



# **BULLYING & HARRASSMENT POLICY**

## **BLACKBURN LAKE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Florence Street Blackburn 3130

### **DEFINITIONS**

**Bullying** is repeated oppression, physical or psychological, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group. It can take a number of forms including physical, social, psychological and cyber.

**Cyber-bullying** consists of covert, psychological bullying, conveyed through the electronic mediums such as cell-phones, web-logs and web-sites, on-line chat rooms, 'MUD' rooms (multi-user domains where individuals take on different characters) and Xangas (on-line personal profiles where some adolescents create lists of people they do not like). It may be verbal (over the telephone or mobile phone), or written (flaming, threats, racial, sexual or homophobic harassment) using the various mediums available.

**Harassment** is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome or offensive to a person.

### **RATIONALE**

At Blackburn Lake Primary School we have the responsibility to build and promote positive relationships which prevent anti-social behaviour, and encourage care and respect of the rights of others.

Our school will actively promote a positive and welcoming personal environment for all members of the school community. Bullying or harassment can result in anger, embarrassment, fear and humiliation, loss of self-confidence and reduced capacity. In order for all students to reach their full potential, it is therefore important to minimise and where necessary address all forms of bullying and harassment. This will ensure that individual differences are respected and enable students and staff in their pursuit of learning and teaching.

### **AIMS**

The aim of this policy is to:

- Reinforce within the school community what bullying is and the fact that it is unacceptable.
- Encourage self-esteem and empower students to communicate effectively.
- Provide the necessary skills, information and resources to assist children in making more informed choices and decisions.
- Encourage students to develop positive values and attitudes in our society and gain an understanding about the possible consequences of inappropriate behaviour
- Ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up appropriately and that support is given to both victims and perpetrators.

### **IMPLEMENTATION**

- Each member of the community has the responsibility to bring incidents of bullying to the attention of the school.
- Structured activities will be available to students at some recess and/or lunch breaks.
- There will be public recognition and reward for positive behaviour and resolution of problems, for example through Student of the Week awards.

### **GUIDELINES**

- A school-wide approach will be taken to deal with bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment in a consistent and systematic way.
- All new students and staff will be informed of the Bullying and Harassment Policy and practices at the commencement of their time at the school
- Anti-Bullying and Pro Social Programs will be supported by curriculum initiatives that will promote an awareness of bullying, the identification of bullying behaviour and the development of strategies to be used when bullying is seen or experienced. Programs will have an emphasis on preventative and early intervention strategies.
- Home and school cooperation is paramount to the successful implementation of the anti-bullying strategies and will be actively encouraged.

Professional development will be provided specifically for all staff, relating to bullying (including cyber bullying), harassment and evidence-based counter measures.

- The school leadership team and the teachers will work together to ensure the safety of all school members in situations of bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment, by thoroughly investigating all complaints while respecting the need for confidentiality, notifying parents/carers when necessary and planning interventions.
- If a teacher feels a student is at serious and imminent risk from bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment, it is their professional duty to pass on the information to the Principal / Principal's Nominee in order to ensure appropriate support for the student. It is important that teachers document fully their interaction with the student and to verify the actions taken.

## **PROGRAM**

Blackburn Lake Primary School staff implement preventative curriculum programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving in regularly timetabled Bounce Back and Buddy/Peer Support programs as well as in Circle Time and other class activities. The beginning of each school year will include 8-10 days of values based learning (Linking TRRACs) and establishing classroom protocols and routines.

- Programs addressing bullying and harassment will variably promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving. Examples of such programs include the Bounce Back classroom resilience, 'Better Buddies', 'Great Mates' and Peer Support Programs.
- Student programs, such as Linking TRRACs, Bounce Back and Buddies, will be timetabled to raise student awareness about bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment, to provide a forum for discussion of matters and to aid development of attitudes.
- There will be consequences for students engaging in bullying or harassment. Disciplinary consequences for bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment will comply with the school's Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy, Behaviour Management Policy and Child Safe Policy. The principal or their nominee will provide disciplinary consequences including withdrawals or suspensions in accordance with Department of Education and Training (DET) guidelines.
- When bullying behaviour is identified, appropriate intervention measures will be followed and implemented consistent with the Student Code of Conduct. Children will be counselled for inappropriate behaviour.
- Teachers will actively support the victims of bullying. They will model appropriate behaviours when interacting with both students and colleagues.

The key strategy to deal with bullying and harassment will be restorative practices. This strategy will be employed in preference to punitive sanctions and negative consequences.

See: DET Restorative Practice: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/methodrestorative.aspx>

## **EVALUATION**

This policy will be reviewed within three years.

**RATIFIED BY SCHOOL COUNCIL: 8<sup>th</sup> August, 2017**

**PRINCIPAL: Loisia Steed SCHOOL COUNCIL PRESIDENT: Dan Watts**

## **Relevant Documents & Links**

Links which are connected with this policy are:

BLPS Internet Procedures Policy

BLPS Child Safe Policy

BLPS Electronic Communication Device Policy

BLPS Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy

BLPS Duty of Care Policy

BLPS School Philosophy

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/methodrestorative.aspx>