



Watsonia Heights Primary School

ANTI BULLYING POLICY

Rationale:

At Watsonia Heights Primary School we believe that the school is a place for learning and teaching where all students have the right to learn and develop in a supportive, safe and caring environment that promotes learning, personal growth and positive self-esteem.

This policy is consistent with Department of Education and Early Childhood Development guidelines and regulations. The school's Code of Conduct, welfare and student management structures and policies support this policy document. This policy will be monitored, evaluated and updated on a regular basis through the policy review process.

This policy is based on a set of rights (see below) and their related responsibilities.

Students are provided with the opportunity to develop and practise skills that will support and equip them throughout their lives.

Together we develop a values driven culture supported by the skills taught through planned, responsive and proactive programs.

These include 'You Can Do It' Education, Friendly Schools, Friendly Families Program.

At the school we aim to develop the students' personal skills so that they are able to reach resolution between parties in any form of conflict.

Code of Conduct: Rights and Responsibilities

All students, staff and parents have the right to:

- be treated with courtesy, kindness and respect
- express feelings and opinions respectfully
- work and play in an atmosphere of harmony and co-operation
- expect that the co-created school values and norms will be consistently implemented and that there will be respect for the rights of all involved
- be valued as an individual
- learn in a supportive atmosphere.

All students, staff and parents have the responsibility to:

- treat others with courtesy, kindness and respect
- actively listen to others
- maintain a safe and secure school environment
- manage impulsivity
- model and support co-created school and classroom norms
- take responsibilities for their own actions
- value others, for their individual differences and similarities
- work to achieve their personal best whilst allowing others to do the same
- not take part in bullying in any way, zero tolerance
- report incidents of bullying to the principal or a teacher
- understand and not tolerate the participatory role of bystanders

The elimination of bullying at Watsonia Heights Primary School is everyone's responsibility. A person who is bullied does not have the problem alone because bullying adversely affects everyone in the community in one way or another. For example:

- The student who is bullied and their family, suffer emotional and physical distress
- No one is safe whilst bullying is happening. Bullying creates a climate of intimidation and fear in which effective learning cannot take place
- Students who are aware of bullying but do nothing about it often feel guilty and ashamed
- Both students who bully and the bystanders can:
 - become desensitised to cruelty and injustice
 - fail to develop social responsibility
 - and, in some cases, become involved at a later stage in workplace bullying and/or other forms of anti-social behaviour
- The way in which the school is perceived in the community

Bullying - A definition

Bullying is a pattern of repeated behaviour by one person or a group towards others which is designed to be hurtful, threatening or frightening.

Bullying is different from simple social rejection, one off aggression/nastiness and mutual conflict.

Bullying is a repeated unjustifiable behaviour that may be physical, verbal and/or psychological that is intended to cause fear, distress or harm to another. It is conducted by a more powerful individual or group against a less powerful individual who is unable to effectively resist. The effects of bullying on both the student being bullied and the student engaging in the bullying behaviour, shows a need for intervention in social skills development in young children and the need for the creation of safe environments.

Bullying can be both direct (open and overt) and indirect (covert).

Physical aggression	including fighting, pushing, shoving, gestures or invasion of personal space.
Verbal	including name calling, using email, notes and phones to send abusive material, deliberate reputation damage through rumour and exposure offensive language, putting people down behind their backs, picking on people because of their race, gender or religious creed.
Visual	including offensive notes or material, graffiti, or damaging other people's possessions.
Victimisation	including stand-over tactics, picking on others, threats to 'get' people, deliberate and repeated social exclusion,
Sexual	including touching or brushing against one in a sexual manner, sexually oriented jokes, drawings of or writing about someone's body, using rude names or commenting about someone's morals, unwanted invitations of a sexual nature, asking questions about someone's private life.

Discrimination of any kind is a form of bullying.

At Watsonia Heights Primary School we have a strong commitment to prevent and minimise bullying and putdowns in the school. We are committed to the use of a combination of many approaches as we believe there is no one simple strategy to achieve a safe and harmonious environment.

Cyber Bullying

The widespread availability of the internet provides unprecedented opportunities to communicate and learn. Whilst most people use the internet as a powerful tool for communication and education, some individuals use the power of the internet for purposes such as posting quite personal information and for bullying and harassment. We can minimise the harm that such individuals do by teaching students how to use the internet safely and responsibly. The term cyber ethics refers to a code of safe and responsible behaviour for the internet community. Practising good cyber ethics involves understanding the risks of harmful and illegal behaviour online and learning how to protect internet users from such behaviour. It also involves teaching young people, who may not realise the potential for harm to themselves and others, how to use the internet safely and responsibly.

Recommendations for staying safe while using the internet at home and at school include:

- Talk to an adult immediately if you see something you are not comfortable with.
- Be open and honest with mum and dad about your Internet usage.
- Talk to your parents/guardian about your different online experiences, the good and the bad.
- Tell mum and dad if anyone online makes you feel uncomfortable or scared.
- Don't give out personal details.
- Use advanced search to narrow results.
- Use internet content filters.
- Don't chat to people you don't know.
- Don't open unexpected email attachments.
- Don't follow email links you are not expecting.
- Don't follow email links that request personal details.
- Use an email junk-mail filter and anti-virus software.

Implementation:

Guidelines to be followed within the school community

- All students are acknowledged and valued as individuals regardless of gender, racial, cultural, religious, physical or intellectual differences.
- The Principal and staff have a responsibility to fairly, reasonably and consistently implement the Code of Conduct.
- All students are informed that if they are bullied, teachers are available to support them and to stop it from happening.

Incidents must be reported to a teacher be it the class teacher, the teacher on duty or a person with whom they feel comfortable.

- All students are informed that if they witness bullying or are aware of it occurring in other ways, incidents must be reported to a teacher whether it is the class teacher, yard duty teacher or a person with whom they feel comfortable.
- All parents are informed that if they believe that their child or another child is being bullied, they should contact the school, class teacher, principal, or someone with whom they feel comfortable.
- All teachers are informed that if they feel bullied they must report the incident to the principal. (Dated journal entries to support this)
- All teachers have a responsibility to respond to, investigate, follow up and monitor incidents of bullying.

Procedures for dealing with bullying

Students should take direct personal action. The victim should try and make it clear to the person who is bullying that it is not wanted and it is not to continue. Sometimes it is not possible to speak to the person who is harassing because it may make the situation worse. In this case the victim should go directly to a teacher or parent.

The problem can be discussed with the teacher who may then speak to the student/s involved

The staff member investigating the report should:

1. Establish the facts-

- What was said and/or done to the recipient
- The time and place the incident occurred
- The reaction of the recipient
- Whether it is the first time the recipient has experienced bullying behaviour and, if not, whether the same person or group was involved
- Whether the recipient knows of anyone else experiencing the same treatment
- Whether there were any witnesses to the incident.

These facts will be ascertained using a range of strategies which best suit the child's age and emotional state. eg. drawings, written conversations, group interviews, one on one interviews and verification techniques.

Strategies the school will use to respond to a confirmed incident of bullying:

- Discuss a range of possible solutions to manage the situation and find a resolution to which all parties involved agree

Through the teachers conducting regular classroom activities on developing positive social relationships using a variety of resources. Educating, so every student understands and knows the definition of bullying, the school consequences of bullying and the whole school rules on bullying. Training the students so they are able to mediate or solve minor disputes.

This program will also be assisted with the use of 'Buddy' systems across all age levels and regular co-operative group learning activities in and across classes.

- Advise the parents of the recipient, and the student who bullied, of the incident
- Monitor and record the situation on an ongoing basis
- Where necessary provide support and the opportunity for counselling for the recipient and the student who bullied
- Establish graduated behaviour management strategies for the student who has bullied.

Refer to Disciplinary measures - Student Code of Conduct and Student Management Plan).

Following is a summary of the programs for students, teachers and parents to promote social competency and an anti-bullying environment.

These programs develop in students the strategies that promote a caring, positive and pro-social school community based on positive relationships and include:

- 'You Can Do It!' Education program
- positive parenting initiatives
- class meetings
- an engaging curriculum
- Buddies Program
- alternative lunch time activities ie. Sports equipment distributed, sports practices
- daily yard supervision provided at specified times
- annual audits of student perceptions of high risk areas and situations, done on a class basis
- planning to address issues
- a whole school Drug Education Program
- a student elected Junior School Council
- Learning Support Programs.

Professional development activities focussing on student welfare issues are attended by individual teachers, teams of teachers and the Welfare Team.

At Watsonia heights Primary School our Values are stated positively and support the principles and practices of the school welfare program and endeavour to develop:

- an understanding and use of common language
- resilience, getting along, persistence, confidence and organisation
- social skills and social competencies.

These skills are defined explicitly as personal development areas, which teachers teach to, evaluate and report on to parents.

In summary, the Watsonia Heights Primary School community is continually striving for the establishment of a cohesive, supportive and inclusive culture with a zero tolerance of bullying. The implementation of a range of anti-bullying program options at all year levels provides students with strategies to develop positive relationships and contributes to the creation of a caring, pro-social school environment. Parents, teachers and students are supported by the provision of a variety of anti-bullying resources, programs, professionals and outside agencies.

Through:

- the commitment of staff as positive role models
- parent opinion, feedback and support
- student identification of high risk areas and situations
- regular review of programs and policies, our students will continue to grow and learn in a safe environment.

Evaluation: This policy will be reviewed annually.