

## Purpose

Our school is committed to providing a safe and caring environment which enables positive relationships to be formed amongst students, staff and parents. This encourages self-esteem, cooperation, personal growth and a positive attitude to learning and teaching. Watsonia North acknowledges that school staff hold a duty of care for students, taking reasonable steps to reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm, which can include harm that may be caused by bullying behaviour.

A clear bullying (including cyberbullying and harassment) prevention policy 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.

## Aims

- To provide clear definitions of what is and what is not bullying and harassment.
- To reinforce within the school community that no form of bullying or harassment is acceptable.
- To provide clear advice on the roles and responsibilities of the whole school community, including students, parents, caregivers and teachers for preventing and responding to bullying behaviour.
- To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up and that support is given to any person who has been affected by, engaged in or witnessed bullying behaviour.
- To seek the support and co-operation of the whole-school community at all times.
- To develop within all students the skills of resilience.
- To reinforce the positive values, beliefs and attitudes held by the Watsonia North school community.

## Definitions

### What are bullying, cyberbullying and harassment?

- **Bullying** is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological aggressive behaviour by a person or group directed towards a less powerful person or group that is intended to cause harm, distress or fear.
  - **Direct verbal bullying**- eg: name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.
  - **Indirect bullying**- eg: spreading rumours, playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate, mimicking, encouraging others to socially exclude a person and/or damaging a person's social reputation or social acceptance.



# POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS & ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

- **Cyber-bullying** is bullying (as defined above) that occurs either online, via a mobile phone or electronic device. It is verbal (over the telephone or mobile phone), or written (flaming, threats, racial, sexual or homophobic harassment) using the various electronic mediums available.
- **Harassment** is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome which could reasonably be expected to cause offence, humiliation or intimidation to a person.
- **Direct physical bullying**- eg: hitting, tripping and punching or damaging property.

## Implementation

Watsonia North has a number of programs and strategies in place to enhance our positive and inclusive school culture. We strive to foster a school culture that prevents bullying behaviour by modelling and encouraging behaviour that demonstrates acceptance, kindness and respect.

Bullying may consist of physical harm, harassment, verbal insults or hurtful remarks, or actions designed to hurt somebody's reputation, social standing or to cause humiliation. Bullying may be carried out directly or indirectly, and may include the use of digital technologies such as social network sites, websites or on-line chat rooms.

- Our school has adopted a zero tolerance position on bullying.
- Our school will combat bullying by providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment.

Bullying prevention at Watsonia North Primary is proactive and is supported by research that indicates that a whole school multi-faceted approach is the most effective way to prevent and address bullying. At our school, we have adopted a four-phase approach when dealing with bullying and harassment:

### A: Primary Prevention

- Professional development for staff relating to bullying, harassment and proven counter measures.
- Ensuring all staff have knowledge and understanding of the WNPS *Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy*.
- Each classroom teacher to clarify with students the types of bullying, as well as the consequences and impact of bullying.
- Community awareness and input relating to bullying, its characteristics and the school's programs and response, complemented by clear processes for reporting suspected bullying.

# POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS & ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

- The provision of programs that promote inclusiveness, resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving will form an integral part of our curriculum. In particular, assertiveness training and bystander training that builds skills in children to challenge and/or report unacceptable behaviour will be central to our curriculum.
- Analysis of the Attitudes to School survey, administered and responded to annually.
- Restorative Practices approach to be implemented across the school, with new staff inducted annually.
- Anti-bullying messages and posters will be displayed around the school.
- The Buddy System will be continued the school.
- Staff and students to be trained in cyber safety. Cyber safety awareness programs will be provided for parents and cyber safety will form part of each child's ICT curriculum.
- Participation in and involvement with programs which support understandings relating to bullying and harassment.

