

TARNEIT RISE PRIMARY SCHOOL BULLYING & HARASSMENT POLICY

Rationale

Bullying and harassment are negative social behaviours and actions that are not acceptable in our school.

Purpose

- To create a safe and respectful school environment and prevent bullying and harassment, cyber bullying and other unacceptable behaviours.
- To ensure Tarneit Rise Primary School complies with DET policy and guidelines.
- To further empower children who are key stakeholders within our organisation.
- To ensure the school has in place strategies to enhance compliance with the Child Safe Standards 2, 4 and 7.
- To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up and that support is given to both victim and perpetrator.
- To ensure the school discharges its duty of care towards children

Definitions

Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, deliberately upsets or hurts another person or damages 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.

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 or covert 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 is 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.

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.

Many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying or harassment 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 should be ignored or condoned as these are unacceptable behaviours.

Approach to Bullying at Tarneit Rise Primary School

The school has a zero tolerance of bullying or harassment in any form.

At Tarneit Rise Primary School we are committed to the safety and welfare of all children. We are constantly striving to make school a place where children can have fun and feel safe and connected. We do not condone or accept bullying. We will work hard to prevent and deal with bullying at Tarneit Rise Primary School .

Children are encouraged to report any bullying incidents to an adult and not to remain silent about it. Once identified, the bully, victim and witnesses will be spoken to, and all incidents or allegations of bullying will be fully investigated and documented.(Refer to Anti-Bullying & Child Welfare Policy and Child Code of Conduct)

The school will

- promote and support a safe and respectful learning environment where bullying is not tolerated
- provide clear definitions of what is and what is not bullying, including descriptions of the different subtypes of bullying
- put in place whole-school strategies and initiatives as outlined in DET's anti-bullying policy
- develop a Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy (and guidelines) that includes processes and strategies to prevent and respond to incidents of bullying and other forms of unacceptable behaviour.
- involve children, staff and parents/carers in updating the Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy (and guidelines)
- include a statement about bullying and cyberbullying behaviours in the Rights and Responsibilities section of their Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy (and guidelines)
- work in partnership with parents/carers to reduce and manage bullying
- take a whole-school approach focusing on safety and wellbeing
- have a clear and documented process where all incidents of bullying have planned interventions and a record of actions taken and follow up required.
- ensure that support is provided to any child who has been affected by, engaged in or witnessed bullying behaviour. This includes liaising with parents and other personnel as may be appropriate.
- provide regular updates, within the bounds of privacy legislation, to parents/carers about the management of incidents
- address cyber bullying as part of its Internet Use/Social Media Policy
- ensure the policy is easily accessible within the school community, available to new families to the school and published on the school's website and in the newsletter.
- utilise a range of available resources including DET's Bullying No Way! And the National Safe Schools Framework.

- organise preventative curriculum programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, tolerance, conflict resolution and problem solving.
- Conduct an annual confidential bullying survey of the student body will be run and de-identified information will be used at staff and/or parent meetings]

Staff will

- be provided with professional development training relating to bullying, cyber-bullying and harassment
- implement school curriculum programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving
- clarify to their class at the start of each year the school policy on bullying.
- follow school protocols and procedures when investigating child matters.
- intervene and swiftly manage any bullying situation that is encountered or reported by a child or family
- contact families to discuss bullying incidents or other incidents of inappropriate behaviour.
- inform families of any investigations undertaken and any follow up action.
- ensure all reported incidents of bullying are followed up
- offer comfort and support to victims
- seek parental support and cooperation
- record incidents
- run cyber-bullying information sessions for parents each year
- include cyber safety as part of the delivered curriculum.
- participate in professional development programs aimed at raising awareness and maximising consistency in managing any bullying incidents.

Student programs will be organised to raise student awareness about bullying and harassment, to provide a forum for discussion and to aid development of attitudes. Some matters will be dealt with formally in the curriculum and in peer support programs, leadership programs or extra-curricular activities.

Students will

- be supported. If students believe they are being bullied they may contact their classroom teacher in the first instance, or another staff member whom they would prefer to discuss the matter with. Where required, an intervention plan will be developed with parent input, implemented and evaluated. Some strategies that might be used by the school to assist the student may include: education in coping strategies; assertiveness training; problem solving, mentoring and social skills; counselling, peer support and behaviour modification.
- If any staff member feels a student is at risk from bullying and harassing behaviours they should discuss their concerns with the PLC leader or assistant principal/principal in order to ensure appropriate support for the student. It is important that staff document fully any actions taken in response to student bullying and/or harassment.
- be encouraged to build resilience including speaking up and standing up for themselves and others.

Parents will:

Watch for signs of bullying and alert the school if they believe their child is being bullied, rather than 'deal' with this themselves. The following signs could suggest a child is being bullied

- have trouble getting out of bed
- not want to go to school
- change their method or route to school or become frightened of walking to school

- change their sleeping or eating patterns
- have frequent tears, anger, mood swings and anxiety
- have unexplained bruises, cuts and scratches
- have stomach aches or unexplained pain
- have missing or damaged belongings or clothes
- ask for extra pocket money or food
- arrive home hungry
- show an unwillingness to discuss, or secrecy about, their online communication.

