

## Anti-Bullying Policy

### AIM

The aim of this policy is to ensure that staff, parents and students of Black Forest will work together to create a safe, caring, orderly and productive learning community that supports the rights of all students to learn and all teachers to teach.

### RATIONALE

- a. At Black Forest Primary School we believe each student and staff member has the right to feel safe, physically and psychologically.
- b. Bullying impacts negatively on the people involved, interferes with their right to learn and feel secure and damages their sense of wellbeing.
- c. Bullying is a systematic abuse of power involving deliberate hurtful gestures, words, or actions which are repeated over time and can involve violence.
- d. Racist and sexist harassment or any other forms of discriminatory behaviour may occur because of people's inability to accept or value differences.
- e. We have a responsibility to empower our school community to identify and implement strategies to eliminate and prevent bullying and harassment.

### DEFINITIONS

**Bullying** is repeated verbal, physical or social behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group to one or more persons. **Cyber-bullying** refers to bullying through information and communication technologies. (1)

Conflict or fights between equals and single incidents are not regarded as bullying

**Harassment** is behaviour that targets an individual or group due to their identity, race, culture or ethnic origin, religion, physical characteristics, gender, sexual orientation, marital, parenting or economic status, age and/or disability and that offends, humiliates, intimidates or creates a hostile environment. Harassment may be an ongoing pattern of behaviour or it may be a single act. (2)

Bullying and harassment can leave a person with many different feelings including: being scared or angry, feeling helpless, sad, powerless, worthless, doubting their own worth, ill, lonely and/or depressed.

### BULLYING / HARASSMENT CAN INCLUDE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

**Physical:** Threatened or actual violence against another person/s that results in psychological harm or injury. It includes hitting, punching, pushing, kicking, touching, grabbing, spitting, looks, stares, facial expressions and gestures

**Sexual:** Unwelcome sexual conduct which makes a person feel offended, humiliated and/or intimidated: suggestive comments or jokes: sexually explicit pictures, screen savers etc

**Verbal:** Spoken or written insults, threats, suggestive comments, name calling, unfair criticism, spreading rumours

**Racial:** Consists of acts or behaviours which are directed against individual or groups (based on perceptions of cultural background and physiological characteristics) and which are experienced as insulting, offensive, demeaning, humiliating or intimidating.

**Extortion:** Coercion to hand over money or possessions.

**Social:** Forming groups to leave out, ignore and disrespect: influencing, encouraging to organising someone else to be involved in any type of bullying

**Cyber bullying:** The use of internet services or mobile technologies such as email, chat rooms, discussion groups, instant messaging, WebPages or SMS to intimidate, humiliate, or putdown a person by sending repeated negative messages, cyber stalking, posting unwanted photos and sending threats.

1. Safer DECD schools: Department for Education and Child Development, 2011

2. Safer DECD schools: Department for Education and Child Development, 2011

#### IF BULLYING / HARASSMENT OCCURS:

- We may feel frightened, unsafe, embarrassed, angry or unfairly treated. Our work, sleep and ability to concentrate may suffer
- Our relationships with our families and friends may be affected and we may feel confused and not know what to do about the problem.

#### DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF INDIVIDUALS IN THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

As a member of the school community you have the right:

1. To be and feel safe and to be treated with respect
2. To feel included
3. To be valued for yourself
4. To be free from harassment
5. To know who to go to for help
6. To be listened to and be heard
7. To know that steps will be taken to resolve problems or issues
8. To be provided with information and advice about bullying and how to manage it

*Every member of the school community has the right to be safe and free from the attempts of others to exert unjust power over them. As a consequence all members of the school community have made a commitment to work collaboratively to maintain a safe and caring environment for all students.*

#### Responsibilities

##### Students

If a student feels that they are being bullied, or has witnessed bullying behaviour as bystander, it is expected they will:

- tell the person to stop the behaviour
- support the person who is being bullied and request help from a teacher at the time of the incident
- report behaviour to class teacher or other staff member
- treat others with respect at all times
- be aware that if students have witnessed bullying behaviour as a bystander they are responsible for reporting the incident.

