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**BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY**

**Purpose**

PRPS (Powlett River Primary School) is committed to providing a safe and respectful learning environment where bullying will not be tolerated.

The purpose of this policy is to:

* explain the definition of bullying
* make clear all forms of bullying at PRPS will not be tolerated
* ask everyone in our school community be alert to signs and evidence of bullying behaviour and accept responsibility to report bullying behaviour to school staff
* ensure all reported incidents of bullying are appropriately investigated and addressed
* ensure support is provided to students who may be affected by bullying behaviour (including victims, bystanders and perpetrators)
* seek parental and peer group support in addressing and preventing bullying behaviour at PRPS

When responding to bullying behaviour, PRPS aims to:

* be proportionate, consistent and responsive
* find a constructive and positive solution for everyone
* stop the bullying from happening again
* restore the relationships between the students involved

PRPS acknowledges that school staff owe a duty of care to students to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm, which can include harm that may be caused by bullying behaviour.

## **Scope**

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions. This policy should be read in conjunction with our *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy*, *Inclusion and Diversity Policy*, *Duty of Care Policy* and *Statement of Values and School Philosophy* and *Complaints Policy.*

## **Policy**

### **Definitions**

*Bullying* occurs when someone, or a group of people, deliberately and repeatedly upset, harass, intimidate, threaten or hurt another person or damage their property, reputation or social acceptance. There is an imbalance of power in incidents of bullying, where the bully or bullies have more power than the victim due to their age, size, status or other reasons.

Bullying may be direct or indirect, physical or verbal, and includes 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 and/or damaging a person’s social reputation or social acceptance

*Cyberbullying* is direct or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technology. For example via a mobile phone, tablets, computers, chat rooms, email, social media, etc. It can be verbal, written or include use of images, video and/or audio.

*Mutual conflict* involves an argument or disagreement between people with no imbalance of power. In incidents of mutual conflict, generally, both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the issue. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.

*Social rejection or dislike* is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

*Single-episode acts* of harassment, nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If someone is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied. Harassment, nastiness or physical aggression directed towards many different people is not the same as bullying. However, single episodes of harassment, nastiness or physical aggression are not acceptable behaviours at our school.

Many distressing behaviours may not constitute bullying even though they are unpleasant. Students who are involved in or who witness any distressing behaviours of concern are encouraged to report their concerns to school staff.

## **Bullying Prevention**

PRPS has a number of programs and strategies in place to build a positive and inclusive school culture. We strive to foster a school culture that prevents bullying behaviour by modelling and encouraging behaviour that demonstrates acceptance, kindness and respect.

Bullying prevention at PRPS is proactive and is supported by research that indicates a whole school, multifaceted approach is the most effect way to prevent and address bullying. At our school:

* we have a positive school environment that provides safety, security and support for students and promotes positive relationships and wellbeing
* we strive to build strong partnerships between the school, families and the broader community that means all members work together to ensure the safety of students
* teachers are encouraged to incorporate classroom management strategies that discourage bullying and promote positive behaviour
* in the classroom our social and emotional learning curriculum teaches students what constitutes bullying and how to respond to bullying behaviour assertively. This promotes resilience, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving
* the Better Buddies program encourage positive relationships between students in different year levels. We seek to empower students to be confident communicators and to resolve conflict in a non-aggressive and constructive way
* students are encouraged to look out for each other and to talk to teachers and older peers about any bullying they have experienced or witnessed

For further information about our engagement and wellbeing initiatives, please see our *Student Wellbeing and Engagement* policy.

## **Incident Response**

### **Reporting concerns to PRPS**

Bullying complaints will be taken seriously and responded to sensitively at our school. Students who may be experiencing bullying behaviour, or students who have witnessed bullying behaviour, are encouraged to report their concerns to school staff as soon as possible.

In most circumstances, we encourage students to speak to their teacher. However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff.

