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Bullying and Harassment Policy

Purpose

This policy addresses how Orchard Grove Primary School aims to prevent and respond to bullying behaviour. Orchard Grove Primary School recognises that there are many other types of inappropriate student behaviours that do not meet the definition of bullying which are also unacceptable at our school. These other inappropriate behaviours will be managed in accordance with our *Student Code of Conduct*, *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy*, *Community Code of Conduct* and *Inclusion Policy*.

All members of the school community are committed to ensuring a safe and caring environment which promotes personal growth, achievement and positive relationships for all. We are also committed to ensuring that put-downs, both verbal and non-verbal (including online) are not accepted or tolerated.

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions and is to be read in conjunction with Orchard Grove Primary School's Child Safe Standards.

Our School's Mission is:

To embrace the diversity of our community by providing a safe and rich learning environment, where quality programs enable students to achieve their full potential.

Our School Values:

- Respect
- Valuing Diversity
- Integrity
- Working Together
- Fostering Growth

Orchard Grove Primary School acknowledges that school staff owe a duty of care to students to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm, which can include harm that may be caused by bullying behaviour.

Rights and Responsibilities

At Orchard Grove Primary School:

- We all have the right to feel safe and respected;
- We all have the right to learn;
- We are all responsible for our behaviour, and being the best we can be;
- It is the responsibility of every person at Orchard Grove Primary School to **not** take part in bullying in any way;
- It is the responsibility of all community members to let teachers, Leadership or the Principal know about bullying situations of which they are aware.

Bullying at school is everyone's problem, not a personal predicament:

- The student who is bullied and their family suffer emotional and physical distress;

- Students who are aware of bullying but do nothing about it often feel guilty and ashamed;
- Students who take part in bullying become desensitised to cruelty and injustice, fail to develop social responsibility and, in some cases, this behaviour can lead to anti-social behaviour later in life;
- No-one is safe whilst bullying is happening, because it creates a climate of intimidation and fear in which effective learning cannot take place.

What is Bullying?
Bullying behaviour has the following key features:
- It is deliberate. It is neither incidental nor accidental. There is either an intention to distress the recipient or a willingness to use the recipient for their own outcomes (e.g. has fun at their expense, be accepted by the group, demonstrate social power over another)
- The behaviour does cause distress for the recipient. They feel oppressed and apprehensive about the possibility of future attacks. The distress may be physical, psychological or social, or involve damage to reputation or property.
- It is directed towards a certain person or group.
- There is a repeated pattern of attacks.
- There is an imbalance of power between those bullying and the recipient.
- The behaviour is unreasonable and unjustifiable.
- The recipient usually finds it difficult to leave or avoid the bullying situation(s) without personal cost (but feels rightly that they shouldn't have to tolerate the treatment.)
- **Cyberbullying** material can spread quickly, be difficult to delete and be created by anonymous users. Cyberbullying can have a serious impact on your life and the lives of other young people. Sometimes it's hard for adults to see the cyberbullying online, especially if it happens in games or through chat—it can also seem hard for them to know how to help.

A simple definition:
- **Bullying** is a **repetitive attack** which causes distress not only at the time of the attack, but also by the threat of future attacks. It is characterised by an imbalance of power and can be defined by the negative impact on the vulnerable person who is targeted. It can be verbal, physical, social or psychological. It can be done in person, manipulating others to take part, or by electronic means such as email, text messages or chat rooms.
- Harassment can be defined as unwanted and one-sided words or actions towards another that demean, annoy, alarm or abuse. Harassment may involve a single incident or an on-going pattern of behaviour. It may be deliberate or unintentional.
- Aggression can be defined as words or actions that are intended to harm another.
- **Cyberbullying** is the use of technology to bully an individual or a group with the intent to cause harm. The intended harm may be social, psychological and, in extreme cases, physical. Cyberbullying can cause fear, withdrawal, shame, guilt, loneliness or depression.

Bullying Behaviours:
- Physical - hitting, tripping, pushing, and throwing things towards others.
- Verbal - name calling, mocking, setting up, belittling, insulting, making insulting racist or sexual comments, spreading rumours, exposing private information, telling lies.
- Using verbal and non-verbal put downs in a public context such as a discussion or meeting
- Playing nasty practical jokes on others
- Damaging or hiding other people's property
- Using covert forms of physical intimidation such as blocking the way, bumping
- Encouraging others to socially exclude the recipient
- Accusing someone of things they haven't done
- Cyberbullying can occur in a number of ways, including:
  - ❖ Abusive texts and emails
  - ❖ Hurtful messages, images or videos
  - ❖ Imitating others online
  - ❖ Excluding others online

❖ Nasty online gossip and chat.

