

**Anti-Bullying and Harassment**

**BELL PS POLICY**

**POLICY STATEMENT**

**At Bell P.S. we aim to work together to create a safe and happy environment that is free from bullying**.

**If we are bullied:**

* We may feel frightened, unsafe, embarrassed, angry or unfairly treated
* Our work, sleep and ability to concentrate may suffer
* Our relationships with our family and friends may deteriorate
* We may feel confused and not know what to do about the problem

**What do we do to prevent bullying at Bell Primary School?**

As a School Community we will not allow cases of bullying to go unreported but will speak up, even at risk to ourselves.

**The Bell PS Anti- Bullying and Harassment policy** is implemented as an integral element of the Bell PS Student Engagement and Wellbeing Framework and Policy and ICT Acceptable Use Policy

**Aims**:

\* To reinforce within the school community that no form of bullying is acceptable.

\* Everyone within the school community is alerted to signs and evidence of bullying and has a responsibility to report it to staff whether as observer or victim.

\* To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up and that support is given to both victim and perpetrator.

\* To seek parental and peer-group support and co-operation at all times.

**Definitions :** What are bullying, cyber bullying and harassment?

**Bullying** is repeated oppression, physical or psychological, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group.

There are three broad categories of bullying:

1. Direct physical bullying – e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.

2. Direct verbal bullying – e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.

3. 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 electronic means to humiliate and distress

**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 is verbal (over the telephone or mobile phone), or written (flaming, threats, racial, sexual or homophobic harassment) using the various mediums available.

**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, random 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.

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

**Bystanders** can have a powerful effect on the reduction of the impact of bullying. Research shows that peers are present in 85 per cent of bullying incidents at school. Bullying has been shown to stop within 10 seconds when bystanders take positive action.[[1]](#footnote-1)

**Workplace Bullying** is repeated unreasonable behaviour directed towards a worker or group of workers that creates a risk to health and safety.

A broad range of behaviours can be bullying and these behaviours can be direct or indirect.

Some common examples of bullying include:

* Verbal abuse, yelling, screaming
* Putting someone down
* Spreading rumours or innuendo about someone
* Interfering with someone’s personal property or work equipment
* Excluding or isolating employees
* Continually criticising someone
* Belittling someone’s opinion
* Unjustified criticism or complaints
* Deliberately excluding someone from workplace activities
* Withholding information that is vital for effective work performance
* Setting timelines that are very difficult to achieve
* Excessive scrutiny at work
* Failure to give credit where it is due

**Workplace bullying is not:**

* reasonable management actions performed in a reasonable way, examples include:
* setting performance goals, standards and deadlines
* allocating work to an employee
* deciding not to select an employee for promotion
* informing an employee about unsatisfactory work performance
* informing an employee about inappropriate behaviour or providing constructive feedback
* implementing organisational changes
* performance management processes

At Bell PS bullying and harassment will be addressed, individual differences will be respected and students and staff will be enabled and supported in their pursuit of learning and teaching.

**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 anti-harassment policy and practices at the commencement of their time at the school ensuring a shared understanding of behaviors responsibilities and practices.

All complaints of harassment will be heard in confidence and taken seriously.

At Bell PS support will be provided to any student who has been affected by, engaged in or witnessed bullying behaviour. In our policy the responsibilities of bystanders is clearly articulated. Information will also be provided on additional external supports such as Kids Helpline and complaints processes.

Our school will organise preventative curriculum programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving. . The Bell PS curriculum will include anti-bullying messages and strategies in line with current DEECD materials e.g. ‘The Friendly Schools’ and ‘No Blame Approach to Bullying’ ‘Bully stoppers” programs.

Staff programs will occur periodically to keep staff informed of current issues/strategies for dealing with these issues.

Bell PS staff will seek to identify 'hot spots' for bullying in the school environment and find ways to address these hot spots (e.g. greater adult supervision, changing the physical environment so bullying is less likely to occur).

There will be disciplinary consequences, covering a range of strategies, for those in breach of the Anti-Bullying (including cyber bullying) and Anti- Harassment Policy, guidelines and procedures (see Appendix A Bell PS will promote strategies for students who have been affected by, engaged in or witnessed bullying behaviour to address behavior changes via a restorative justice framework

In severe cases of bullying incidents involving assaults, threats, intimidation or harassment Bell Primary School will report critical incidents.via the Student Critical Incident Unit.

**PROGRAM**

**Promotion and Prevention**

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 and planning interventions.