Parents or carers who may develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at PRPS should contact either the child’s teacher or the school principal on 56787582. The school also has a direct email link where people can report allegations of bullying anonymously at ***reportabully@powlett.vic.gov.au***

The principal may implement all, or some of the following responses to bullying behaviours:

1. **Primary Prevention:**

* professional development for staff relating to bullying, harassment and proven counter measures
* community awareness and input relating to bullying (including cyber-bullying), its characteristics, its effects on victims and the school’s programs and response
* provide programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving
* a bullying survey and yard survey will be administered and acted upon twice annually.
* ‘Bounce Back Program’ program implemented across the school
* each classroom teacher to clarify with students at the start of each year the school policy on bullying, including cyber-bullying
* all students to be provided with individual and confidential computer and network log-ins and passwords with processes to be put in place to ensure tracking of student activity on the school’s computer equipment and network.
* firewalls are installed to eliminate outside traffic into the school’s network and intranet
* the curriculum to include anti-bulling messages and strategies
* student Representative Council, peer support delegates, staff and students to promote the philosophy of ‘No Put Downs’

**Early Intervention:**

* promote children and staff reporting bullying incidents involving themselves or others
* classroom teachers and principal on a regular basis reminding students and staff to report incidents of bullying
* regular monitoring of student traffic on school’s computer networks to identify potential problems
* parents encouraged to contact school if they become aware of a problem
* a designated safe and quiet place for children to access at recess and lunch times
* public recognition and reward for positive behaviour and resolution of problems
* parents to be contacted where signs of bullying are becoming apparent

**Intervention:**

* once identified each bully, victim and witnesses will be spoken with, and all incidents or allegations of bullying will be fully investigated and documented
* students and staff identified by others as bullies will be informed of allegations
* parents may be contacted
* both bullies and victims will be offered counselling and support
* removal of cyber-bullies from access to the school’s network and computers for a period of time
* if student bullying persists parents will be contacted and consequences implemented consistent with the school’s Student Code of Conduct
* if staff bullying persists the principal will commence formal disciplinary action

The principal is responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner.

All communications with the principal in the course of investigating an allegation of bullying will be managed sensitively. Investigations will be completed as quickly as possible to allow for the behaviours to be addressed in a timely manner.

The objective of completing a thorough investigation into the circumstances of alleged bullying behaviour is to determine the nature of the conduct and the students involved. A thorough understanding of the alleged bullying will inform staff about how to most effectively implement an appropriate response to that behaviour.

Serious bullying, including serious cyberbullying, is a criminal offence and may be referred to Victoria Police. For more information, see: [Brodie’s Law.](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/advicesheetbrodieslaw.aspx)

### **Responses to bullying behaviours**

There are a number of factors that will be considered when determining the most appropriate response to the behaviour. When making a decision about how to respond to bullying behaviour, PRPS will consider:

* the age and maturity of the students involved
* the severity and frequency of the bullying, and the impact it has had on the victim student
* whether the perpetrator student or students have displayed similar behaviour before
* whether the bullying took place in a group or one-to-one context
* whether the perpetrator demonstrates insight or remorse for their behaviour
* the alleged motive of the behaviour, including any element of provocation

**Post Violation:**

Consequences for students will be individually based and may involve:

* exclusion from class
* exclusion from yard
* school suspension
* withdrawal of privileges
* ongoing counselling from appropriate agency for both victim and bully
* reinforcement of positive behaviours
* classroom meetings
* support structures
* ongoing monitoring of identified bullies
* rewards for positive behaviour
* consequences for staff will be individually based and may involve:
  + counselling
  + a period of monitoring
  + a formal support group
  + disciplinary actions

## **Evaluation**

This will be reviewed on a 1-2 year basis following analysis of school data on reported incidents of, and responses to bullying to ensure that this policy remains up to date, practical and effective.

Data will be collected through:

* discussion with students
* regular student bullying surveys
* regular staff surveys
* assessment of school based data, including the number of reported incidents of bullying in each year group and the effectiveness of the responses implemented

## **Review cycle**

This policy was last updated on \_\_\_\_18/6/18\_ and is scheduled for review in \_\_\_\_2020\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_