



Bullying and Serious Incident Policy

Date	Term 4 2014
Signed	College of Teachers
Review	annually

Ref: Behaviour Management Policy

Rationale:

It is recognised that bullying and various forms of intimidation are unacceptable behaviour and therefore need to be taken seriously. The Dandenong Ranges Steiner School is committed to ensuring that all staff and students are able to work and learn in a safe environment, free from harassment and bullying.

Definition:

Bullying is abuse of power, discrimination which causes offence to another, or invasion of another's personal dignity or personal privacy. It is repeated oppression, psychological or physical abuse of one person by another person(s). It may involve any of:

- ◆ a desire to hurt
- ◆ a hurtful action
- ◆ a power imbalance
- ◆ repetition
- ◆ an unjust use of power
- ◆ a sense of being oppressed on the part of the victim
- ◆ repeated aggression

NOTE that this is very different to conflict or disagreement, even though these also cause distress in many children. However, in the case of a single incident, the power differential may be such that the incident is deemed bullying.

Without limiting the preceding definitions, bullying may take any of the following forms:

1. **Intimidation:** This is any threat, verbal or physical action that frightens another. It includes:
 - physical: hitting, pushing and shoving, hair pulling
 - psychological: verbal – social banter, insults, name calling, teasing, threatening.
non verbal – nasty body language, offensive gestures.
 - indirectly: rumour-spreading, hurtful gossip, exclusion, social manipulation.
2. **Racial harassment:** This is behaviour of an offensive nature towards another which occurs by reason of the race, colour, ethnic or national origin of the other.

3. **Sexual harassment or abuse:** This behaviour which is construed by the recipient as unwelcome or offensive and is either repeated or of a significant nature:
- (a) use of words (either written or spoken) of a sexual nature;
 - (b) physical behaviour of a sexual nature.

Aim

Our aim is to reduce bullying across the school and to ensure recognised procedures and strategies are implemented so that they work towards eliminating bullying, violence and unmanaged anger.

Guidelines

The school acknowledges that bullying and harassment can occur and pupils will be encouraged to report it to the school and their parents. Encouragement occurs regularly in classrooms and at parent/teacher meetings.

1. All forms of bullying are considered serious as this can damage self-esteem and form a barrier to effective teaching and learning.
2. Comments about sexual harassment will be dealt with in accordance with our Sexual Harassment Policy.
3. Complaints about other forms of bullying will be written down, investigated and reported to the College of Teachers.
4. Pupils alerting adults to acts of bullying will be protected from victimisation.
5. All parties involved in a complaint of bullying will be treated fairly with the complaint resolved as quickly as possible, with the feelings of all involved respected.
6. The parents or caregivers of pupils involved may be contacted and informed of the incident.
7. Monitoring and follow-up will take place to ensure the bullying ceases.

Education and Training

The staff, students and parent community will be informed about issues around prevention of harassment and bullying.

The classroom programs build pupils' confidence, develop self-esteem and enable pupils to assert themselves positively.

Methods used to address bullying will be shared with parents. Implementation may be through:

- ◆ Class parent/teacher evenings
- ◆ School newsletter
- ◆ A Parents' Guide to Preventing Bullying
- ◆ The Parents' Handbook
- ◆ Consultation with outside agencies
- ◆ A Peer Mediation program to be taught, and used in the playground

The children in each class will be clearly informed of the content of this policy and that it is the expectation of the whole school community (teachers, parents and children) that it will be carried out. **The most positive outcome for the children will happen when teachers and parents work together.**

Steps used in the School to address Bullying

Depending upon the situation:

- (a) the teacher will talk with the children involved either separately or as a group.
- (b) If bullying is found to have taken place then:

1. An apology will be required

In the lower classes it is most likely in the form of looking the person in the eye, a verbal apology and a handshake.

In the middle and upper classes, the above as well as a handwritten apology from the child for their behaviour and what they are going to do to heal the situation. This is time out as it involves the child missing a reasonable part of recess or lunchtime.

2. Details of the incident will be written up in the Incident Book and parents of students concerned will be informed of the incident by the Class Teacher.
3. A verbal checking with the child will take place by the Class Teacher.

This is to make sure that there is no recurrence. The talk with the child would be concerned with whether the child has learned that it is unacceptable behaviour and that they will not do it again.

In the junior and middle classes this check-in would happen at the end of the day in which the incident took place. In the senior classes it would take place the following day to allow the child to reflect upon the incident and come back prepared to acknowledge the unacceptable behaviour and the process of healing the situation.

4. A letter to the child's parents

A letter will be sent to the parent/s of the child informing them of the incident and what the process has been up to that point. They will also be informed that the potential consequence is exclusion from either activity, class, playground or school.

If exclusion takes place, a process will be set in place to determine the conditions under which the child may re-enter the activity, class, playground or school.

5. The parents, and in some instances the child, will be required to attend a meeting with the class teacher and/or representative/s of the College of Teachers to discuss the issue/s.
 6. The College of Teachers may offer the *families* assistance with seeking appropriate support.
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