Sandringham Primary School

Bullying Prevention Policy

Background

This policy is guided by the Department of Education and Training and applies to students, staff and parents of Sandringham Primary School.

Purpose:

At Sandringham Primary School we believe that the school is a place for learning and teaching where all students have the right to learn and develop in a supportive environment with people who are caring and co-operative.

We have a strong commitment to prevent and minimise bullying and putdowns in the school. We are committed to the use of a combination of many approaches as we believe there is no one simple strategy to achieve a safe and harmonious environment.

This policy is based on a set of rights (see below) and their related responsibilities.

Students are provided with the opportunity to develop and practise skills that will support and equip them throughout their lives.

Together we develop a values driven culture supported by the skills taught through planned, responsive and proactive programs. These include 'KidsMatter, Friends for Life' program, Norms and Values, Bully Stoppers and Restorative Practice programs.

Code of Conduct: **Rights and Responsibilities**

All students, staff and parents have the right to:
- be treated with courtesy, kindness and respect
- express feelings and opinions respectfully
- work and play in an atmosphere of harmony and co-operation
- expect that the co-created school values and norms will be consistently implemented and that there will be respect for the rights of all involved
- be valued as an individual
- learn in a supportive atmosphere.

All students, staff and parents have the responsibility to:
- treat others with courtesy, kindness and respect
- actively listen to others
- maintain a safe and secure school environment
- manage impulsivity
- model and support co-created school and classroom norms
- develop and take responsibilities for their own actions
- value others, for their individual differences and similarities
- work to achieve their personal best whilst allowing others to do the same
- not take part in bullying in any way, zero tolerance
- report incidents of bullying to the principal or a teacher
- understand and not tolerate the participatory role of bystanders

The elimination of bullying at Sandringham Primary School is everyone's responsibility. A person who is bullied does not have the problem alone because bullying adversely affects everyone in the community in one-way or another. For example:
- The student who is bullied and their family, suffer emotional and physical distress
- No one is safe whilst bullying is happening. Bullying creates a climate of intimidation and fear in which effective learning cannot take place
- Students who are aware of bullying but do nothing about it often feel guilty and ashamed
- Both students who bully and the bystanders can:
  o become desensitised to cruelty and injustice
  o fail to develop social responsibility
  o and, in some cases, become involved at a later stage in workplace bullying and/or other forms of anti-social behaviour

Bullying - A definition
Definition:
Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological aggressive behaviour by a person or a group directed towards a less powerful person or group that is intended to cause harm, distress or fear. (Department of Education and Training – Bully Stoppers)
It can be:
- Physical aggression
- The use of put-down comments or insults
- Name calling

- Deliberate damage to the person's property or reputation
- Deliberate exclusion from activities
- The setting-up of humiliating experiences.
(from "Friendly Kids, Friendly Classrooms" by Helen McGrath)

Bullying is different from simple social rejection, one off aggression/nastiness and mutual conflict.

Bullying is a repeated unjustifiable behaviour that may be physical, verbal and/or psychological that is intended to cause fear, distress or harm to another. It is conducted by a more powerful individual or group against a less powerful individual who is unable to effectively resist. Bullying occurs to some extent in all schools. The effects of bullying on both the student being bullied and the student engaging in the bullying behaviour show a need for intervention in social skills development in young children and the need for the creation of safe environments.

Bullying can be both direct (open and overt) and indirect (covert). Typical examples are physical bullying, practical jokes, name calling, using email, notes and phones to send abusive material, deliberate reputation damage through rumour and exposure, deliberate and repeated social exclusion, property damage etc.

