



## Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment 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.**

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.

### Aims:

- To reinforce within the school community that no form of bullying is acceptable.
- To ensure that everyone within the school community is alerted to signs and evidence of bullying and understands 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.

### Definitions:

**Bullying** is repeated oppression, physical or psychological, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group. Bullying is when someone repeatedly uses their power to deliberately upset or hurt others, their property, reputation or social acceptance. It can be done by an individual or by a group. It can be carried out physically, emotionally or verbally.

**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.

For further explanations see [Appendix 1](#).

### Guidelines from the Department of Education and Training:

1. A school-wide approach should be taken to deal with bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment in a consistent and systematic way.
2. All parents, students and staff should be informed of the anti-harassment policy and practices.
3. All complaints of harassment should be heard in confidence and taken seriously.
4. Staff professional learning should occur periodically to keep staff informed of current issues/strategies for dealing with these issues.
5. There should be disciplinary consequences, covering a range of strategies, for those in breach of the Bullying and Anti-Harassment Policy (Appendix 2).
6. This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's *Learning Technologies eSmart Policy*, and the *Netbook Lease Agreement*.

### **Implementation at Maldon PS:**

1. Our school will organise preventative curriculum programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving. Positive strategies will be employed in preference to punitive sanctions and negative consequences.
2. The Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment Policy of the school will be widely promoted to students, staff, parents/carers and the local community, and will be posted on the school's website.
3. A summary of the policy will be included in the Student Enrolment Package while new staff will receive extensive documentation as part of the school's induction process.
4. The staff will work together 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.
5. If a teacher feels a student is at serious and imminent risk from bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment then it is their professional duty to pass on the information to the principal, in order to ensure appropriate support for the student. It is important that teachers document fully their interaction with the student and to verify the actions taken.
6. Student programs will be organized 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 and workers. The curriculum will include anti-bullying messages and strategies in line with current DET materials e.g. 'Bully-stoppers'
7. 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.
8. The school will provide specialist resources such as books, videos, kits and in-service activities to assist staff in responding appropriately to bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment issues.
9. Disciplinary consequences for bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment will comply with the school's Student Engagement Policy. The principal will provide disciplinary consequences including suspension in accordance with Department of Education and Training (DET) guidelines.

**Appendix 1:** Added information regarding bullying

**Appendix 2:** Behavioural expectations

## Appendix 1:

### 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 is bullying?	What is not bullying?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>verbal or written abuse</b> - such as using put-downs, targeted name-calling or jokes, teasing, or spreading rumours, writing offensive notes</li> <li>• <b>Exclusion</b> – 'ganging up' against someone</li> <li>• <b>violence</b> - including threats of violence, threatening by word, gestures or actions, or forcing others to do something against their will</li> <li>• <b>sexual harassment</b> - unwelcome or unreciprocated conduct of a sexual nature, which could reasonably be expected to cause offence, humiliation or intimidation</li> <li>• <b>homophobia</b> and other hostile behaviour towards students relating to gender and sexuality</li> <li>• <b>discrimination including racial discrimination</b> - treating people differently because of their identity</li> <li>• <b>cyberbullying</b> - either online or via mobile phone</li> <li>• <b>invading personal space</b> – interfering with another person's property, unwelcome touching</li> </ul>	<p>There are also some behaviours, which, although they might be unpleasant or distressing, are not bullying:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>mutual conflict</b> - which involves a disagreement, but not an imbalance of power. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.</li> <li>• <b>single-episode acts</b> of nastiness or physical aggression, or aggression directed towards many different people, is not bullying</li> <li>• <b>social rejection or dislike</b> is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.</li> </ul>

### Impact on students who are bullied:

Being bullied can have different effects on different people. Students who are bullied are more likely to:

- feel uncomfortable, unhappy or left out, intimidated or frightened, embarrassed or ashamed, angry or unsafe, offended or humiliated,
- want to stay away or not join in
- find it difficult to concentrate or sleep
- be confused about how to deal with the situation
- feel disconnected from school and not like school
- have lower academic outcomes, including lower attendance and completion rates
- lack quality friendships at school
- display high levels of emotion that indicate vulnerability and low levels of resilience
- be less well accepted by peers, avoid conflict and be socially withdrawn
- have low self-esteem
- have depression, anxiety, feelings of loneliness and isolation
- have nightmares
- feel wary or suspicious of others
- have an increased risk of depression and substance abuse

- in extreme cases, have a higher risk of suicide, however, the reasons why a person may be at risk of suicide are extremely complicated.