What bullying is NOT:
There are three typical negative social situations which are often confused with bullying, namely:
● mutual conflict
● social rejection or exclusive friendships
● single-episode or random acts of aggression or intimidation.

What to do?

Students:
● If you show your fear or anger you make the bully happy. Did you know that bullies are very fragile people inside? When you show that you are scared or angry by fighting back, calling them nasty names, doing nothing or looking upset, then you remind them of how they are feeling inside and they don't like that. So they will repeat their behaviour. Instead, get rid of your anger and fear by releasing it verbally, talking to someone about it or doing some physical activity to release your feelings and remain cool.
● When you fight back, you give your power to the bully. Do something different and don't lose your cool. Make a joke, move away. If the bully can't fight you and make you look powerless, they will feel powerless and embarrassed instead.
● Report any physical bullying to the school or to the police.
● If you are being excluded then it's time to find better friends, tell your teacher and learn some good communication skills so that everyone will want you in their group.

What can you do about cyberbullying?
If you are being cyberbullied, you can:
● avoid retaliating or responding
● collect the evidence — this needs to be age-appropriate. Students are encouraged to minimise the screen and tell the teacher or parent.
● block the bully and change your privacy settings
● report the abuse to the social media service and ask others to as well
● talk to someone you trust straight away—like a parent, teacher or friend.

Parents:
● Encourage your child to report any bullying to the school. If the situation does not improve, then make an appointment to see the school.
● In some more serious cases, parents may wish to seek counselling for their child. Make sure that the psychologist is used to working with children who have been bullied. Generally treatment is brief, about 4-8 sessions with a skilled therapist. They should be treating your child for any psychological damage, teaching the child how to protect themselves from the bullying and teaching them social skills to develop true friends who can protect them in the future.
● Display appropriate assertive skills as an example to children.
● If bullying does occur, even though it is not your child's fault, they need to be supported to learn assertive skills. Coach them to improve their social survival skills.

Teachers:
● Manage classes in ways that enhance peer relations and demonstrate respect and valuing of all students within a supportive environment.
● Integrate supportive, inclusive problem solving strategies into all curriculum activities.

- Incorporate teaching practices that support students in identifying, analysing and resolving immediate and long-term challenges to their own and others' safety and rights.
- Deliver curriculum that encourages and supports responsible digital citizenship.
- Model behaviours of acceptance, fairness and problem solving. Also model appropriate uses of technology.

All staff:
- Take responsibility for establishing close relationships between school staff and the full diversity of carers and students.
- Build a community of learners responsible for student learning outcomes.
- Modify and monitor practices to achieve social justice.
- Encourage students to develop values and ethics in their relationships with others.
- Identify recommended improvements to student/staff and student/student relations.
- Include young people in decision making about policies and programs designed to assist them.
- Regularly review class and playground cultures to improve peer relations and reduce bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence through early intervention responses involving teachers, administrators and/or specialist staff.
- Identify and address signs of discriminatory behaviour. Never turn a blind eye.
- Know how to respond effectively to bullying incidents.
- Work proactively in a team to assist students at risk.
- Maintain a duty of care in class, the playground and between classes.
- Maintain appropriate and supportive supervision of iPad use.
- Provide a roster of teachers on yard duty throughout recess, lunchtime and wet/sweat days.
- Provide a 'lunch club' for those students who prefer an inside environment during recess and lunchtimes.
- Run a 'Peer Mediators' program whereby student leaders assist yard duty teachers with resolving minor issues in the playground. These students will undergo formal training for this role.
- Participate in a school wide Buddy Program.

Incident Response
Reporting concerns to Orchard Grove Primary School
Bullying complaints will be taken seriously and responded to sensitively at our school.
Students who may be experiencing bullying behaviour, or students who have witnessed bullying behaviour, are encouraged to report their concerns to school staff as soon as possible.

Our ability to effectively reduce and eliminate bullying behaviour is greatly affected by students and/or parents and carers reporting concerning behaviour as soon as possible, so that the responses implemented by Orchard Grove Primary School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

We encourage students to speak to their class teacher. However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff including the Principal, Assistant Principals or Year Level Coordinator.

Parents or carers who develop concerns that their child is involved in, or have witnessed bullying behaviour at Orchard Grove Primary School should contact the class teacher first, then, if the issue is ongoing, Leeanne King, Assistant Principal and Student Wellbeing Coordinator by phone on 9894 3400.

Investigations

When notified of alleged bullying behaviour, school staff are required to:
1. record the details of the allegations in the [eSmart Incident Register](#) (on OGPS' Google Drive) and
2. inform (class teacher, relevant Year Level Coordinator, Assistant Principal, Principal).