Cyber Bullying

The widespread availability of the internet provides unprecedented opportunities to communicate and learn. Whilst most people use the internet as a powerful tool for communication and education, some individuals use the power of the internet for purposes such as posting quite personal information and for bullying and harassment. We can minimise the harm that such individuals do by teaching students how to use the internet safely and responsibly. The term *cyber ethics refers* to a code of safe and responsible behaviour for the internet community. Practising good *cyber ethics* involves understanding the risks of harmful and illegal behaviour online and learning how to protect internet users from such behaviour. It also involves teaching young people, who may not realise the potential for harm to themselves and others, how to use the internet safely and responsibly.
Recommendations for staying safe while using the internet at home and at school include:

- Talk to an adult immediately if you see something with which you are not comfortable.
- Be open and honest with mum and dad about your Internet usage.
- Talk to mum and dad about your different online experiences, the good and the bad.
- Tell mum and dad if anyone online makes you feel uncomfortable or scared.
- Don't give out personal details.
- Use advanced search to narrow results.
- Use internet content filters.
- Don't chat to people you don't know.
- Don't open unexpected email attachments.
- Don't follow email links you are not expecting.
- Don't follow email links that request personal details.
- Use an email junk-mail filter and anti-virus software.
- Screenshot any online bullying.

Guidelines for students, teachers and parents on what to do in bullying situations.

Terminology to be used within the school community:
- Avoid the term "victim" and use "**recipient " or "target"** instead.
- Avoid the term "the bully" and use **"the student who bullied"** instead.
- Avoid the term "weaker" and use **"in a less powerful (or more vulnerable) position"** instead.

Guidelines to be followed within the school community
- All students are acknowledged and valued as individuals regardless of gender, racial, cultural, religious, physical or intellectual differences.
- The Principal and staff have a responsibility to fairly; reasonably and consistently implement the Code of Conduct.
- All students are informed that if they are bullied, teachers are available to support them and to stop it from happening. Incidents **must** be reported to a teacher be it the class teacher, the teacher on duty or a person with whom they feel comfortable.
- All students are informed that if they witness bullying or are aware of it occurring in other ways, incidents must be reported to a teacher whether it is the class teacher, yard duty teacher or a person with whom they feel comfortable.
- All parents are informed that if they believe that their child or another child is being bullied, they should contact the school, class teacher, principal, assistant principal or someone with whom they feel comfortable.
- All teachers are informed that if they feel bullied they must report the incident to the principal. (Dated journal entries to support this)
- All teachers are informed of the procedures that must be followed if an incident of bullying is reported to them.
- All teachers have a responsibility to respond to, investigate, follow up and monitor incidents of bullying.
- All reported incidents of harm (deliberate or unintentional) are logged onto data reporting system (SMART)

Procedures for identifying and dealing with bullying

The staff member investigating the report should:

1. Establish the facts-
   - What was said and/or done to the recipient
   - The time and place the incident occurred
   - The reaction of the recipient
   - Whether it is the first time the recipient has experienced bullying behaviour and, if not, whether the same person or group was involved
   - Whether the recipient knows of anyone else experiencing the same treatment
   - Whether there were any witnesses to the incident.

These facts will be ascertained using a range of strategies which best suit the child's age and emotional state. Eg. drawings, written conversations, group interviews, one on one interviews and verification techniques.
This information must be recorded in individual welfare files and kept for future reference.

2. Strategies the school will use to respond to a confirmed incident of bullying:
   - Record any statements from the recipient of bullying
   - Record any statements from witnesses
   - Record any statements from the student who allegedly bullied
   - Discuss a range of possible solutions to manage the situation and find a resolution to which all parties involved agree
   - Advise all involved that they may make additional reports if they are not satisfied that the issue has been resolved
   - Advise the parents of the recipient, and the student who bullied, of the incident
   - Monitor and record the situation on an ongoing basis
   - Where necessary provide support and the opportunity for counselling for the recipient and the student who bullied
   - Develop an Individual Behaviour Management Plan, where necessary, for the student who bullied and the recipient, to promote and establish positive peer relationships
   - Establish graduated behaviour management strategies for the student who has bullied.

3. If bullying by a student persists, strategies to eliminate further incidents will be implemented and may involve:
   - reflection time away from class or yard
   - completion of written think time on paper
   - written letter of apology
   - loss of privileges
   - school suspension or expulsion
   - ongoing counselling from appropriate agency for both recipient and student who chose to bully

Parties involved will be advised of their right of access to the Department of Education and Training complaints procedures or to seek external review through the office of the State Ombudsman.

At Sandringham Primary School a Student Well Being Committee has been established and is comprised of members of the Leadership Team, the Welfare Team, students involved in the Bully Stoppers program and the Junior School Council. This group oversees the implementation of the school policy, whole school use of a variety of programs and strategies to develop and enhance the students' social skills, and wellbeing as well as the regular review of policy.