Contributing factors to being bullied may include:

- depression
- family problems
- history of trauma
- belonging to a minority group, where isolation or lack of community support is an issue.

### **Impact on bullies:**

Students who frequently bully others are more likely to:

- feel disconnected from school and dislike school
- get into fights, vandalise property and leave school early.

In addition, recent Victorian research has shown that bullying perpetration in Year 10 is associated with an increased likelihood of theft, violent behaviour and binge drinking.

### **Impact on bystanders:**

Students who witness bullying may:

- be reluctant to attend school
- feel fearful or powerless to act and guilty for not acting
- have increased mental health problems, including depression and anxiety
- have increased use of tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs.

### **Impact on schools:**

When bullying continues and a school does not take action, the entire school climate and culture can be negatively affected. This impacts on student learning and engagement, staff retention and satisfaction and parental confidence in the school, which can lead to:

- the school developing an environment of fear and disrespect
- students experiencing difficulty learning
- students feeling insecure
- students disliking school
- students perceiving that teachers and staff have little control and don't care about them.

### **If you feel you are being bullied:**

Remember that not all strategies work all the time. If these do not work seek help from an adult.

Do not show the bully you are upset, this may help avoid future provocation.

Do not ignore hurtful comments that upset you.

Use "I" statements, as they can be very powerful. "I don't like it when you ....." "I don't like it when you say....."

### **Bullying roles**

People in a bullying scenario may take on one of the following roles:

- a person who engages in bullying behaviour
- a target who is subjected to the bullying behaviour
- an assistant who assists the bullying behaviour and actively joins in
- a supporter who encourages and gives silent approval to the bullying, by smiling, laughing or making comments
- a silent bystander who sees or knows about someone being bullied but is passive and does nothing (This may be an adult bystander)
- a defender who supports the student who is being bullied by intervening, getting teacher support or comforting them.

### **Role of students who witness bullying - 'There are no innocent bystanders'**

\* Don't join in – being part of the group where someone is being bullied is still being a bully.

\* Report bullying, so both the target and the bully are able to get help.

- \* When possible tell the bully to stop, sometimes peer group advice is stronger than messages coming from an adult.
- \* Reporting bullying is a mature and responsible act. It is not “dobbing”.

#### **Staff responsibilities:-**

- \* Ensure the school community is aware of the Student Welfare Policy
- \* Liaise with parents via the Principal or Welfare Coordinator when required
- \* Monitor student behaviour during recess and lunch times to ensure that appropriate behaviour becomes an integral part of the learning process
- \* Deal with all reported and observed incidences of bullying, including cyber-bullying
- \* Strive to ensure students feel safe at all times
- \* Help create a school culture which does not tolerate any form of bullying, including cyber-bullying
- \* Help students identify the various forms bullying can take
- \* Explore & discuss strategies that can help prevent any form of bullying
- \* Model anti-bullying behaviour

#### **Student responsibilities:-**

- \* Not bully other students, in any form. There is also no reason to tease.
- \* Report any incidents at school, or on the way to & from school, or within the school community
- \* Help prevent bullying situations by providing strong peer relations
- \* Practise strategies being discussed in the classroom or individually
- \* Take responsibility for behaviour
- \* Respect others and don't hurt their feelings
- \* Treat others fairly
- \* Take care of own things and do not touch, steal or damage someone else's property
- \* Try to sort small problems out without needing a third party to intervene

#### **Parent responsibilities:-**

- \* Listen and have empathy with feelings, asking questions calmly to clarify the problem
- \* Watch for signs of bullying, both when your child is either a target or perpetrator
- \* If your child is the perpetrator, work with care and compassion but emphasise that any discussion is an explanation, not an excuse for the behaviour
- \* Speak to the school if their child is involved in a bullying situation. Be assured that something will be done. We cannot help if we don't know what is happening.
- \* Instruct their child to report if they are being bullied
- \* Support your child if they have been bullied. Let them know that they are special individuals and help them to move on by encouraging them to use appropriate strategies for empowering themselves to deal with situations they may face
- \* Accept reasonable responsibility to work with the school to reinforce anti-bullying expectations, and follow up consequences if your child has been a perpetrator.
- \* Model anti-bullying behaviour, including safe use of the internet

#### **Possible strategies to use include:-**

- \* Reinforce assertive behaviour, perhaps the use of 'I' statements, such as:  
*I/We feel \_\_\_\_\_ when you \_\_\_\_\_ and I/we want you to stop \_\_\_\_\_ and start \_\_\_\_\_.*
- \* Explore feelings and perceptions through discussions of others' body language, perhaps through photos, magazine pictures, role plays, picture books
- \* Encourage problem-solving by telling stories based on case studies and discuss different solutions.