STRATEGIES: THAT PARENTS CAN USE IF THEIR CHILD IS BEING BULLIED

- Report any bullying matters immediately to the school. Discuss the situation with your child's classroom teacher or with a member of the school's leadership team.
- Do not try and resolve the matter yourself by approaching any children or families. This tends to incite/inflame the matter even further.
- Parents should try to obtain as many facts as they can through discussion with their child so that they can identify if there is a REPEATED pattern. Try to identify and write down:
 - What happened
 - Who was involved on each occasion
 - Where and when these things happened
 - Whether there was any provocation on the part of the victim
 - Who witnessed each situation
 - Did anybody else see it, and, if so, who;
 - When the bullying first began;
 - What solutions you have tried so far; and
 - The names of any teachers who are aware of the problem
- As soon as you have a reasonably clear picture of the situation and the facts let your child know that you are approaching the school.
- Make an appointment with your child's teacher, assistant principal, principal or a member of the leadership team to discuss the matter (please ring the office to make an appointment so we may give the matter our full attention)

At the meeting:

- Bring notes of the points you want to make at the meeting.
- Present your concern and information in a calm way and try to work with the school to resolve the problem. Becoming angry, making accusations or demanding certain actions may make the situation worse.
- It can be helpful to remember that if you were originally unaware of the problem, then your child's teacher may also not have known of the situation.
- Be patient. The school will need time to investigate the matter and speak to all the children and staff (if applicable) involved.
- Ask to see the school's Anti-Bullying policy to see the school's approach to dealing with bullying.
- The school will contact you to discuss the outcome of the investigation and to outline the steps it will take to resolve the matter.

- Arrange a further meeting to discuss the plan for dealing with the matter and any future bullying incidents.

Other:

Refer also to the school's *Duty of Care Policy*, the *Student Engagement Policy*, the *Gender Identity Policy* and the Child Safe Standards.

- 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](#)
- 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
- Other support resources linked to this policy are:
 - [Appendix A Anti-Bullying \(including cyber-bullying\) and Anti-Harassment Procedures](#)
 - [Appendix B Reporting an incident of Bullying/harassment template](#)
 - [Appendix C Formal referral of a student who has bullied / harassed others to student welfare coordinator template](#)

Evaluation

- This policy will be reviewed annually as part of preparing the Annual Report or if guidelines change (latest DET update early July 2017).

<u>Ratification</u>	<u>Review Date</u>	<u>Policy Number</u>	<u>Version Number</u>	<u>Date Produced</u>
May 2018	2019	13	1	September 2017

Reference:

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

Appendix A

Anti-Bullying (including cyber-bullying) and Anti-Harassment Procedures

What are Bullying, Cyber Bullying and Harassment?

Bullying

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, who have more power at the time, deliberately upset or hurt another person, their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion.

Types of Bullying

There are three broad categories of bullying:

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** – this form of bullying is harder to recognise and often carried out behind the bullied student's back. It is 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 and social acceptance
 - cyber-bullying, which involves the use of electronic means to humiliate and distress

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

In mutual conflict situations, there is 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-episode acts of nastiness or meanness, or random acts of aggression or intimidation

Single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression 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.

Cyber-bullying

Consists of covert, psychological bullying, conveyed through the 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.

Why do we have a Policy on these?

To provide a safe and friendly college environment for students and staff and to encourage care, courtesy and respect for others. All persons have a legal right to protection from harassment under the *Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act* and the *Victorian Equal Opportunity Act*.

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

Am I bullying or harassing someone?

If you are not sure about your behaviour you can:

- check it out by asking if it is offensive or inappropriate
- stop it
- apologise
- take it seriously if someone says they are feeling uncomfortable
- talk it over with an adviser or somebody who has an understanding of the issues

What are some of the feelings victims of bullying or harassment may experience?

- "I will ignore it and it will go away."

If anything it will make things worse - you will give the impression that you agree with the situation.

- "I don't want to cause trouble."

Most causes of harassment are sorted out quite simply. By speaking up, action can be taken to address the problem.

- “Am I to blame?”

Victims of harassment or bullying sometimes feel that it is their fault. Victims are made to feel guilty by the offender and often blame themselves. It is your right to have a safe environment free from harassment or bullying.

- “Am I imagining things?”

Often our hunches are correct. Rather than put up with nagging doubts, talk to someone about your feelings.

Bullying or harassment can often make people feel:

- embarrassed or ashamed
- offended or humiliated
- intimidated or frightened
- uncomfortable

What should you do if you see another person being bullied or harassed?

Tell the person that you witnessed the incident and advise them to report it to an appropriate person. However, if your friend is harassing another person, let them know that their behaviour is unacceptable.

