



BULLYING & HARRASMENT POLICY

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.
- Everyone within the school community is alerted to signs and evidence of bullying and has 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 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.

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.

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.

Bullying actions

These might be:

- *Verbal*: the child is called names, put down, threatened.
- *Physical*: the child is hit, tripped, poked, kicked, or belongings are stolen or damaged.
- *Social*: the child is left out, ignored, or rumours are spread.
- Psychological: the child is stalked or given dirty looks.

Bullying is different from ordinary teasing, rough-and-tumble or schoolyard fights. What makes it different is that the incidents are ongoing, and there is sometimes an imbalance of size, strength and power between the children involved.

Dealing with reports of bullying

- Reports of bullying may be made by students, teachers or parents.
- Always take the report seriously because a child/ren may be feeling quite emotionally distressed by the incidents/s.
- Depending on the level of the report, either a teacher, Assistant Principal or Principal should investigate the facts provided:
 - what happened?
 - who was involved?
 - where?
 - when? and
 - did anybody else see it, and if so, who?

Basically, attempts to gain a clearer picture of the situation are paramount.

It will then be the decision of the teacher or administrator to provide support as appropriate:

- a) to the child who has been bullied.
- b) For the child who is bullying

This process may involve:

- Consultation with parents.
- Consultation and support from school Guidance Officers, Social Workers or school chaplain.
- Support from outside school agencies.

The school STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT forms the basis of expected student behaviour and in some cases the Victorian Education Department "Student Code Of Conduct" may be consulted to consider:

- student/parent discipline meetings
- grounds for suspension and
- grounds for expulsion

BULLYING SOLUTIONS

Baxter Primary School believes it is every child's right to feel happy and safe at school, every child has the right to learn; every child has the right to be respected.

To promote this safe and effective environment we:

1. Develop positive student-teacher relationships and student-student relationships.
2. Facilitate peer support and buddy systems.
3. Implement a values-based curriculum.
4. Develop classroom structures and negotiated rules that focus on peer support and processes of group participation.
5. Teach values and social competencies: respect, co-operation, sportsmanship, truthfulness etc.
6. Implement discipline procedures that help keep students feeling connected and respected with realistic outcomes.
7. Develop a curriculum which values all children's contributions and encourages co-operation, teamwork and respect for others' views and ideas.
8. Develop literature based programs for social and emotional learning as well as creative arts therapy, outdoor education, etc.
9. On-going professional development and discussion between staff and students.
10. Promote positive behaviours and attitudes between students through various awards: Aussie of the Week, Principal's Awards, Student of the Week, etc.

If children feel unsafe and threatened physically, socially or emotionally at school, they have the following avenues of support:

1. Report any incident/s or child's behaviour to their classroom teacher.
2. Report any incident/s or child's behaviour to a teacher on duty eg. yard duty.
3. Report any incident/s or child's behaviour to the Principal or Assistant Principal.

Follow-up and support will include:

- a. Discussing/establishing the alleged facts with the child.
- b. Discussing these details with child/ren who may have caused the complaint.

Follow-up may include:

- a. Discussion with the Assistant Principal or Principal regarding appropriate strategies or consequences.
- b. Negotiation with parents regarding realistic consequences and other strategies to ensure appropriate behaviour in future.
- c. Negotiation with the victim's parents.
- d. Support from Guidance Officers re anti bullying strategies, counselling, etc.
- e. The need to implement the DEECD. "Code Of Conduct" which could include:
 - Discipline meetings with students and parents.
 - Suspension of students.
 - Expulsion of students.

At Baxter Primary School, we do encourage students to let us know if they feel unsafe or their rights have been violated. We will then support children in the appropriate manner.

All children are discouraged from retaliating with verbal or physical abuse. Please contact staff if you have concerns about your child's welfare. Sometimes incidents are isolated and can be quickly resolved.

At other times, a pattern of abuse, (bullying), may be occurring and we need to investigate more intensively.

What Can We Do About Bullying?

Children should.....

- Stand up for themselves. Use a strong voice and look the bully in the eyes and say **No**.
- **Walk away**.
- If it continues **report** any problems to a teacher.
- Talk to their parents about the problem after having told a teacher.
- **Do not retaliate** with aggression or they may find themselves in trouble as well.

Bullies have got problems of their own, so don't make their problems your problems.

Parents should..... if their child is the victim of bullying.

- Advise their child to act assertively: children need to stand up for themselves when the first act occurs.
- Advise their child not to retaliate without explaining the possible negative consequences of such an action.
- Advise their child to report incidents of bullying to a teacher. If possible, encourage the student to report the incident himself or herself. They will gain more self respect by taking the initiative themselves rather than relying on a parent to take action.
- Emphasize to their child that taking **any** part in bullying still makes them responsible for their actions
- Understand that being bullied is NOT part of growing up.

Parents should..... if their child is the bully

- Let your child know that bullying is totally unacceptable because it affects the rights of others
- Emphasize to them that school should be a safe place for everyone, regardless of the differences between people; no one deserves being bullied because they speak, look or act differently in any way 'you don't like'.
- Show your support for the victim; speak to your child about how the victim may feel because of your child's actions.
- Show support for the school's consequences for bullying.

The School will.....for the victim of bullying

- Clarify the facts
- Discuss the incident with the student/s concerned.
- Make sure that the victim of the bullying has been looked after and been given some strategies to deal with a similar problem in the future.
- Make sure that the class teacher/ assistant principal or principal have been informed.
- Involve the parents when necessary.

The School will.....for the bully

- Clarify the facts.
- Discuss the incident with the student/s concerned.
- Link actions to consequences.
- Restate the school rules on acceptable behaviour.
- Discuss other options that the child could choose when reacting to incidents.
- Involve parents when necessary.
- If warnings are not heeded, take action.
- Time out, detentions or suspension as deemed appropriate by consultation between the teacher, assistant principal and/or principal.

LINKS AND APPENDIX (including processes related to this policy)

Links which are connected with this policy are:

- 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
- Appendix A: Reporting on Incident of Bullying / Harassment – Template

EVALUATION

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

School Rules

We have five basic school rules:

- Move and play safely.
- Care for yourself, others and property.
- Resolve problems calmly, sensibly and fairly.
- Respect others through your speech and manners.
- Work as well as you can and allow others to do the same.

Appendix A

Reporting on Incident of Bullying / Harassment

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: / /

Additional comments:
