



# Melrose Primary School

RESPECT ~ HONESTY ~ RESPONSIBILITY ~ EXCELLENCE

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## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

### Vision

*Melrose Primary School empowers students to excel in learning and in life.*

*We nurture relationships that challenge and support students to contribute to a more just and compassionate world.*

Melrose Primary School is centred on the well-being of our students. We create and uphold a nurturing environment for our students, families, teachers, volunteers, and the wider community. We are a small rural community school of educators and learners who strive for excellence in education, and we are innovative and collaborative in our approach. We aim to maintain a sense of belonging for all our children encouraging them to reach their full potential.

Melrose Primary School recognises that issues can arise within the school community that may sometimes cause people to feel bullied. This policy aims to resolve situations of bullying by consultation, cooperation and discussion in the first instance. It is desirable for matters to be resolved promptly at a local level.

### RATIONALE

At Melrose Primary School all members of the school community are entitled to a safe, secure and caring environment. It is EVERYONE'S responsibility to ensure this happens. Bullying and harassment are issues which are treated very seriously as they can adversely affect a person's ability to work and learn, therefore we work hard to find solutions to stop bullying. Evidence suggests that the development of resilience and positive self-esteem can help protect people from the harmful effects of bullying, as well as help them build positive peer relationships.

### BULLYING IS ...

Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. Cyberbullying refers to bullying via information and communication technologies.

Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved including bystanders.

### TYPES OF BULLYING

#### *Harassment*

Harassment is behaviour that targets an individual or group due to their: identity, race, culture or ethnic origin, religion, physical characteristics, gender, sexual orientation, marital, parenting, economic status, age, ability or disability that offends, humiliates, intimidates or creates a hostile environment.

### *Discrimination*

Discrimination occurs when people are treated less favourably than others because of their race, culture or ethnic origin, religion, physical characteristics, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, parenting, economic status, age, ability or disability. Discrimination is often ongoing and commonly involves exclusion or rejection.

### *Violence*

Violence is the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against another person(s). Violence may involve provoked acts and can be a single incident, a random act or can occur over time.

### *Cyber bullying*

Cyber bullying is a term used to describe bullying that is carried out through internet or mobile phone technologies. It is often combined with off-line bullying. It may include a combination of behaviours such as pranking (i.e. hang-up calls), sending insulting text messages, publishing someone's private information, creating hate sites or implementing social exclusion campaigns in social networking sites. It is also cyber bullying when student(s) use technology to run a multi-step campaign to bully another student, e.g. setting another student up to be assaulted, video-recording their humiliation, posting the recording online and then sending the website to others.

## **WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT BULLYING?**

Who to report it to:

- A teacher or another staff member within the school
- Your parents or caregivers

How to report it:

- Tell the trusted adult where the bullying happened, how often it has happened and what you have done to try and stop it.

When to report:

- Report bullying in the early stages. Do not leave it too long. When bullying is ignored it may get worse.

Responsibilities of school staff, students and parents:

Like all Department for Education schools, we work within the guidelines of the Behaviour Support Policy. A range of consequences may be used for students who bully and harass, including time spent out of the classroom or playground. We will initiate a Student Improvement Plan in response to unacceptable behaviour by students. Consequences could ultimately lead to suspension/exclusion. Police will be contacted if the behaviour is considered illegal (e.g. sexting).

Staff will:

- Talk with students involved and help them to solve the problem
- Teach students strategies to break the cycle of bullying
- Teach students about care and respect for themselves and others
- Reinforce the school's Code of Conduct
- Set up processes to monitor the situation.

## **HOW DO I RECOGNISE A STUDENT WHO IS BEING BULLIED?**

Students affected by bullying may not talk about it with their teachers or another staff member. They may be afraid that it will only make things worse, or that it is wrong to tell tales or 'dob in' other students. When people are bullied or harassed they may feel angry, embarrassed, frightened, humiliated or uncomfortable, scared or unsafe or think it is their fault. Some signs a child or young person is being bullied or harassed may be:

- Reduced ability to concentrate and learn
- Refusal to attend school, excuses not to go
- Unexplained cuts, bruises or scratches
- Stolen or damaged possessions/clothing
- Headaches or stomach aches
- Asking for extra pocket money or food
- Acting out, tearful, sadness, lack of interest in usual activities

- Unwillingness to discuss (or secrecy about) their online communications (e.g. mobile phone texts, social media comments).

### **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS AND ACTIONS**

When dealing with bullying and harassment incidents, we use flexibility and consider all the needs of students involved. We do not use a 'one size fits all' approach, as each incident and the students involved are different: e.g. it is depending on the nature, severity and the extent of the bullying.

### **PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES**

Prevention strategies include:

- Using the curriculum to teach students about respectful relationships and civics and citizenship
- Teaching the Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum
- Developing programs to help students participate and have a say in their learning
- Teaching students about violence prevention, conflict resolution, anger management and problem solving
- Developing policies which promote student safety
- Teaching for and about diversity and tolerance
- Using 'Play is the Way' games and language
- Learning and living the school values
- Implementing specific social skills programs such as "What's the Buzz" when needed
- Reinforcing the school's Code of Conduct.

Intervention strategies include:

- Counselling students who have been bullied
- Informing parents or caregivers about the situation
- Putting consequences in place for those who bully others
- Teaching students not to be bystanders, to get involved and seek an adult to intervene
- Ensuring all staff know how to address bullying effectively and respectfully
- Conducting bully audits annually.

Post-intervention strategies include:

- Monitoring a bullying case and ensuring a child's safety and wellbeing is maintained
- Talking with parents or caregivers about ongoing strategies if needed
- Reviewing yard duty procedures for effectiveness
- Reviewing and evaluating behaviour codes and policies.

### **IF YOUR CHILD IS BEING BULLIED**

- It is imperative that school and family work and support each other
- Listen calmly to your child
- Discourage any planned retaliation, either physical or verbal.

Encourage positive strategies such as:

- Using a strong, confident voice
- Staying away from the place where the bullying is occurring
- Don't react; just walk away with your head high
- Don't show that you are scared, even though you might be
- Tell the bully "Leave me alone" and walk away confidently
- Let your child know that telling about the bullying or harassment is the right thing to do
- Assist your child to report the problem with a teacher or another school staff member.

### **DOCUMENTED PROCESSES (School responsibility)**

- Education Department School Administration System (EDSAS) recording
- Student Improvement Plan
- Advice to parents

**VALUABLE RESOURCES:**

- Department for Education (DfE) Parent Help Line: 1800 222 696
- Kids Help Line: 1800 551 800
- Child and Youth Health Parent Help Line: 1300 364 100
- Bullying No Way: [www.bullyingnoway.com.au](http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au)
- Kids Help: [www.kidshelp.com.au](http://www.kidshelp.com.au)
- Parenting SA: [www.parenting.sa.gov.au](http://www.parenting.sa.gov.au)

**CONCLUSION**

Bullying is treated very seriously at Melrose Primary School as this is considered to be insidious behaviour. School staff deal with unacceptable behaviour and work hard to prevent bullying and to find solutions to support safe and positive behaviour for all our students.

