeting time
- Where appropriate and using discretion, work with parents of the bullied child to assist their child to avoid being bullied in the future. Keep them informed about progress and the measures taken
- Inform the parents of the child instigating the bullying, cyber-bullying and/ or harassment, and work with them to establish joint strategies for behaviour modification
- Where appropriate/necessary follow the guidelines and procedures contained in the **Behaviour Management Policy and Procedures** for suspension or expulsion

Challenging incidents – Physical violence or intimidation (e.g. threatening behaviour)

- Move student onlookers away
- Separate students with minimal physical contact
- Seek assistance/support from other staff
- Inform the Principal and/or Assistant Principal
- Report of incident to be recorded
- Follow other relevant procedures in the Bullying and Harassment and Behaviour Management Policies and Procedures

Challenging Students

- Arrange collaborative case management of students with persistent aggression or continued victimisation
- Develop a student behaviour management plan
- Problem-solving strategies for dealing with disclosures
- Utilise School Support Officers where appropriate
- Use of sanctions for violent incidents
- Follow other relevant procedures in the Bullying and Harassment and Behaviour Management Policies

Schoolyard strategies

- Separate the school play equipment into group areas (foundation, junior and senior)
- Promotion of positive social interaction and directed play– lunch time activities and ideas given for games
- Teachers reinforce positives with verbal praise. Listen to grievances and take appropriate action

POSITIVE STEPS A STUDENT AND PARENT CAN TAKE

Positive steps a student can take in response to cyber bullying:

- Tell an adult – parent, teacher, Principal, Assistant Principal
- Keep a record – include time and date
- Ask parents to contact their phone or internet provider and report what is happening
- If messages are threatening get in touch with the Police – cyber-bullying is illegal
- **Do not reply** to bullying messages – it will only get worse if you do. Often if you don't reply the bully will leave you alone
- **Change your contact details** – get a new user name for the internet, a new email account, new mobile phone number and only give them to people you trust (e.g. family and close friends)
- **Keep your username and password secret** – keep all personal information private
- Respect other people online and offline
- Don't spread rumours about people or share their secrets, including their phone numbers and passwords
- If someone insults you online or by phone, stay calm and ignore them
- “Do as you would be done by”- think how you would feel if you were bullied. You're responsible for your own behaviour – make sure you don't distress other people or cause them to be bullied by someone else

Positive steps a parent can take to ensure internet and other technology safety for their child:

- Promote and model appropriate cyber conduct at home
- Familiarise themselves with information and communication technology and websites used by their child
- Have an appropriate agreement with their child on the acceptable use of technology at home, which includes clearly identified and consistent consequences
- Try to keep computers and other information and communication technology in an open and common area and have filter software installed
- Actively participate in anti-cyber-bullying activities
- Become familiar with, and be alert for, behaviour that indicates that a child may be involved in cyber-bullying
- If their child is a victim of cyber-bullying assist them to determining the appropriate response using the **Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedures** as a guide