



## Briar Hill Primary School

# BULLYING (INCLUDING CYBER-BULLYING) & HARASSMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURES

### POLICY STATEMENT

Our school is committed to providing a safe and caring environment and culture which enables positive relationships to be formed amongst all students and staff, and which encourages self-esteem, cooperation, personal growth and a positive attitude to learning and teaching. A clear policy on bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment will inform the community that bullying and harassment in any of its forms will not be tolerated.

### AIMS

- To reinforce within the school community that no form of bullying is acceptable.
- To alert everyone within the school community to signs and evidence of bullying, and inform them that they have a responsibility to report it to staff whether as 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 co-operation at all times.

### WHAT ARE BULLYING, CYBER BULLYING AND HARASSMENT?

**Bullying** is repeated oppression, physical or psychological, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group.

**Cyber-bullying** consists of covert psychological bullying, conveyed through 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.

Our school will actively promote a positive and welcoming personal environment for all members of the school community. When people are bullied or harassed some effects might be anger, embarrassment, fear and humiliation, loss of self-confidence and reduced function and potential. Bullying and harassment will be addressed, individual differences will be respected and students and staff will be enabled and supported in their pursuit of learning and teaching.

## **GUIDELINES**

A school-wide approach will be taken to deal with bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment in a consistent and systematic way.

- All staff, students and families 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.
- Our school will organise preventative curriculum programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.
- Staff programs will occur periodically to keep staff informed of current issues/strategies for dealing with these issues.
- There will be disciplinary consequences, covering a range of strategies, for those in breach of the Anti-Bullying (including cyber bullying) and Anti-Harassment Policy, guidelines and procedures.

## **PROGRAM**

Constructive strategies to deal with harassment will include:

- education in coping strategies
- assertiveness training
- problem solving and social skills
- counseling, and
- behaviour modification.

These positive, proactive strategies will be employed in preference to sanctions or negative consequences.

The Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment Policy of the school will be widely promoted to students, staff, parents/carers and the local community.

A summary of the policy will be included in the staff handbook, and new staff will receive this information as part of the school's induction process.

The school will work 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 will be their professional duty to pass on the information to an appropriate person in order to ensure 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 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. The curriculum will include anti-bullying messages and strategies in line with current DEECD guidelines.

Professional development will be provided for staff relating to bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment and proven strategies to address these issues in classrooms will be shared with all staff.

Disciplinary consequences for bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment will comply with the school's Welfare and Discipline Policy. The principal or their nominee will provide disciplinary consequences including suspension in accordance with Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) guidelines.

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

Links which are connected with this policy include:

DEECD's [Effective Schools are Engaging Schools: Student Engagement Policy Guidelines](#)

DEECD's [Safe Schools are Effective School's](#)

DEECD's [Student Engagement Policy Guidelines](#)

The school's Internet Use Policy (re cyber-bullying)

DEECD's [Respectful Schools](#)

**EVALUATION**

This policy will be reviewed annually, or more often if necessary, due to changes in regulations or circumstances.

<b>Date Implemented</b>	1 July, 2014
<b>Approved By</b>	
<b>Approval Authority (Signature &amp; Date)</b>	
<b>Responsible for Review</b>	Principal
<b>Review Date</b>	July, 2015