



*'Quality Education in a Friendly, Caring and Supportive Environment'*

*Last review: November, 2018*

*Next review: August, 2021*

## **Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedures**

### **1. POLICY STATEMENT**

Bridgewater Primary School is committed to providing a safe and respectful teaching and learning environment where bullying and harassment is not tolerated. Bridgewater Primary School believes that all students have the right to learn in a school environment in which they feel safe and secure.

This Bullying and Harassment Policy should be read in conjunction with the Bridgewater Primary School Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy & Student Code of Conduct.

### **2. AIMS**

- To explain what bullying and harassment are, and the fact that they are unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
- To ask that everyone in the school community be alert to signs and evidence of bullying and have a responsibility to report it to staff whether as observer or victim.
- To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up appropriately and that support is given to both victims and perpetrators.
- To seek parental and peer-group support and co-operation at all times.

### **3. DEFINITIONS**

**Bullying** is when a person, or a group of people, repeatedly upset or hurt another person or damage their property, reputation or social acceptance. Bullying may be direct physical, direct verbal, indirect or cyberbullying. Bullying is not a one-off disagreement between two or more people or a situation of mutual dislike.

Bullying can be:

1. **Direct physical bullying** – e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.
2. **Direct verbal bullying** – e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.
3. **Indirect bullying** – e.g. spreading rumours, playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate, mimicking, encouraging others to socially exclude a person, damaging a person's social reputation or social acceptance, or cyberbullying.

**Cyber-bullying** is direct or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technology. For example via a mobile phone, chat rooms, social media, Xangas or MUD rooms. It could involve setting up a defamatory personal website or deliberately excluding someone from social networking spaces. It can be verbal or written.

**Harassment** is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome and which is reasonably likely to humiliate, offend, intimidate or distress a person. For example, teasing a student because of their speech impediment.

#### **4. GUIDELINES**

Bridgewater Primary School will not tolerate bullying (including cyberbullying) or harassment.

A school-wide approach will be taken to deal with bullying and harassment in a consistent and systematic way, with a focus on student safety and wellbeing.

Disciplinary measures will apply to students in breach of the behavior expectations established by the school and communicated through this Bullying and Harassment Policy (see Student Code of Conduct & Student Inclusion and Engagement Policy).

All complaints of bullying or harassment will be taken seriously and treated sensitively. This policy will be clearly communicated to students, parents and staff on the school's website and sent home to all families.

- Our school will organise preventative curriculum programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, tolerance, conflict resolution and problem solving e.g. Circle Time & Respectful Relationships Program N.B. These skills are embedded to everyday classroom practice.
- Student programs will be organised to raise student awareness about bullying and harassment, to provide a forum for discussion and to aid development of attitudes. Some matters will be dealt with formally in the curriculum and in peer support programs, leadership programs, extra-curricular programs, classroom discussions and occasional activities run by outside experts. The curriculum will include anti-bullying messages and strategies in line with DET materials e.g. Bully Stoppers: Make a Stand, Lend a Hand, National Day Against Bullying and 'No Blame Approach to Bullying'.
- Staff professional development programs will occur periodically to keep staff informed of current issues/strategies for dealing with bullying and/or harassment issues.
- An annual confidential bullying survey of the student body will be conducted and de-identified information will be used at staff and/or parent meetings.

If students believe they are being bullied they may contact the Principal in the first instance, or a staff member that they would prefer to discuss the matter with.

This policy will be reviewed periodically by Bridgewater Primary School to ensure it reflects current practices and refers to up-to-date policy.

#### **5. STUDENT SUPPORT**

If any staff member feels a student is at risk from bullying and harassing behaviours they should discuss their concerns with the Principal in order to ensure appropriate support for the student. It is important that staff document fully any actions taken in response to student bullying and/or harassment (see Appendix B).

## 6. COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in induction processes for relevant staff
- Included in our staff handbook/manual
- Discussed in an annual staff briefing/meeting
- Made available in a hard copy from the school office on request

## 7. LINKS AND APPENDICES

Links which are connected with this policy are:

- DET's [Student Engagement Guidance](#)
- The school's Acceptable ICT Use Agreement (re: cyber-bullying)
- DET's [Bully Stoppers: Make a Stand, Lend a Hand](#)
- DET's [Vulnerable Students](#)
- [National day Against Bullying and Violence](#)

Supporting links:

- [Bully Free World: Special Needs Anti-bullying Toolkit](#)
- Australian Human Rights Commission - [Human rights in the school classroom](#)
- [Safe Schools Coalition Victoria](#)
- [Racism. No way!](#) anti-racism education for Australian schools

Appendices which are connected with this policy are:

- **Appendix A:** Anti-Bullying (including cyberbullying) and Anti-Harassment Procedures
- **Appendix B:** Reporting on Incident of Bullying / Harassment – Template

## 6. EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed annually or more often if necessary.

## Appendix A

### Anti-Bullying & Anti-Harassment Procedures

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#### How will a student's bullying complaint be dealt with?

Bullying complaints will be taken seriously and treated sensitively. School procedures for responding to a student who bullies or harasses others are set out below.

**Note:** If at any time bullying or harassment persists or is sufficiently serious, the principal may contact parents/carers and commence formal disciplinary action in accordance with the School's Student Engagement Policy/Student Code of Conduct and DET's Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance.

#### **Level 1**

If the harassment incident is minor or a first-time occurrence, teachers may elect to use one or more of the following:

- stopping the harassment/re-statement of rules and consequences/reminder of Bullying and Harassment Policy
- think time detention
- restorative conference

The Principal should be notified of the situation and the actions put into place.

#### **Level 2**

If the bullying or harassment continues, or in instances of severe bullying or harassment, a referral should be made to the Principal who may:

- provide counselling support to the victim
- meet with the perpetrator to develop a Behaviour Support Plan and meet with parents of the student to discuss strategies
- provide discussion/mentoring of different social and emotional learning competencies including structured learning activities
- conduct a restorative conference separately with the perpetrator and "target"

#### **Level 3**

- A behaviour support group formed involving parents, student, Principal and relevant School Support Staff e.g. Educational Psychologist,

#### **Level 4**

Stronger responses such as suspension or expulsion may be considered in-line with DET guidelines.

## Appendix B

### Reporting on Incident of Bullying / Harassment

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Staff member recording incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_/\_\_\_ /

Name of student(s) who appears to have instigated bullying

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Year/Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of target(s)

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Name(s) of witnesses

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Did you observe the incident? YES  No

If 'No' who reported the incident to you? \_\_\_\_\_

Brief description of incident (what was allegedly said or done to the student who appears to have been bullied?)

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What form(s) of bullying took place? Verbal  Physical  Indirect  Cyber

Other  Please detail: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe how you responded (Did you use a school anti-bullying practice?)

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Describe how student responded to your intervention

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**Where / when / time incident took place:**

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

When: \_\_\_\_\_ before school  recess  lunch  in class  \_\_\_\_\_ after school

Time: \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm

Date incident took place: / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

**Additional comments:**

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