Following is a summary of the programs for students, teachers and parents to promote social competency and a bullying prevention environment.

These programs develop in students the strategies that promote a caring, positive and pro-social school community based on positive relationships and include:
   - *Restorative Practices
   - Circle Time
   - Friends For Life
   - positive parenting initiatives
   - class meetings
   - an engaging curriculum
   - Better Buddies Program
   - alternative lunch time activities
   - Friendship Ambassadors
   - Play is the Way
   - A daily, rostered Welfare Team
   - daily yard supervision is provided at specified times
   - anecdotal records of incidents using the incident journal in the yard duty bag then transferred to SMART welfare
   - follow up of students in SMART welfare program
   - annual audits of student perceptions of high risk areas and situations done on a class basis
   - planning to address issues evident in the audit of student perceptions
   - a student elected Junior School Council
   - learning Support Programs
   - Partnership with Bayside City Council Youth Services

- Be the Boss of Your Brain (Year 1 program)
- Student feedback through 'Things I want my teacher to know' box
- Bullying prevention performing arts incursions
- Wellbeing Student Action Leadership Team
- Peer Support Student Action Leadership Team
- Peacemakers
- Cybersafety Parent Information nights with Elearning Consultant Georgina Pazzi

*Restorative Practices:
The fundamental concepts of Restorative Practice include an understanding of violation of people and relationships, resultant obligations and liabilities, restorative justice to heal and put things right and seeking to heal and put things right. These fundamental concepts have the relationship and putting it right at its core. Restorative Practice is based on an old commonsense understanding of wrongdoing and the underlying need in all of us to be connected. Wrongdoing is therefore damage to the connection, and restorative justice seeks to understand, make amends and put things right. The healing of the relationship invariably concerns all those connected to or affected by the wrongdoing thus allowing everyone to begin their "journey to belonging."

Professional development activities focussing on student welfare issues are attended by individual teachers, teams of teachers and the Welfare Team.

At Sandringham Primary School our Values and Norms, co-created with students, are stated positively and support the principles and practices of the school welfare program and endeavour to develop:
- an understanding and use of common language
- resilience, getting along, persistence, confidence and organisation
- social skills and social competencies.

These skills are defined explicitly as personal development areas, which teachers teach to, evaluate and report on to parents.

In summary, the Sandringham Primary School community is continually striving for the establishment of a cohesive, supportive and inclusive culture with a zero tolerance of bullying. The implementation of a range of bullying prevention program options at all year levels provides students with strategies to develop positive relationships and contributes to the creation of a caring, pro-social school environment. Parents, teachers and students are supported by the provision of a variety of bullying prevention resources, programs, professionals and outside agencies.

Through:
- the commitment of staff as positive role models
- parent opinion, feedback and support
- student identification of high risk areas and situations
- the regular review of programs and policies, our students will continue to grow and learn in a safe environment.

References:
Anti-bullying Template for Schools by Helen McGrath
Friendly Kids Friendly Classrooms by Helen McGrath
National Safe Schools Framework Dept of Education, Science and Training
The Bully You Can't See by Farah Tomazin
Cyberethics: Be alert but not alarmed by John Keysers

Research Papers
Peer Harassment, School Connectedness and Academic Achievement by Marla Eisenberg
A Strategy to Help Students with Bullying by Katherine E. Gregory
Bullying and Harassment by Dr Donna Cross

Websites:
www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/students.aspx

www.transformingconflict.com

Appendix to Sandringham Primary School's Bullying Prevention Policy.
In reviewing our Bullying Prevention Policy and whole school approach to student welfare, our school has followed the recommendations of the Bullying Prevention Template for Schools developed by Dr Helen McGrath.

The template has five parts including:
Part A: Bullying Prevention Policy
Part B: Procedures, Processes and Structures Based on Informed Practice.
Part C: Effective Management of Bullying
Part D: Implementation of Preventive programs and Strategies Based on Informed Practice.
Part E: Collection of Feedback and Ongoing Adjustments

Part A: Bullying Prevention Policy.
In consultation with the school community the school developed a Bullying Prevention Policy that was ratified by School Council.