## **B: Isolated, Infrequent or Less Serious Incidents**

- All instances of suspected bullying or inappropriate behaviour will be taken seriously and responded to sensitively at our school.
- Parents are encouraged to contact the school if they suspect a bullying or behaviour problem.
- The school will reinforce with children the importance of appropriately reporting incidents of inappropriate behaviour involving themselves or others.
- Parents are to be contacted if their child is alleged to have been bullied or experienced inappropriate behaviour, or if their child appears to have behaved inappropriately or bullied someone else.
- Appropriate and proportional consequences may include a verbal apology, writing a letter of regret, completing a Behaviour Incident booklet/information sheet, loss of privileges. The *Student Code of Conduct* will be referenced in relation to consequence in consultation with Principal and Assistant Principal.
- Public recognition and reward for positive behaviour and resolution of problems will occur as appropriate.

## **C: Repetitive or Serious Incidents**

- Serious incidents and/or repetitive incidents of bullying or unacceptable behaviour must be reported, responded to by staff and documented.
- Serious incidents are those that include physical assault, sexual assault, criminal activity involving theft or serious damage of property, serious threats or homophobic bullying etc.
- All such incidents or allegations will be thoroughly investigated and documented by a member of the Principal class. Depending upon the nature of each incident,

- they may be also be reported to and investigated by police, reported to the Student Critical Incident Advisory Unit, and/or reported to the School Services Unit.
- The school may contact support professionals from Department of Education & Training such as councillors and psychologists. This may involve external providers and/or Student Support Officers for assistance and support.
  - Students, staff and parents identified by others as bullies will be informed of allegations.
  - Both offenders and victims will be offered counselling and support and a Restorative Practices meeting held to repair the fractured relationship.
  - All repetitive or serious incidents must be brought to the attention of the Principal class members of the school.
  - The most appropriate staff member will contact parents of the targeted child. Principal class members will contact alleged perpetrators unless advised by police or Department of Human Services not to do so.
  - Consequences of repetitive or serious incidents may include criminal charges, suspension, expulsion, loss of privileges, counselling, conciliation or any other consequences consistent with the school's Student Code of Conduct.
  - The school may need to prepare and implement a safety management plan restricting contact between victim and perpetrator.
  - Parents or community members who bully or harass or abuse staff will be provided with official warnings, and if necessary referred to the police, and/or have trespass restrictions placed upon them by the Principal consistent with the Summary Offences Act.

## **D: Post Incident**

It is important that appropriate strategies and support are put in place after an incident has been resolved for all individuals involved. Appropriate strategies may include:-

- conciliation meetings between all parties and or meetings with parties separately.
- ongoing monitoring of students involved.
- identification of an agreed key contact staff member for each student involved.
- follow-up meetings regarding each child's management strategy.
- ongoing communication with parents.
- counselling from appropriate agencies and/or support officers for both parties.
- reinforcement of positive behaviours and appropriate behaviour strategies.

Parents and carers who may develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Watsonia North primary should contact the Assistant Principal who has responsibility relating to student welfare and wellbeing.

## Further Information & Resources

DE&T Links and other school policies which are connected with this policy are:

- DET [Effective Schools Engaging Schools: Student Engagement Policy Guidelines](#)
- DET [Safe Schools are Effective School's](#)
- DET [Student Engagement Policy Guidelines](#)
- DET [Respectful Schools](#)
- WNPS *Student Wellbeing and Inclusion Policy*
- WNPS *Statement of School Values and Philosophy*
- WNPS *Digital Technologies Policy*
- WNPS *Duty of Care Policy*

The following websites:

[www.bullyingnoway.gov.au](http://www.bullyingnoway.gov.au)

[www.brodieslaw.org](http://www.brodieslaw.org)

[www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers)

[www.kidshelpline.com.au](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au)

[www.lifeline.com.au](http://www.lifeline.com.au)

## Review cycle & evaluation

Evaluation of the *Positive Relationship & Anti Bullying Policy* will occur every two years as stipulated in the *Watsonia North PS Policy Review Cycle* document.

This policy was endorsed by School Council on 11 September 2018 and is scheduled for review in 2020.