The teacher involved is responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, the Principal or Assistant Principals may:
· speak to those involved in the allegations, including the target/s, the students allegedly engaging in bullying behaviour/s and any witnesses to the incidents;
· speak to the parents of the students involved;
· speak to the teachers of the students involved;
· take detailed notes of all discussions for future reference;
· obtain written statements from all or any of the above.

All communications with the Student Wellbeing Coordinator in the course of investigating an allegation of bullying will be managed sensitively. Investigations will be completed as quickly as possible to allow for the behaviours to be addressed in a timely manner.

The objective of completing a thorough investigation into the circumstances of alleged bullying behaviour is to determine the nature of the conduct and the students involved. A thorough understanding of the alleged bullying will inform staff about how to most effectively implement an appropriate response to that behaviour.

Serious bullying, including serious cyberbullying, is a criminal offence and may be referred to Victoria Police. For more information, see: [Brodie's Law.](#)

Responses to bullying behaviours
When the Student Wellbeing Coordinator has sufficient information to understand the circumstances of the alleged bullying and the students involved, a number of strategies may be implemented to address the behaviour and support affected students in consultation with (the classroom teacher, Year level Coordinator, Assistant Principal, Principal, Department of Education and Training specialist staff etc).

There are a number of factors that will be considered when determining the most appropriate response to the behaviour. When making a decision about how to respond to bullying behaviour, Orchard Grove Primary School will consider:
● the age and maturity of the students involved;
● the severity and frequency of bullying, and the impact it has had on the target student;
● whether the student/s engaging in bullying behaviour have displayed similar behaviour before;
● whether the bullying took place in a group or one-to-one context;
● whether the students engaging in bullying behaviour demonstrates insight or remorse for their behaviour;
● the alleged motive of the behaviour, including any element of provocation.

The Student Wellbeing Coordinator may implement all, or some of the following responses to bullying behaviours:
● Offer counselling support to the target student or students, including referral to the School Counsellor or an external provider;
● Offer counselling support to the students engaging in bullying behaviour, including referral to the School Counsellor or an external provider;
● Offer counselling support to affected students, including witnesses and/or friends of the target student, including referral to the School Counsellor or an external provider;
● Facilitate a restorative practice meeting with all or some of the students involved. The objective of restorative practice is to repair relationships that have been damaged by bringing about a sense of remorse and restorative action on the part of the person who has bullied someone and forgiveness by the person who has been bullied;
● Facilitate a mediation between some or all of the students involved to help to encourage students to take responsibility for their behaviour and explore underlying reasons for conflict or grievance. Mediation is only

suitable if all students are involved voluntarily and demonstrate a willingness to engage in the mediation process;
- Facilitate a process using the Support Group Method, involving the target student(s), the students engaging in bullying behaviour and a group of students who are likely to be supportive of the target(s);
- Facilitate a Student Support Group meeting and/or Behaviour Support Plan for affected students;
- Prepare a Safety Plan or Individual Behaviour Plan restricting contact between target and students engaging in bullying behaviour;
- Provide discussion and/or mentoring for different social and emotional learning competencies of the students involved, including a stronger classroom and cohort level focus during weekly student wellbeing activities.
- Monitor the behaviour of the students involved for an appropriate time and take follow up action if necessary.
- Implement disciplinary consequences for the students engaging in bullying behaviour, which may include removal of privileges, detention, suspension and/or expulsion consistent with our Student Wellbeing and Engagement policy, the Ministerial Order on Suspensions and Expulsions and any other relevant Department policy.

Orchard Grove Primary School understands the importance of monitoring and following up on the progress of students who have been involved in or affected by bullying behaviour. Where appropriate, school staff will also endeavour to provide parents and carers with updates on the management of bullying incidents.

The Student Wellbeing Coordinator, Principal and Assistant Principals are responsible for maintaining up to date records of the investigation of and responses to bullying behaviour.

Further information and resources
The following websites and resources provide useful information on prevention and responding to bullying, as well as supporting students who have been the target of bullying behaviours:
· Bully Stoppers
· Kids Helpline
· Lifeline
· Bullying. No way!
· Student Wellbeing Hub
· Office of the eSafety Commissioner

Review and Evaluation
This policy will be reviewed every two years, or earlier as required, following analysis of school data on reported incidents of, and responses to bullying to ensure that the policy remains up to date, practical and effective.

Data will be collected through:
· discussion and consultation with students and parent/carers
· regular student bullying surveys
· regular staff surveys
· eSmart Incident Register
· assessment of other school-based data, including the number of reported incidents of bullying in each year level and the effectiveness of the responses implemented
· Attitudes to School Survey
· Parent Opinion Survey

Ratified by School Council - 2019
Review - 2021