



# Mornington Park Primary School

## Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy

**POLICY DATE:** March 2017

**STATUS:** Approved by School Council on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2017

### Rationale:

- The National Safe Schools Framework supported by all Australian Ministers and education jurisdictions provides a vision and a set of guiding principles for safe supportive and respectful school communities that promote student wellbeing
- Student safety and wellbeing is a prerequisite for effective learning in all school settings
- Everyone, including students, teachers, other workers, parents and volunteers, has the right to feel physically and emotionally safe and be safe at school and when attending any activities, events, excursions or camps organised by Mornington Park Primary School (MPPS). MPPS promotes a safe and inclusive learning environment where bullying, harassment and victimisation are actively discouraged, and respect, compassion and cooperation are promoted. The school values promote kindness, cooperation, responsibility, honesty and perseverance. Bullying, harassment and victimisation are not accepted at MPPS, and this is reflected in the school's culture. MPPS will address concerns brought to our attention in an appropriate and timely manner

### Aim:

- To provide a consistent approach for dealing with bullying, harassment and victimisation
- To encourage positive behaviour and actively discourage negative behaviour
- To provide proactive systems to define, teach and support appropriate behaviour
- To provide the optimal learning environment where students feel safe, connected, valued and supported to achieve their true potential

### Definition of Bullying:

- Bullying is the systematic abuse of power in interpersonal relations. (Professor Ken Rigby.)
- Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological aggressive behaviour by a person or group directed towards a lesser powerful person or group that is intended to cause harm, distress or fear (Department of Education and Training Bullying Prevention Policy 24.6.2014)



# Mornington Park Primary School

- Bullying can take a number of forms including: Verbal (direct and indirect), Physical, (direct and indirect), Psychological, Social, (such as unfair exclusion, rumour spreading), and Cyber Bullying
- Behaviour is usually defined as bullying if it is *ongoing*, rather than a one-off isolated incident
- Bullying can have long term negative consequences for the person being bullied, for those who are engaging in bullying and onlookers or bystanders who witness the bullying

## **Responding to Bullying, Harassment and Victimization - Roles and Responsibilities**

- Students, parents/caregivers, teachers and other staff have the shared responsibility for preventing and responding to bullying behaviour
- Students have the responsibility of treating each other with respect in line with the school's values and code of conduct
- Parents/carers share the responsibility with their child(ren) to report any instances of bullying that they witness or hear about to school staff as soon as possible
- Staff have the responsibility to accurately record all incidents of bullying that are brought to their attention and document what follow up action was taken. These records should be kept in the student's wellbeing file in accordance with the Health Records Act 2001
- Staff should be aware of the importance of consistently responding to all reported incidents of bullying, victimisation and harassment and ensure reasonable steps are taken to respond appropriately
- Members of staff are to ensure that support is provided to any student affected by, engaged in or who has witnessed bullying behaviour, harassment or victimisation. This may include the provision of appropriate first aid or counselling, if necessary
- Designated staff are to provide regular updates to parents/carers regarding the management of incidents within the bounds of Privacy Legislation
- Safety Surveys are administered at least once a year and focus groups held to increase student voice and participation in decision making
- Data is analysed to seek to identify patterns of bullying behaviour and respond accordingly
- Staff will seek to identify any "hot spots" and address any associated issues such as modifying the physical environment or providing greater adult supervision where possible
- The school will use the Department of Education and Training's clear procedures for reporting critical incidents involving assaults, threats, intimidation and harassment via the Student Critical Incident Unit
- Provision of professional development to staff as required



# Mornington Park Primary School

- Placing bullying, harassment and victimisation on staff meeting agendas for discussion
- There are established and well understood protocols in place about appropriate adult to student contact and interactions within the school context
- There are protocols in place to induct staff, CRT's, new students and volunteers to make them familiar with all relevant policies including the Anti-Bullying, Harassment and Victimisation Policy

## **Strategies for Preventing and/ or Responding to Bullying, Harassment and Victimisation**

- The provision of a whole school framework to assist in the maintenance of a positive learning environment, reduce problem behaviour and increase student wellbeing and achievement such as that provided by the School Wide Positive Behaviour Support Program (SWPBS)
- MPPS is a KidsMatter School, committed to providing a positive school community, offer social and emotional learning for students, parent education and support as well as targeted intervention for students with emerging mental health difficulties
- Provision of targeted intervention either on a class, small group or individual level such as You Can Do It, Friendly Schools, Friends, Teaching Empathy, Kids Hope Mentoring, Respect Ambassadors Program, National Day Against Bullying, Lend a Hand, Harmony Day, Happy Room, Leadership Programs, Social Skills Programs which develop resilience, conflict resolution, assertiveness and problem solving skills, Girls Rock, BoysBiz, Incursions, Morning Circle Time. Programs offered may vary from time to time according to need
- At the beginning of each school year, students with the assistance of their class teacher, help to develop a set of classroom guidelines focusing on positive behaviour, code of conduct and SWPBS school Values
- Yard supervision, over and above recommended staff/student ratios and the provision of an array of play options both indoors and outdoors, is designed to help children feel safe and supported
- The "Reflection" system, operating throughout the school, gives students an opportunity, under adult supervision and guidance, to think about their behaviour and work out better ways of getting along. Students write or draw why they are in Reflection, who was affected by their behaviour and what they could have done differently and what they plan to do differently in the future.
- Students under supervision of a staff member may have access, when necessary, to a sensory space so that they can self-regulate before further discussion about an incident takes place
- Conversations with the person who has been bullied, the person or group that has been engaging in bullying and any witnesses, onlookers and bystanders. The Method of Shared



# Mornington Park Primary School

Concern is one way that is used to try to resolve the situation; Restorative Justice is another way. Students may agree to be friends, go their separate ways, play in different parts of the school grounds, or play under close supervision until they can demonstrate the appropriate conflict resolution and social skills

- Mediation is a positive problem solving process that can help people to resolve their differences. An independent third party, the mediator, helps disputing parties to assess their options realistically and reach mutually acceptable solutions. The process focuses on discussion between the parties on problem solving rather than on blame and punishment
- Time in with a designated adult such as the School Social Worker
- Referral to the School Chaplain for pastoral care with the knowledge and consent of the parent/carer
- Referral to the Student Support Service's Psychologist or Social Worker for more specialised intervention with the consent of the parent/carer
- Referral to external agencies and support services with the cooperation of the parent/carer
- Access to telephone /internet support services such as Kids Helpline
- Risk of cyber bullying is reduced by imposing a ban on the use of mobile phones during school time
- School internet access is restricted to approved sites by a limited cache
- Students are unable to access social networking sites during school hours
- An ICT Acceptable Use Agreement is signed by students and their parents before they are able to access any ICT devices
- Distribution of literature to parents/carers about bullying, harassment and victimisation
- Disciplinary measures may also be imposed where other strategies have failed, for example, Time Out, After School Detention, Exclusion from the yard in line with the Student Management Policy
- Suspension and expulsion are only used as a last resort where all other interventions and measures have not been effective

## **Evaluation: 14<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

This policy will be reviewed at least once a year to ensure that it helps in promoting a positive school community, a safe and inclusive environment, assists in helping to prevent bullying, harassment and victimisation and encourages respect and compassion, in line with the school's values of kindness, cooperation, responsibility, honesty and perseverance. Student, parent/carer and staff feedback will be sought.



# Mornington Park Primary School

**Distribution:**

A copy of this Policy will be available on the School Website and a hard copy will be distributed via the School Newsletter for comment and suggestions for review.