PARK ORCHARDS PRIMARY SCHOOL
Bullying Prevention Policy

This template was updated in Oct 2020 to be consistent with to be consistent with Department policy and incorporate the recommended template in the new Policy and Advisory Library (PAL)

PURPOSE

Park Orchards Primary School (P.O.P.S) is committed to providing a safe and respectful learning environment where bullying will not be tolerated.

The purpose of this policy is to:
- explain the definition of bullying so that there is shared understanding amongst all members of the P.O.P.S community
- make clear that **no form of bullying** at P.O.P.S will be tolerated
- strategies and programs in place at P.O.P.S to build a positive school culture and prevent bullying behaviour include:
  - Whole School Tribes Approach to building learning communities (eg. Multiage Tribe Groups)
  - Start of the year program focussing on age appropriate activities that highlight the school values, bullying and cyber safety
  - Buddy Program- Year 5 with Foundation student and Year 6 with Year 1 student
  - Restorative Practices Approach
  - Year 3 and 5 students participating in MPower Girls and Revved Up for Boys
  - Participation in
- ask that everyone in our school community be alert to signs and evidence of bullying behaviour, and accept responsibility to report bullying behaviour to school staff
- ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are appropriately investigated and addressed
- ensure that support is provided to students who may be affected by bullying behaviour (including targets, bystanders and students engaging in bullying behaviour)
- seek parental and peer group support in addressing and preventing bullying behaviour at P.O.P.S.

When responding to bullying behaviour, P.O.P.S aims to:
- be proportionate, consistent and responsive
- find a constructive solution for everyone
- stop the bullying from happening again
- restore the relationships between the students involved.

P.O.P.S acknowledges that school staff owe a duty of care to students to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm, which can include harm that may be caused by bullying behaviour.

SCOPE

This policy addresses how P.O.P.S aims to prevent, address and respond to student bullying behaviour. P.O.P.S recognises that there are many other types of inappropriate student behaviours that **do not meet** the definition of bullying which are also unacceptable at our school. These other inappropriate behaviours will be managed in accordance with our Behaviour Management Policy and Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy. This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

DEFINITIONS

Bullying

In 2018 the Education Council of the Council of Australian Governments endorsed the following definition of bullying for use by all Australian schools:

Bullying is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening.

Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records).

Bullying of any form or for any reason can have immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.

Bullying has three main features:
- It involves a misuse of power in a relationship
- It is ongoing and repeated, and
- It involves behaviours that can cause harm.

Bullying can be:
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 –** e.g. spreading rumours, playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate, mimicking, encouraging others to socially exclude a person and/or damaging a person's social reputation or social acceptance.

Cyberbullying is direct or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technology. For example, via a mobile device, computers, chat rooms, email, social media, etc. It can be verbal, written and include images, video and/or audio.

Other distressing and inappropriate behaviours

Many distressing and inappropriate behaviours may not constitute bullying even though they are unpleasant. Students who are involved in or who witness any distressing and inappropriate behaviours should report their concerns to school staff and our school will follow the Behaviour Management Policy and Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy.

Mutual conflict involves an argument or disagreement between people with no imbalance of power. In incidents of mutual conflict, generally, both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the issue. 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. However, single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not acceptable behaviours at our school and may have serious

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consequences for students engaging in this behaviour. Behaviour Management Policy and Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy to guide a response to single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression.

Harassment is language or actions that are demeaning, offensive or intimidating to a person. It can take many forms, including sexual harassment and disability harassment. Further information about these two forms of harassment, including definitions, is set out in our **Inclusion and Diversity Policy.**

Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated at P.O.PS and may have serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour. P.O.P.S will use its Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy to guide a response to students demonstrating harassing behaviour, unless the behaviour also constitutes bullying, in which case the behaviour will be managed in accordance with this Bullying Prevention Policy.

BULLYING PREVENTION

P.O.P.S has a number of programs and strategies in place to build a positive and inclusive school culture. We strive to foster a school culture that prevents bullying behaviour by modelling and encouraging behaviour that demonstrates acceptance, kindness and respect.

Bullying prevention at P.O.P.S is proactive and is supported by research that indicates that a whole school, multifaceted approach is the most effect way to prevent and address bullying. At P.O.P.S we have adopted a three-phase approach to bullying. This approach involves primary prevention, managing incidents and what to do post incident

Primary Prevention:

P.O.P.S has a number of programs and strategies in place to build a positive and inclusive school culture. We strive to foster a school culture that prevents bullying behaviour by modelling and encouraging behaviour that demonstrates acceptance, kindness and respect.

- We have a positive school environment that provides safety, security and support for students and promotes positive relationships and wellbeing
- We strive to build strong partnerships between the school, families and the broader community that means all members work together to ensure the safety of students
- 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 eg. Stride- MPower-Girls, Revved Up- Boys
- Explicit teaching of interpersonal skills and developing resilience to bullying and harassment will be undertaken by classroom teachers as part of the P.O.P.S start of the year program incorporating whole school Tribes and Cybersafety
- Teachers are to make students aware of their responsibilities regarding the Bullying Prevention Policy
- 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:
  o Bucket Filling Awards
  o Student of the Week
  o Principal's Awards
  o Aussie of the Month

- We participate in the National Day of Action against Bullying organised by our Student Representative Council members

For further information about our engagement and wellbeing initiatives, please see our Student Wellbeing and Engagement policy.

Incident Response:

Reporting concerns

Bullying complaints will be taken seriously and responded to sensitively at our school.