Appendix 2:

**Behavioural Expectations:**

Students are expected to show self-awareness:

To promote self-awareness, students could choose to:	Self-awareness is difficult when a student:	Appropriate responses to minor/initial incidents	Major or repeated incidents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*be compassionate</li> <li>*share thoughts and feelings with trusted people</li> <li>*make good choices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*is disrespectful towards others</li> <li>*doesn't take responsibility for their actions</li> <li>*is not willing to understand the seriousness of an issue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*speak to child</li> <li>*student to reflect on the incident (complete report)</li> <li>*utilize opportunity to repair harm/relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*parents contacted</li> <li>*withdrawal of privileges, with explanation of impact of behavior</li> <li>*positive behavior support plan</li> <li>*student support group</li> <li>*in-school suspension</li> </ul>

Students are expected to self-manage:

To promote self-management students could choose to:	Self-management is difficult when a student:	Appropriate responses to minor/initial incidents	Major or repeated incidents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*take ownership of their learning</li> <li>*think about what they learn, how they learn and the progress they make</li> <li>*encourage peer and teacher feedback</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*loses focus on the tasks to be completed</li> <li>*becomes a distraction to themselves and/or others</li> <li>*ignores instructions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*speak to child</li> <li>*student to reflect and complete incident report</li> <li>*reflection sheet may allow opportunity for student to repair relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*parents contacted</li> <li>*withdrawal of privileges, with explanation of impact of behavior</li> <li>*positive behavior plan</li> <li>*student support group</li> <li>*in-school suspension</li> </ul>

Students are expected to show social awareness:

To promote self-awareness students could choose to:	Self-management is difficult when a student:	Appropriate responses to minor/initial incidents	Major or repeated incidents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*listen to the needs of others</li> <li>*be considerate of others</li> <li>*respect themselves</li> <li>*show empathy towards others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*interferes with others</li> <li>*lacks tolerance towards others</li> <li>*has difficulty recognizing individual or group similarities or differences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*speak to child</li> <li>*student to reflect and complete incident report</li> <li>*reflection sheet may allow opportunity for student to repair relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*parents contacted</li> <li>*withdrawal of privileges, with explanation of impact of behavior</li> <li>*positive behavior plan</li> <li>*student support group</li> <li>*in school suspension</li> </ul>

Students are expected to build relationship skills:

To promote positive relationships students could choose to:	Building relationships is difficult when a student:	Appropriate responses to minor/initial incidents	Major or repeated incidents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*consider a person's feelings and safety</li> <li>*think of ways for everyone to have a turn</li> <li>*encourage others to have a say</li> <li>*work in teams</li> <li>*adapt to the needs of the person being cared for while being non-judgmental</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*is self-absorbed</li> <li>*refuses to take turns</li> <li>*ignores the ideas of others</li> <li>*is unwilling to support a person's needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*speak to child</li> <li>*student to reflect and complete incident report</li> <li>*reflection sheet may allow opportunity for student to repair relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*parents contacted</li> <li>*withdrawal of privileges, with explanation of impact of behavior</li> <li>*positive behavior plan</li> <li>*student support group</li> <li>*in school suspension</li> </ul>

Students are expected to be responsible:

To promote responsible decision-making students could choose to:	Responsible decision-making is difficult when a student:	Appropriate responses to minor/initial incidents	Major or repeated incidents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*make constructive choices about personal and social behavior</li> <li>*set goals and objectives for themselves</li> <li>*identify positions of representation</li> <li>*contribute to the wellbeing of the school and community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*does not accept accountability for their actions</li> <li>*gives inconsistent messages</li> <li>*is not willing to understand the seriousness of an issue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*speak to child</li> <li>*student to reflect and complete incident report</li> <li>*reflection sheet may allow opportunity for student to repair relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*parents contacted</li> <li>*withdrawal of privileges, with explanation of impact of behavior</li> <li>*positive behavior plan</li> <li>*student support group</li> <li>*in school suspension</li> </ul>