Part B: Procedures, Processes and Structures Based on Informed Practice.
Bullying awareness programs continue on an on-going basis for all students at all year levels through:
- the use of norm setting by each class for use as a point of reference for student interactions,
- the implementation of Friends for Life and Restorative Practices social skills programs,
- the presentation of workshops demonstrating real life bullying scenarios for students to discuss and resolve.

Bullying awareness programs for teachers and parents are provided by health professionals. Consultants provide skills based professional development for teachers, and information sessions for parents, based on informed practice.

Teacher guidelines for responding to and managing bullying situations are developed collaboratively and are outlined in the school policy.
Through the welfare team and a commitment to whole staff responsibility for student welfare, the school has procedures in place to address student welfare issues as they arise. Confidential reporting and record keeping procedures and systems have been established and collected data is analysed to inform our practice.

The playground is supervised by duty staff during before school (8.45 -9am) and after school (3.30 -3.45), recess and lunchtimes and students are made aware of the importance of teacher intervention in welfare issues.

The students complete a bullying audit of playground areas and activities to enable the implementation of strategies to eliminate high risk situations.

Part C: Effective Management of Bullying
Guidelines for the effective and sensitive handling of bullying reports and complaints have been included in the policy. Additionally the staff are proactive in continuing open communication between all parties involved in bullying issues through the use of student interviews, follow up phone calls to parents and parent/teacher meetings to ensure all are informed.

Following the investigation of an incident, the staff use mentoring and coaching strategies to improve and develop their practice.

Counselling is available for the bully and the victim at a level agreed to after consultation with the parents. Counselling is also available to others involved if necessary.

Part D: Implementation of Preventive Programs and Strategies based on Informed Practice.
Sandringham Primary School is committed to the establishment of a 'no put downs' culture.
This culture permeates the school through a range of anti bullying program options implemented at all levels and including *Bully Stoppers* and *Restorative Practice*.

These programs and strategies contribute towards the creation of a caring and pro-social school. The programs are supported by a variety of anti-bullying resources for teachers, students and parents which may range from reference material, structured classroom programs, texts for students and in house workshops.

The program extends to the creation of a safe and structured approach to indoor and outdoor activities including strategic playground supervision, open classrooms and library, time out areas and individualised behaviour management plans.

Underlying our endeavour to create a 'safe school', is a staff commitment to model appropriate behaviour and provide positive role models. Through the use of consultants, focussed professional development and consultation with the broader school community, a whole school approach to anti bullying is a high priority.

Part E: Collection of Feedback and Ongoing Adjustments.
Ongoing collection of data about bullying is achieved through the parent opinion survey, Student Attitudes to School Survey, playground audit data, incident records in the welfare book, audit in SMART welfare and parent and teacher observations and feedback.

The school has a proactive approach to anti-bullying that is enhanced by analysing information collected to inform the future direction of the programs at the school.

The remainder of this document is a copy from the DET website and is copied here for reference.

Purpose of this policy

To support schools to create safe and respectful school environments and prevent bullying, cyberbullying and other unacceptable behaviours.

Policy

Schools must include a statement about bullying and cyberbullying behaviours in the Rights and Responsibilities section of their Student Engagement Policy.

Note: A Student Engagement Policy should include a positive statement about the school's values and philosophy, and the related programs and strategies being implemented by the school to promote student engagement, high attendance and positive behaviours see below.

Definition

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: - 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.

Note: 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.

Approaches

Schools should:

- promote and support safe and respectful learning environments where bullying is not tolerated

- put in place whole-school strategies and initiatives as outlined in the Department's anti-bullying policy

- develop a Student Engagement Policy 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 Policy.

- work in partnership with parents to reduce and manage bullying.

- take a whole-school approach focusing on safety and wellbeing.

Related policies

- Student Support Services Student Engagement Wellbeing and Inclusion

Related legislation

- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*

Department resources

For more information see**:**

Victorian Anti Bullying and Mental Health Initiative

Other resources

http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers

References

http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/bullying.aspx

This Policy was ratified by Sandringham Primary School Council on April 23rd 2018