Students who may be experiencing bullying behaviour, or students who have witnessed bullying behaviour, are encouraged to report their concerns to school staff as soon as possible.

Our ability to effectively reduce and eliminate bullying behaviour is greatly affected by students and/or parents and carers reporting concerning behaviour as soon as possible, so that the responses implemented by Example School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

We encourage students to speak to their class teacher. However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff including the Assistant Principal/ Principal.

Parents or carers who develop concerns that their child is involved in or has witnessed bullying behaviour at P.O.P.S should contact the Assistant Principal or Principal by phone on 9876 1249.

Investigations

When notified of alleged bullying behaviour, school staff are required to:

1. record the details of the allegations in Compass Chronicles and
2. inform Assistant Principal and Principal.

The Assistant Principal / Principal is responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, the Assistant Principal / Principal may:

- speak to the those involved in the allegations, including the target/s, the students allegedly engaging in bullying behaviour/s and any witnesses to the incidents
- speak to the parents of the students involved
- speak to the teachers of the students involved
- take detailed notes of all discussions for future reference
- obtain written statements from all or any of the above.

All communications with the Assistant Principal / Principal in the course of investigating an allegation of bullying will be managed sensitively. Investigations will be completed as quickly as possible to allow for the behaviours to be addressed in a timely manner.

The objective of completing a thorough investigation into the circumstances of alleged bullying behaviour is to determine the nature of the conduct and the students involved. A thorough understanding of the alleged bullying will inform staff about how to most effectively implement an appropriate response to that behaviour.

Serious bullying, including serious cyberbullying, is a criminal offence and may be referred to Victoria Police. For more information, see: Brodie's Law.

Responses to bullying behaviours

When the Assistant Principal/Principal has sufficient information to understand the circumstances of the alleged bullying and the students involved, a number of strategies may be implemented to address the behaviour and support affected students in consultation with the classroom teachers and if necessary Student Support Services (SSS).

There are a number of factors that will be considered when determining the most appropriate response to the behaviour. When making a decision about how to respond to bullying behaviour, P.O.P.S will consider:

- the age and maturity of the students involved
- the severity and frequency of the bullying, and the impact it has had on the target student
- whether the student/s engaging in bullying behaviour have displayed similar behaviour before
- whether the bullying took place in a group or one-to-one context
- whether the students engaging in bullying behaviour demonstrates insight or remorse for their behaviour
- the alleged motive of the behaviour, including any element of provocation.

The Assistant Principal/ Principal may implement all, or some of the following responses to bullying behaviours:

- Offer counselling support to the target student or students, including referral to SSS or an external provider
- Offer counselling support to the students engaging in bullying behaviour, including referral to SSS or an external provider
- Offer counselling support to affected students, including witnesses and/or friends of the target student, including referral to SSS or an external provider
- Facilitate a restorative practice meeting with all or some of the students involved. The objective of restorative practice is to repair relationships that have been damaged by bringing about a sense of remorse and restorative action on the part of the person who has bullied someone and forgiveness by the person who has been bullied
- Facilitate a mediation between some or all of the students involved to help to encourage students to take responsibility for their behaviour and explore underlying reasons for conflict or grievance. Mediation is only suitable if all students are involved voluntarily and demonstrate a willingness to engage in the mediation process
- Facilitate a process using the Support Group Method, involving the target student(s), the students engaging in bullying behaviour and a group of students who are likely to be supportive of the target(s).
- Implement a Method of Shared Concern process with all students involved in the bullying.
- Facilitate a Student Support Group meeting and/or Behaviour Support Plan for affected students.
- Prepare an Individual Management Plan restricting contact between target and students engaging in bullying behaviour
- Monitor the behaviour of the students involved for an appropriate time and take follow up action if necessary
- Implement year group targeted strategies to reinforce positive behaviours, for example Stride-MPower- Girls and Revved Up- Boys for year 3 and 5 students
- Implement disciplinary consequences for the students engaging in bullying behaviour, which may include removal of privileges, detention, suspension and/or expulsion consistent with our Student Wellbeing and Engagement policy, the Ministerial Order on Suspensions and Expulsions.

P.O.P.S understands the importance of monitoring and following up on the progress of students who have been involved in or affected by bullying behaviour. Where appropriate, school staff will also endeavour to provide parents and carers with updates on the management of bullying incidents.

The Assistant Principal/Principal is responsible for maintaining up to date records of the investigation of and responses to bullying behaviour.

OTHER POLICIES WHICH UNDERPIN THIS POLICY:

- Behaviour Management Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- On Site Supervision Policy
- Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy
- Student Welfare Policy

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

The following websites and resources provide useful information on prevention and responding to bullying, as well as supporting students who have been the target of bullying behaviours:

- Bully Stoppers
- Kids Helpline
- Lifeline
- Bullying. No way!
- Student Wellbeing Hub
- Office of the eSafety Commissioner
- Australian Student Wellbeing Framework

REVIEW CYCLE AND EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years, or earlier as required following an incident or analysis of new research or school data relating to bullying, to ensure that the policy remains up to date, practical and effective. Proposed amendments to this policy will be discussed with staff and the school council and communicated to the students and parents via the school website, and school newsletter.

Data will be collected through:

- discussion and consultation with students and parent/carers
- regular staff surveys
- assessment of other school-based data, including the number of reported incidents of bullying in each year group and the effectiveness of the responses implemented
- Attitudes to School Survey
- Parent Opinion Survey

This policy was last reviewed **August 2018** and is scheduled for review in **August 2021**