

# **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

## **DEFINITION**

Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, upset or create a risk to another person's health and safety - either psychologically or physically - or their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion. (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Definition)

## **RATIONALE**

At Ivanhoe Primary School we work to promote a positive culture where bullying is not accepted, and in doing so, all will have the right of respect from others, the right to learn or teach, and a right to feel safe and secure in the school environment.

## **PURPOSE**

Our aim is to promote tolerance and positive behaviour in our school community;

- Reinforcing within the school community that no form of bullying is acceptable.
- Encouraging the school community to be alert to signs and evidence of bullying and to have a responsibility to report it to staff whether as observer or victim.
- Ensuring that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up and that support is given to the victim, perpetrator and all other individuals involved.
- Seeking parental and peer group support and co operation at all times.

## **GUIDELINES**

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Ivanhoe Primary School Student Code of Conduct.

Successful implementation of this policy requires a clear understanding of what bullying is and is not. Implementation will be applied to all types of bullying, negative behaviour not deemed to be bullying will be addressed under the School Code of Conduct.

Before and After School Hour Care to follow the same procedures.

## Types of Bullying

There are four broad categories of bullying:

- **Direct physical bullying** could include hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging the property of others.
- **Direct verbal bullying** could include name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.
- **Indirect bullying** is harder to recognise and often carried out behind the bullied student's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Indirect bullying could include:
  - 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** could include being cruel to others by sending or posting harmful material or engaging in other forms of social aggression using the Internet or other digital technologies. Cyber bullying includes:
  - Flaming: online fights using electronic messages with angry or vulgar messages
  - Harassment: Repeatedly sending nasty, mean and insulting messages.
  - Denigration: Posting or sending gossip or rumours about a person to damage his/her reputation or friendships
  - Outing: Sharing someone's secrets or embarrassing information or images online
  - Exclusion: Intentionally and cruelly excluding someone from an online group
  - Cyber stalking: Repeated, intense harassment and denigration that includes threats or creates significant fear

## What Bullying is Not

There are three socially unpleasant situations that are often confused with bullying:

- **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.
- **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.
- **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.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

Teachers, parents and students are required to play an active role in the implementation of our anti bullying strategies.

### **Anti- bullying strategies**

- Emphasis is on preventative and early intervention wellbeing programs that focus on the areas of social skills and peer support and promote resilience, life skills and protective factors.
- Curriculum to include open discussions on anti-bullying strategies.
- At the commencement of the school year each classroom teacher will clarify the school policy on bullying and the Ivanhoe Primary School Student Code of Conduct with their students. Acknowledgement letter will be given to Prep parents and new parents to sign at the beginning of the year and return to school.
- Copies of the Student Code of Conduct and the Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures will be sent out to all Prep parents and families new to the school. Information about the policies will be provided at the 'Meet the Teacher Interview' in Term 1. Copies of the policies can be obtained from the office, classroom teacher or viewed on the school website.
- Encourage students to report incidents and assist them in adopting strategies to deal with bullying
- Junior School Council is a forum for promoting anti-bullying behaviour.

Programs and strategies that foster resilience and promote anti-bullying include:

- You Can Do It Program including Star of the Week
- Life Education Van
- Grade Six Prep Peer Buddy Program
- Grade Prep and Grade Two Peer Buddy Program
- Separate Playing Equipment for each grade levels, friendship seat in play ground
- Rotation of soccer, football and cricket pitch through the grade levels
- Lunchtime activities including dance, sporting equipment, library
- Transition programs

### **Teacher's responsibility:**

- Consistently reinforce positive behaviour
- Encourage and model tolerance and acceptance
- Be observant of signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying
- Confer with parents if necessary
- Make efforts to remove opportunity for bullying through proactive yard duty
- Communication between staff members using yard duty "clip boards" listing names of children requiring attention during yard duty times
- Arrive at class on time and supervise children in and out of the building
- Take steps to help victims and remove source of distress
- Listen and respond to all complaints of bullying
- Record of children's unacceptable behaviour
- Report incidents of behaviour to principal / assistant principal and parents

### **Student's responsibility:**

- Refuse to be involved in bullying situations
- Report suspected incidents to the appropriate teachers, either as an observer or a victim
- To behave in a way that reflects their understanding of the Student Code of Conduct

### **Parent's responsibility:**

- Take an active interest in their child's school life to be aware of any problems
- Encourage their child to report and deal with the problem themselves
- Encourage their child to be verbally assertive rather than retaliate with action
- Communicate to the school that their child is being bullied

### **Strategies for parents as referred to in the DEECD website -**

**<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/aboutschool/childhealth/bullyingstrategies.htm>**

Step 1: Listen carefully to your child and show concern and support.

Step 2: Give sensible advice – don't encourage your child to fight back, this will most likely increase the bullying.

Step 3: Assist your child to develop positive strategies including:

- saying *leave me alone* and calmly walking away
- avoiding situations that might expose them to further bullying
- making new friends.

Step 4: Ask your child the following questions to understand if there is a repeated pattern:

- What, where and when did the incident happen?
- Who was involved on each occasion?
- Did anybody else see it, and, if so, who?
- What solutions have been tried so far?
- The names of any teachers who are aware of the problem.

Step 5: Work with your child's school to solve the problem. Schools take their responsibilities in relation to bullying behaviour very seriously and they have more success when parents work with the school to solve the bullying problem.

*Remember, if you were not aware that your child was being bullied, then perhaps your child's teacher(s) did not know about it either.*

You should:

- Make an appointment with your child's teacher and make notes of the points you want to discuss before the meeting.
- Try to stay calm at the meeting and present information in a way that makes it clear to the school that you and the school are working as partners in trying to fix this problem.

**The school will need time to investigate and to talk to teachers and, perhaps, other students.**

Step 6: You can make a follow-up call to see what has been done or alternatively ask the school when you can expect them to get back to you.

Step 7: Work with the school to establish a plan for dealing with the current situation and future bullying incidents. Before you leave, ask for clarification about the next steps in the plan.

Step 8: If needed, ask for the school guidance officer to become involved.

Step 9: Encourage your child to report any further bullying incidents to a teacher they trust at the school

## **FOLLOW UP**

- Teaching staff to complete the form - Report on Incident of Bullying
- Classroom teacher, Assistant Principal/Principal will continue to monitor the situation
- Implementation of school's student code of conduct discipline procedures.

## **EVALUATION**

This policy will be evaluated through the following methods;

- School/community feedback
- Parent Opinion Survey
- Grade 5 & 6 Attitudes To School survey
- Monitoring of behaviour records
- Prep – grade 4 student survey
- Reports from Junior School Council
- This policy will be reviewed as part of Ivanhoe Primary School's Education Committee's review cycle, or in response to changes in legislation.

### **Other documents to be read in conjunction with this policy:**

- Student Code Of Conduct Policy
- Equal Opportunity
- Anti Harassment Policy
- Internet Acceptable Use Policy

*Working Party Date: August 2008*

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