##### All Staff (including Support Services staff)

If a student reports a bullying incident or a staff member witnesses incidents of bullying they are expected to:

- listen and provide support to the target of the bullying by acknowledging the nature and seriousness of bullying behaviour
- find out the background and attempt to resolve the incident
- refer the incident to leadership, if follow up is required
- model appropriate behaviours at all times
- implement curriculum that supports social education and student well being
- use Restorative Justice practices
- support the witnesses / whistle blower

##### Leadership

- provide support to the students who have been bullied
- provide support for bullies (i.e. anger management etc)
- ensuring the school anti-bullying policy is implemented consistently throughout the school
- make contact with parents regarding bullying incidents as required
- encourage students to continue to report incidents of bullying behaviour
- disseminate information regarding the school's anti-bullying policy, procedures and curriculum

## Parents and Caregivers

Children who are being bullied or harassed may not choose to talk about it with their teachers. They may be afraid that it will only make things worse or they may feel that it is wrong to tell tales.

This is why parents and caregivers have an important part to play in helping the school deal with bullying.

- Watch for signs that their child may be being bullied. Some signs that a child is being bullied may be:
  - ◊ Unexplained injuries
  - ◊ Damaged or ripped clothing
  - ◊ Vague headaches or stomach aches
  - ◊ Refusal to go to school
  - ◊ Asking for extra pocket money or food
  - ◊ Tearfulness or depression
- Encourage their child to report any incidences of bullying.
- Contact the school if they are aware that any child is being bullied.
- Encourage their child to become emotionally resilient eg use of positive self talk, fostering optimistic thinking and connectedness to family and community.
- Support anti-bullying curriculum implemented at school.
- Contact the school for further information regarding support available.

At Black Forest Primary we use a **3 tier approach** including prevention, intervention and post-intervention strategies:

### 1. Prevention strategies:

- Identifying and defining the difference between conflict and bullying
- Planned teaching and learning linked to anti-bullying.
- Valuing diversity and teaching for and about diversity.
- Providing professional learning for all staff re anti-bullying.
- Teaching students about problem solving, conflict resolution and anger management and resilient behaviours
- Using the curriculum to teach about respectful and responsible relationships.

### 2. Intervention strategies:

- An acknowledgement that there are degrees of seriousness of incidents of bullying and responses cater for this range.
- Those responses are logical consequences to enable students to learn the appropriate social behaviours and provide an opportunity to restore positive relationships
- Implementing consequences for those who bully others as well as providing counselling to develop skills for self-management
- Teaching students of their responsibilities as contributors or bystanders.
- Responses will be age appropriate.

### 3. Post-intervention strategies:

- Monitoring situations between the students to ensure that their safety and wellbeing are maintained.
- Informing parents of strategies to prevent and deal with bullying.
- Reviewing and evaluating behaviour codes and policies.

## Responding to incidents of bullying

The principles underlying responses to incidents of bullying include:

### Low Level, infrequent incidents

Responses would include the use of a restorative practice process to understand, clarify and resolve the situation and work together towards repairing the harm caused; and this would include:

- a focus on what happened

- what harm has resulted
- what needs to happen to resolve the situation or repair the relationship
- a monitoring agreement

#### Intermediate Level Incidents

- Talking with the perpetrator(s) and the target(s) individually.
- Identifying the concerns of the victim/s to the perpetrator(s)
- Establishing an agreement aimed at reconciling the situation.
- Jointly negotiating how the agreement will be monitored
- Ensure parents are aware of incidents concerning their child.

If there continues to be further bullying the situation would be considered of high severity. Parents of students involved in this process will be notified and updated on the progress of the situation.

*(This process will be modified to cater for younger students or students with special needs. It would also be modified to suit the complexity of the situation.)*

#### High Severity

Responses to incidents of high severity, with parent involvement include:

- Sanctions such as removal from the yard, loss of play, restricted play areas or assigned tasks.
- The implementation of DECD suspension, exclusion and expulsion guidelines.
- Counselling for the target and referral to outside agencies
- Notification to Families SA.
- Notification to police.
- Negotiation with families to access DECD support services or Child And Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

#### EVALUATION

The frequency or continuation of bullying will be monitored after six months and then after twelve months, alongside the effectiveness of the procedures as stated above.

It will be evaluated by:

- Noting if there has been a reduction in reporting or observed incidences of bullying.
- Speaking to parents who have reported incidences to find out if the problem has been resolved.
- Report given to community through Newsletter

#### Links to

“Student Well-being: Make a stand against bullying” and

”BULLYING: How Parents can work with the school to counter it”