

	<p><b>FRANKSTON PRIMARY SCHOOL</b></p> <p><b>Bullying and Harassment Policy</b></p>	<p><b>Developed</b> 2018 <b>Review: 2021</b></p>
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## **POLICY STATEMENT**

Frankston Primary School is committed to providing a safe and respectful teaching and learning environment where bullying and harassment is not tolerated. Frankston 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 Frankston Primary School Student Engagement and Inclusion and Diversity Policy.

## **AIM**

The aims of the Bullying and Harassment Policy is:

- to explain what bullying and harassment are, and the fact 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.

## **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 cyber-bullying. Bullying is not a one-off disagreement between two or more people or a situation of mutual dislike.

Bullying can be:

- Direct physical bullying e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property
- Direct verbal bullying e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse
- 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 cyber-bullying.

*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.

*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 that is 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.

Restorative practices are based on principles of accountability and meaningful change instead of punishment. The restorative practices approach seeks to repair relationships that have been damaged, including those damaged through bullying. It does this by bringing about a sense of remorse and restorative action on the part of the perpetrator and forgiveness by the victim. Restorative Practices in schools assists teachers, students and parents to build, maintain and restore relationships.

*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.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

Frankston Primary School 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 and harassment behaviour by modelling and encouraging behaviour that demonstrates acceptance, kindness and respect.

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

- We have a positive whole school environment built on the philosophy of Restorative Practices' that provides safety, security and support for students and promotes positive relationships and wellbeing. The implementation of Restorative Practices seeks to empower students to be confident communicators and to resolve conflict in a non-aggressive and constructive way
- 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
- Annual collaborative development of a class code of conduct set clear expectations and define expected positive behaviour
- Classroom management strategies are implemented school-wide in conjunction with public recognition of positive student behaviour, including 'Student of the Week', 'Smoothie Club' and 'Morning Tea with the Principal' awards
- In the classroom, our personal and social capabilities of resilience, assertiveness, positive conflict resolution and problem solving are developed, and supported through the implementation of personal goal setting using the 'Zones of Regulation'.
- Our Student Engagement Program supports the development of personal and social capabilities, including a program for P – 2 students and 3 – 6 students
- Students are encouraged to look out for each other and to talk to teachers and older peers about any bullying or harassment they have experienced or witnessed.
- Staff professional development programs will occur periodically to keep staff informed of current issues/strategies for dealing with bullying and/or harassment issues.
- Results from the annual Students Attitude to School Survey and other school implemented surveys will be reviewed as a staff to discern areas of concern and used to promote school-wide proactive support measures

### **The school will conduct specific programs and initiatives to respond to bullying and harassment:**

- Frankston Primary school's Vision, Mission and Values Statements will provide a framework for the schools approach to bullying and harassment
- Our school will organise preventative curriculum programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, tolerance, conflict resolution and problem solving
- 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, extracurricular programs, classroom discussions and occasional activities run by outside experts. The curriculum will include anti-bullying messages and strategies in line with DET materials
- Staff professional development programs will occur periodically to keep staff informed of current issues/strategies for dealing with bullying and/or harassment issues
- Results from the Students Attitude to School Survey will be reviewed to discern areas of concern.

### **INCIDENT RESPONSE**

#### **Reporting concerns to Frankston Primary School**

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

In most circumstances, we encourage students to speak to their classroom teacher first. However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff including teachers, integration aides, Principal and Assistant Principal.

Parents or carers who may develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying or harassment behaviour at Frankston Primary are encouraged to contact their child's classroom teacher to discuss first, however are welcome to discuss concerns with the Assistant Principal or Principal.

#### **Investigations**

When notified of alleged bullying or harassment behaviour, school staff are required to:

1. record the details of the allegations in the Sentral student management system; and
2. inform the Assistant Principal.

The classroom teacher is responsible for investigating allegations of bullying that affect mostly the students in their class. If the students affected are spread across the grade level or across the school, the allegation may be investigated by the Assistant Principal to ensure prior knowledge and consistency. All investigations will be undertaken in a confidential, timely and sensitive manner.

To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying or harassment, the classroom teacher, Assistant Principal or Principal may:

- speak to the students involved in the allegations, including the victim/s, the alleged perpetrator/s and any witnesses to the incidents
- speak to the parents/carers of the students involved
- speak to the teachers of the students involved
- take detailed notes of all discussions for future reference
- obtain written statements from all or any of the above.

All communications with the classroom teacher, Assistant Principal and Principal in the course of investigating an allegation of bullying or harassment 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 or harassing behaviour is to determine the

nature of the conduct and the students involved. A thorough understanding of the alleged bullying or harassment will inform staff about how to most effectively implement an appropriate response to that behaviour. Serious bullying or harassment, including serious cyberbullying, is a criminal offence and may be referred to Victoria Police. For more information, see: Brodie's Law.

### **Responses to bullying and harassing behaviours**

When the classroom teacher has sufficient information to understand the circumstances of the alleged bullying or harassment and the students involved, a number of strategies may be implemented to address the behaviour and support affected students in consultation with parents, teachers, integration aides, Principal and Assistant Principal. 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, Frankston Primary School 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
- whether the perpetrator student or students have displayed similar behaviour in the past
- 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.

The staff member investigating the incident may implement all, or some of the following responses to bullying or harassing behaviours:

- facilitate a restorative practice meeting and conference with all or some of the students involved. The objective of restorative practice is to repair relationships that have been damaged by bringing about a sense of remorse and restorative action on the part of the person who has bullied or harassed someone and forgiveness by the person who has been bullied or harassed
- implement targeted strategies and positive rewards personal goals to reinforce positive behaviours
- facilitate a mediation between some or all of the students involved to help to encourage students to take responsibility for their behaviour and explore underlying reasons for conflict or grievance
- facilitate a Student Support Group meeting and/or Behaviour Management Plan for affected students
- restrict contact between victim and perpetrator
- provide discussion and/or mentoring for different social and emotional learning competencies of the students involved
- monitor the behaviour of the students involved for an appropriate time and take follow up action if necessary
- offer counselling support to the perpetrator student or students, including referral to the Student Support Coordinator
- offer counselling support to affected students, including witnesses and/or friends of the victim student, including referral to the Student Support Coordinator
- implement disciplinary consequences for the perpetrating students, which may include removal of privileges, reflection time, suspension and/or expulsion consistent with our Student Wellbeing and Engagement policy, the Ministerial Order on Suspensions and Expulsions and any other relevant Department policy

It is important that staff document fully any actions taken in response to student bullying and/or harassment upon the school record system, Sentral.

Frankston Primary School understands the importance of monitoring the progress of students who have been involved in or affected by bullying or harassing behaviour. Our ability to effectively reduce and eliminate bullying and harassing behaviour is greatly affected by students reporting concerning behaviour as soon as possible, so that the responses implemented by Frankston Primary School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

Should any students involved or parents/carers not be satisfied with the process followed by the investigating staff member or outcomes of this bullying or harassment process, they may discuss the matter further with the Assistant Principal or Principal.

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, through newsletters from time to time, in student forums and class discussions.

<b>DEVELOPED</b>	2018
<b>PRINCIPAL</b>	Renée Kennedy
<b>SCHOOL COUNCIL PRESIDENT</b>	Chad Wilson
<b>EVALUATION</b>	This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three year review cycle, or as required due to changes in relevant Acts, Laws, DET mandates, or should situations arise that require earlier consideration.