Bystanders who do nothing to stop bullying may be contributing to the problem by providing an audience for the bully.

Bullying can involve

- grabbing, aggressive staring, hitting, pinching kicking, pushing and shoving
- publicly excluding a person from your group
- knocking a person’s books or belongings out of their hands or off their desk
- teasing a person because of their looks

Cyber-bullying can involve

- *Flaming* – online fights using electronic messages with angry or vulgar messages
- *Harassment* – repeatedly sending nasty, mean and insulting messages
- *Denigration* – posting or sending gossip or rumours about a person to damage his/her reputation or friendships
- *Outing* – sharing someone’s secrets or embarrassing information or images online
- *Exclusion* – intentionally and cruelly excluding someone from an online group
- *Cyber-stalking* – repeated, intense harassment and denigration that includes threats or creates significant fear

Harassment is usually directed at a person because of their gender, race, creed or abilities – it can be subtle or explicit

Subtle (the most common) they include:

- offensive staring and leering
- unwanted comments about physical appearance and sexual preference
- racist or smutty comments or jokes
- questions about another's sexual activity
- persistent comments about a person's private life or family
- physical contact e.g. purposely brushing up against another's body
- offensive name calling

Explicit (obvious) they include:

- grabbing, aggressive hitting, pinching and shoving, etc
- unwelcome patting, touching, embracing
- repeated requests for dates, especially after refusal
- offensive gestures, jokes, comments, letters, phone calls or e-mail
- sexually and/or racially provocative remarks
- displays of sexually graphic material – pornography
- requests for sexual favours
- extreme forms of sexual harassment will lead to criminal prosecution

What do you do if you are being bullied or harassed?

- tell the person you don't like what they are doing and you want them to stop
- discuss the matter with a Coordinator, Student Welfare Coordinator or peer mediator, peer support leader or a teacher that you feel comfortable with
- the school will take your concerns seriously - all complaints will be treated confidentially

How will your complaint be dealt with?

Your 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.

Level 1

If the bullying or harassment incident is minor or first time occurrence, teachers may elect to use one or more anti-bullying practices:

- stopping the bullying/re-statement of rules and consequences
- restorative questioning
- think time detention
- private conference
- shared control discussion

If the student does not take control over his/her behaviour, an Incident Report Form should be completed and submitted to the student welfare coordinator or principal/assistant principal.

Level 2

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

Here, the Student Welfare Coordinator (or another who has responsibility for student welfare) may:

- meet with the student to develop a behaviour contract
- 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 ‘strength building’ plan should be developed by the student welfare coordinator in consultation with student, parents/carers and teachers. Individual strength-building 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.

Note: The school may choose, if bullying or harassment persists or the initial incident is of such magnitude, that parents/carers will be contacted and consequences implemented consistent with the school’s Student Code of Conduct. Furthermore, the principal may commence formal disciplinary action in line with *‘Effective Schools are Engaging Schools - Student Engagement Policy Guidelines’ (DET) at any stage in the process depending on contextual information relating to the severity of the bullying (including-cyber bullying) and harassment.*

Appendix B

Reporting An Incident of Bullying / Harassment – Template

Staff member recording incident: _____

Date: / /

Name of student(s) who appears to have instigated bullying

Year/Class: _____

Name(s) of target(s) _____

Name(s) of witnesses

Did you observe the incident? YES NO

If 'No' who reported the incident to you? _____

Brief description of incident (what was allegedly said or done to the student who appears to have been bullied?)

What form(s) of bullying took place? Verbal Physical Indirect

Cyber Other Please detail:

Was the incident of bullying: Mild Severe

Describe how you responded (Did you use a school anti-bullying practice?)

Describe how student responded to your intervention

Where / when / time incident took place:

Location: _____

When: before school recess lunch in class after school

Time: ___ ___ : am/pm

Date incident took place: _/___ / _____

Further follow-up actions:

Date	What was the action?	Who was involved?

Appendix C

Formal Referral of a Student who has bullied / harassed others to Student Welfare Coordinator – Template

(This form may be completed by a classroom teacher, year level coordinator, school administrator or Student Welfare/Wellbeing Coordinator)

Staff member recording incident: _____

Date / / Position: _____

Name of student being referred: _____

Year/Class: _____

History of incident(s) of bullying (dates, description)

Have parents/guardian been notified? YES NO

If 'No' why not? _____

Have they attended a conference? YES NO

If 'No' why not? _____

Are they willing to participate? YES NO

If 'No' why not? _____

What appears to be the reason for the student's bullying behaviour (family, peer, school, personal, other)?

What practices have been tried?

Impact

What has been the student's attitude towards student(s) who have been targets? (e.g., any concern or remorse expressed)?

A brief description of academic performance of student over past year or more.

Distinguishing 'at risk' factors of student (e.g. limited English: economic disadvantage of family; ADHD)
