



## **BULLYING & HARASSMENT**

### **Rationale**

- Categories of bullying include direct physical bullying (hitting, kicking, pinching, pushing or damaging property), direct verbal bullying (name calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, racist remarks or verbal abuse), indirect verbal bullying (lying or spreading rumours, playing nasty jokes, mimicking or encouraging others to socially exclude someone) and cyberbullying (direct verbal or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technologies including harassment using a mobile phone, setting up a defamatory website or deliberately excluding someone from social spaces).
- Many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management.
- Mutual conflict involves an argument or disagreement between people but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution. 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 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. Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different people is not the same as bullying. However, this does not mean that single episodes should be ignored or condoned as these are unacceptable behaviours.

### **Purpose**

- To create a safe and respectful school environment and prevent bullying, cyber bullying and other unacceptable behaviours.
- To ensure Altona Meadows Primary School complies with DET policy and guidelines.

### **Definitions**

**Bullying** is when someone, or a group of people, deliberately upsets or hurts another person or damages their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion. There is an imbalance of power in incidents of bullying with the bully or bullies having more power at the time due to age, size, status or other reasons.

**Cyberbullying** is direct verbal or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technologies. This includes harassment via a mobile phone, setting up a defamatory personal website or deliberately excluding someone from social networking spaces.

**Harassment** is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome which could reasonably be expected to cause offence, humiliation or intimidation to a person.

### **Implementation**

- Altona Meadows Primary School will:
  - promote and support safe and respectful learning environments where bullying is not tolerated
  - put in place whole-school strategies and initiatives as outlined in DET's anti-bullying policy
  - develop a Student Engagement Policy that includes processes and strategies to prevent and respond to incidents of bullying and other forms of unacceptable behaviour.
  - Involve students, staff and parents in updating the Student Engagement Policy.

- take a whole-school approach focusing on safety and wellbeing
- address cyber bullying as part of its *Internet / Social Media Policy*
- If deemed necessary, the school may elect to use the data capture tool which will provide some insights into the experiences and opinions of the school community in regards to safety and wellbeing, including bullying in the school environment. Within this tool there is content tailored for leadership and school staff, students and parents. The tool can be accessed through the following website:  
<https://edugate.vic.gov.au/Services/Schools/bullying/default.aspx>  
The Principal's logon and password is required.

#### **Evaluation**

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle or if guidelines change

Reference:

[www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/bullying.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/bullying.aspx)