



ENGAGEMENT & WELL BEING POLICY

Rationale

Every member of the school community has a right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive. Everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity. Our Values clearly discourage all forms of discrimination, bullying or harassment of any type and will not be tolerated at Sunshine Harvester Primary in the interest of protecting students, staff, parents and visitors.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Discipline and Welfare policies.

Definitions - Bullying

- is a form of harassment and is an act of aggression
- is a willful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten, frighten or embarrass someone else
- includes physical, verbal, psychological and social isolation
- is a conscious act
- may relate to religious custom/belief
- may be of a sexual nature or relate to sexuality
- can be planned, and most times repeated over a period of time
- causes distress at the time of occurrence and can impact on the future
- **Indirect** bullying includes lying and spreading nasty rumours, excluding someone from the group and isolating someone by preventing others from befriending them.
- **Cyber** bullying which involves the use of e-mail, voice mail, text messages, social networking sites, blogs or chat rooms to humiliate and distress someone.

Aims

- To provide an environment that is free from all forms of bullying.
- To provide an environment that encourages reporting of bullying so that action can be taken.
- To maintain an environment that ensures people do not have their self-esteem or morale undermined, nor work effectiveness and learning impeded by any form of bullying.

Implementation

Bullying / Harassment Prevention Strategies

- Equally encourage use of “boosters” and discourage “put downs”
- Reinforce references and review of our Values

- Knowledge of: Staff, Community, School Council, Principal codes of practice
- Encourage team work and development of team skills
- Provide positive role models across the school community
- Encourage reporting of bullying, harassment or discrimination
- Provide relevant parent information
- Regularly remind students of Values, rights and responsibilities
- Promote co-operative learning
- Continually raise the profile of the prevention of bullying, within the curriculum.
- Active promotion of current school policies

Strategy Guidelines

Persons Who Experience Bullying Should:

- Inform a trusted adult who could be a parent, teacher, friend or relative.
- Communicate in an open, honest and ongoing way.
- Co-operate with strategies devised to address the issue.
- Record incident in a journal, diary or incident sheet available from school office

Parents Should:

- Be vigilant for signs of distress, changes in mood or patterns of behaviour, bruising, asking regularly for extra money, damage to clothing or property, and take an interest in their child's social life.
- Be role models in avoiding bullying behaviour of their students or staff members.
- Advise school staff of bullying, if their child feels too threatened to do so.
- Actively encourage their child to work with the school to find solutions.
- Be willing to attend interviews.
- Be willing to actively support the school's processes.

Observers / By-standers Should:

- Desist from joining in.
- Let the bully know the actions are wrong.
- Support the bullied student.
- Report the matter to a staff member or adult with whom they feel comfortable.

Staff Should:

- Be role models of appropriate behaviour and themselves avoid all forms of bullying behaviour against students or other staff members and parents.
- Maintain appropriate supervision and arrive at class on time.
- Be aware of students in class whose contributions are met with hurtful (often subtle) responses by others, and intervene where appropriate.
- Endeavour to assist the bullied students by removing the cause of distress.

- Respond appropriately to incidents of bullying, report to the classroom teacher and Area coordinator and discuss the appropriate strategy with colleagues and/or principal.
- Communicate the devised strategies to the student and his/her parents as appropriate.

The Alleged Bully Should:

- Discontinue the bullying behaviour.
- Be helped to understand how words and/or actions have been harmful and to learn from this experience.
Cooperate with strategies devised; expect their parents to be informed if appropriate.

Bullying/Harassment Policy - Implementation Guidelines

1. Teachers make an appropriate initial response. If the situation remains unchanged, a specific strategy will be developed for each case. Parents will be a part of the process as appropriate. There are a variety of strategies that may be used, including:
 - Skills For Growing / Adolescence
 - Behaviour Modification videos such as Bully Busters' strategies
 - Parent involvement either by phone, letter or interview
 - Personalised behaviour modification plan
 - Intensive individual counselling
 - Consequences set by the school as set out in the Student Code of Conduct.
2. Staff members making an initial response must:
 - Meet with both parties separately and record the essential details.
 - Make an immediate response to each party to reassure the complainant and to ensure student's safety and to curb and prevent further bullying by the alleged bully.
 - Fully brief successive key personnel in the process (coordinator, class teacher, leadership team) and then devise and implement appropriate responses or strategy.
 - Manage the strategies devised for both parties.

In serious cases, an immediate response may include counseling/mediation as a first response, and may require the isolation or suspension of the offending student.

3. Staff need to recognise that when a strategy is not working there must be a follow up system developed with a different strategy to establish whether or not the bullying has stopped, in such case different strategies will be immediately devised.
4. Bullying a serious breach of expected behaviour. A person perpetrating bullying who fails to appropriately modify their behaviour will be sanctioned in accordance with the school's ten step Discipline Policy.
5. Counseling is available to all parties at all stages of the process.
6. Restorative Practices -staff will acknowledge positive gains in student efforts (both the bully and the bullied) to change their behaviour.

Evaluation

The effectiveness of the Engagement Policy will be determined through:

- student attendance and punctuality records
- student retention data
- parent and student survey results
- integrated responses to parent, teacher and student surveys
- review of school incident records.
- annual reviews of student achievement evidence
- delivery of annual targets detailed in Annual Implementation Plans