



## **DROUIN SOUTH PRIMARY SCHOOL ANTI BULLYING & HARRASSMENT POICY**

### **Policy Overview**

The school recognises that bullying and harassment could occur between any school community members. This policy addresses two broad areas: Bullying and Harassment of and by students, and Bullying and Harassment of and by employees and volunteers.

Each member of the school community including teachers, non-teaching staff, volunteers, parents and students has the right:

- To be treated equally and without discrimination regardless of race; gender; age; religion, sexuality; health or economic circumstances; industrial activity; disability; political beliefs or activity; marital, parental or carer status; personal association with a person who is identified by reference to any of the aforementioned attributes.
- To be treated with respect and politeness by other students, parents, volunteers and staff
- To be treated with understanding
- To obtain maximum benefit from all lessons, classes and school related activities and programs.

Drouin South Primary School promotes a supportive, cooperative atmosphere in which students can learn to the best of their ability and teachers can carry out their work to the best of their ability. We acknowledge that harassment and bullying are behaviours that are unacceptable and have a negative and detrimental impact on a school community's environment and therefore needs to be actively discouraged and eliminated (if they occur) from our school.

### **Procedures To Combat Bullying and Harassment**

Students, employees and all school community members need to be encouraged to report cases of bullying or harassment and need to be aware that it is possible for them to do something about it. They will be:

- Taken seriously
- Allowed to maintain anonymity if they wish

- Allowed to have a say in how their complaint is handled

Reporting can be verbal or written and made to a member of staff with whom the student or school community member feels comfortable. The staff member is then responsible for ensuring appropriate procedures are followed. If the action taken is not satisfactory to the complainant, the matter is to be referred to the principal.

Consequences for bullying by students will be in accordance with the school's Code of Conduct.

Proactive approaches in the school to help combat bullying and harassment include the You Can Do It! program, Peer Mediation, buddy programs and the use of Restorative Practices. The school will also ensure children know how and when to report incidents of bullying through teaching programs and the newsletter.

## **Bullying And Harassment Of And By Students**

### What is Bullying?

The Department of Education and Training provides the following definition of bullying as:

*“Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, who have more power at the time, deliberately upset or hurt another person, their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion.”*

### Types of Bullying

There are three broad categories of bullying.

- 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 - This form of bullying is harder to recognise and often carried out behind the bullied student's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation.

Indirect bullying includes: lying and spreading rumours, playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate, mimicking, encouraging others to socially exclude someone, damaging someone's social reputation and social acceptance, cyber-bullying, which involves the use of email, text messages or chat rooms to humiliate and distress.

### What Bullying is Not

Many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management. There are three socially unpleasant situations that are often confused with bullying:

## Mutual conflict

In mutual conflict situations, there is an argument or disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the problem. However, unresolved mutual conflict sometimes develops into a bullying situation with one person becoming targeted repeatedly for 'retaliation' in a one-sided way.

## Social rejection or dislike

Unless the social rejection is directed towards someone specific and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others, it is not bullying.

Single-episode acts of nastiness or meanness, or random acts of aggression or intimidation

Single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If a student is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied.

Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different students is not the same as bullying.”

## (a) Procedures for Staff

If staff witness an incident that may involve bullying inside their classrooms or elsewhere on school grounds, they will:

- Approach the students and try to establish the nature of the incident
- Remind students of the school's anti-bullying policy - make it clear to the offender(s) that bullying is unacceptable, and to the victim(s) that they have the right to make a formal complaint.
- Decide whether the incident is likely to recur in which case it should be reported to the Principal or Student Welfare Co-ordinator.

## (b) Procedures for Students

Step 1 = Take direct personal action. The first thing to do is to try to make it clear to the person who is harassing or bullying you that you don't want him/her to continue doing it. Speak up, say how you feel.

Sometimes it is not possible to speak to the person who is harassing you because it only makes the situation worse or because it makes you feel worse. In this case you should go straight to Step 2.

Step 2 = Talk to someone you trust: Your parents, a friend, a teacher, the Principal or Student Welfare Coordinator.

Step 3 = A formal complaint will be referred to the Principal who will arrange for a meeting with the person against whom the complaint is made to:

(i) determine whether mediation can be used to resolve the conflict.

(ii) if mediation is not jointly agreed upon as an option, parents will be contacted to discuss other strategies to stop the bullying behaviour.

Examples include: Behaviour contract, restricted play area, direct supervision whilst in the playground and suspension from school.

Step 4 = Discipline measures will be enforced by the Principal and staff. A follow up time with victim and perpetrator will be set to determine whether the behaviour has ceased.

## **Bullying And Harassment Of And By Employees And Volunteers**

What is Bullying in the Workplace?

WorkSafe Victoria defines workplace bullying as :

*“Repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed toward an employee or group of employees that creates a risk to health and safety.*

*Unreasonable behaviour is behaviour that a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would expect to victimise, humiliate, undermine or threaten.*

*Behaviour includes: actions of individuals or a group; and may involve using a system or work as a means of victimising, humiliating, undermining or threatening.*

*Risk to health and safety includes risk to the mental or physical health of the employee.”*

Workplace bullying towards another or a group of others, regardless of their employment status is unacceptable. In the school environment, this includes teachers, aides, administration staff, casual employees, relief teachers, parents, paid assistants and volunteers.

Proactive approaches in the school to help combat bullying and harassment amongst employees include informing, instructing and training staff in identifying risk factors, making policy statements explicit, controlling the risk and encouraging reporting.

Where instances of bullying or harassment occur or are observed, the following procedure should be followed:

Step 1 = Take direct personal action. The first thing to do is to try to make it clear to the offender(s) that bullying is unacceptable, that you don't want it to continue and that you have the right to make a formal complaint.. Speak up, say how you feel. Sometimes it is not possible to speak to the person because for fear of retribution it only makes the situation worse or because it makes you feel worse. In this case you should go straight to Step 2.

Step 2 = Discuss the issue with someone you trust: A colleague, the Principal or OHS officer.

Step 3 = A formal complaint can be made to the Principal (or Deputy Regional Director) who will arrange for a meeting with the person/s against whom the complaint is made to:

- (i) determine whether mediation can be used to resolve the conflict.
- (ii) if mediation is not jointly agreed upon as an option, the principal will discuss other strategies to stop the bullying behaviour such as disciplinary action or a review of performance.

Step 4 = The principal will arrange a follow up time with victim and perpetrator to determine whether the behaviour has ceased.

## **References**

Drouin South Primary School Equal Opportunity policy

Drouin South Primary School Code of Conduct

Department of Education and Training Schools Reference Guide "Student Care and Supervision".

Department of Education and Training website "Safe Schools Are Effective Schools".

[www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/bullying/index.htm](http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/bullying/index.htm)

[www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing/safeschools/bullying](http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing/safeschools/bullying)

Victorian Work Cover Authority

WorkSafe Victoria booklet "Prevention of Bullying and Violence at Work"

[www.workcover.vic.gov.au](http://www.workcover.vic.gov.au)

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