



TINTERNVALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bullying and Harassment Policy

Rationale

Tinternvale Primary School will provide a positive culture where bullying is not accepted. All members of the school community will have the right of respect from others, the right to learn or to teach, and a right to feel safe and secure in their school environment.

Definitions

Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, who have more power at the time, deliberately upset or hurt another person, their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion.

Cyber bullying is a form of bullying which is carried out through an internet service or mobile phone technology.

Harassment is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome or offensive to a person.

Types of bullying

There are 3 broad categories of bullying:

1. Direct physical bullying – eg hitting, tripping and pushing or damaging property.
2. Direct verbal bullying – eg name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.
3. Indirect bullying – this form of bullying is harder to recognise and is often carried out behind the bullied student's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Indirect bullying includes:
 - Lying and spreading rumours
 - Playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
 - Mimicking
 - Encouraging others to socially exclude someone
 - Damaging someone's social reputation and social acceptance
 - Cyber-bullying, which involves the use of electronic means to humiliate and distress.

What bullying is not

Many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management. There are three socially unpleasant situations that are often confused with bullying:

1. Mutual conflict - in mutual conflict situations, there is an argument or disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the problem. However, unresolved mutual conflict sometimes develops into a bullying situation with one person becoming targeted repeatedly for 'retaliation' in a one-sided way.
2. Social rejection or dislike – unless the social rejection is directed towards someone specific and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others, it is not bullying.
3. Single-episode acts of nastiness or meanness, or random acts of aggression or intimidation – single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If a student is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied.

Rights and Responsibilities

The rights of students with respect to bullying at school

All students have a right to:

- feel safe and secure at school, to work, play and move from place to place without being harassed or bullied
- travel to and from school safely without being harassed or bullied
- be treated with fairness and respect, regardless of gender, race or disability
- have personal and school property respected
- expect a resolution of their problems, to be able to tell their side of the story in a dispute within a supportive environment and to be taught strategies to solve problems.

The responsibilities of students who witness incidents of bullying

Students have the responsibility to:

- refuse to be involved in any bullying situation, at school and while travelling to and from school. If present when bullying occurs the student should report the incident or suspected incident to a teacher or other adult
- help to make our school a happy and safe place
- treat others (parents, students, and teachers) with consideration, tolerance and respect, accepting individuality
- respect the property of others and the school
- seek to resolve conflict in a positive and cooperative manner.

The responsibilities of parents

The school recommends that parents:

- watch for signs of distress in their child, eg unwillingness to attend school, bed wetting, a pattern of headaches, missing equipment, requests for extra money, damaged clothes or bruising
- take an active interest in their child's social life and acquaintances
- advise their child to tell a staff member about bullying incidents.
- inform the school if bullying is suspected
- do not encourage the child to retaliate
- communicate to their child that parental involvement, if necessary, will be appropriate for the situation
- be willing to attend interviews at the school if their child is involved in any bullying incident
- be willing to inform the school of any cases of suspected bullying even if their own child is not directly affected.

The responsibilities of staff

Staff have a responsibility to:

- be role models in words and actions at all times
- be observant of signs of distress or suspected bullying
- actively patrolling during yard duty and supervising effectively within the buildings
- arrive at class on time and, where appropriate, move promptly between lessons
- take steps to help victims and remove sources of distress without placing the victim at further risk
- report suspected bullying to the Principal or Assistant Principal
- provide opportunities for students to learn how to behave cooperatively and in a friendly manner to others
- provide opportunities for parents to participate in parenting training.

What to do if you are being bullied or harassed?

1. All bullying or harassment incidences must be directed to the Principal or Assistant Principal immediately.
2. All incidences will be handled using the Restorative Practices Model. Restorative practice is a strategy that seeks to repair relationships that have been damaged, including those damaged through bullying or harassment. It does this by bringing about a sense of remorse and restorative action on the part of the offender and forgiveness by the victim. The rationale behind this approach is that when offenders reflect upon their harm to victims:
 - they become remorseful and act restoratively
 - teachers can focus on the unacceptable behaviour of offenders rather than their moral character
 - it can lead to healthier interpersonal relations among members of the school community and more effective learning

Restorative practices can be undertaken in a variety of forums. It may be conducted with varying degrees of formality and may include just those students most directly involved in bullying or harassment or in some circumstances a whole class. It may also include the parent/care giver.

3. For students whose bullying or harassing behaviour is severe, ongoing and resistant to change, an Individual Behaviour Management Plan will be developed by the Principal or Assistant Principal in consultation with student, parents/carers and teachers. Individual Behaviour Management Plans or Safety Plans and associated interventions help connect the student to positive people, programs and actions in the community, school and home as well as develop the student's inner social and emotional strengths (skills, values).
4. The school may choose, if bullying or harassment persists or the initial incident is of such magnitude that parents/carers will be contacted and consequences implemented consistent with the school's Code of Conduct. Furthermore, the Principal may commence formal disciplinary action in line with *Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance – 2014 (DET)* at any stage in the process depending on contextual information relating to the severity of the bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment.

An undertaking to evaluate the policy

This policy will be evaluated annually through:

- The annual Parent Survey.
- Examination and analysis of the register of reported incidents.
- The annual Attitudes to School Survey.

Ratified by School Council: 25th July 2016
Review Date: 2019