Bell PS is a cyber-safe school with teachers undertaking the Esmart cyber safety training annually.

Bell PS promotes positive behaviours through all staff implementing the AUSVELS personal and interpersonal curriculum; Values education and You Can Do It program which provide education in coping strategies; assertiveness training; problem solving and social skills.

The Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment Policy of Bell PS will be widely promoted to students, staff, parents/carers and the local community including through the start of year information packs; the student code of conduct and staff induction program, annual cyberbullying workshops for parents and families will be publicly available on the school website.

Staff and Students are required annually to sign the Bell PS Acceptable Use of Electronic Media Devices Agreement. Parents are required to counter sign to confirm their child’s agreement.

Bell PS will promote the access to DEECD Bully Stoppers resources for parents to assist in their understanding and responding to bullying see.<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/parents.aspx>

**Responding to Bullying**

All members of the community have a responsibility to take action when bullying or harassment is witnessed or reported. Counselling and behaviour modification strategies will be used where appropriate. These strategies will be employed in preference to punitive sanctions and negative consequences.

**Strategies**

a) Staff should aim to:

1. Be role models in word and action.
2. Be observant of signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying
3. Minimise occasions for bullying by being pro-active.
4. Arrive at class on time and move promptly between lessons
5. Take steps to help victims and remove sources of distress without placing the victim at further risk
6. Report suspected incidents to the Class Teacher and Welfare coordinator who will follow the designated procedures as outlined in the flow diagram from the Wellbeing framework see below
7. Document fully interactions with the student and to verify the actions taken.

b) Students should aim to:

1. Have the courage to speak out so that they may help reduce the pain for themselves and other potential victims.
   1. Stand with feet firmly planted on the ground, hands loosely by sides, look the person/s in the eye.
   2. Use a strong confident voice and tell the person/s what you want them to stop and how it makes you feel. E.g.” I want you to stop yelling in my face ,it makes me feel frightened or I feel frightened when you yell in my face please stop it”. If the person/s doesn’t stop then go and get a teacher/adult/friend’s assistance.
   3. Feel confident enough to do tell the person or ask someone to stand beside them when they tell the person what they don’t want to happen and how it makes them feel. talk.(This could be a teacher/friend/bigger person)
2. Refuse to be involved in any bullying situation.
3. If present when any bullying occurs do not become a bystander:
   1. If appropriate, take some form of preventative action ;( g tell the person that they are bullying when they do …..)
   2. Report the incident to a teacher immediately

If student/s takes no action they are a bystander and may be making the person being bullied feel much worse and more vulnerable.

c) The School recommends that parents:

* Watch for signs of distress in their children, e.g. unwillingness to attend school, a pattern of headaches, missing equipment, requests for extra money, damaged clothes or bruising;
* Take an active interest in your child’s social life and acquaintances;
* Advise your child to tell a staff member about the incident. If possible, allow them to report and deal with the incident themselves. Children can gain much respect through taking the initiative and dealing with the problem without parental involvement.
* Inform the school if bullying is suspected;
* Keep a written record (who, what, when, where, why, how);
* Do not encourage your child to retaliate;
* Communicate with your child that parental involvement, if necessary, will be appropriate for the situation;
* Be willing to attend interviews at the school if your child is involved in a bullying incident;
* Be willing to inform the school of any cases of suspected bullying even if your own child is not directly affected
* Utilise the Departmental online resources Bully Stoppers;

**Responding to Workplace Bullying**

What to do if bullying happens to you

* If you can, tell the person the behaviour is unreasonable/inappropriate, that you are offended and want it to stop
* Talk to people you trust at the workplace
* Keep a record of events that includes the names of people involved (make sure the records focus on the facts of the situation)
* Use the OHS procedure to report the situation

All reports of bullying will be taken seriously. The aim is to gain a commitment from the employee displaying the alleged bullying behaviour to cease the behaviour.

* A management representative will counsel the employee displaying the alleged bullying
* A workplace bullying awareness session will be conducted for all employees, outlining responsibilities in relation to appropriate behaviour in the workplace and training on bullying prevention
* Refer to the OHS Risk Register to assess control measures

If informal approaches appear to be having little impact, a formal complaint will proceed.

For further information on the DEECD complaints process refer to the Workforce Management’s web page.

Refer to Preventing and responding to bullying at work (Worksafe) publication

It is important that teachers document fully their interaction with the student and to verify the actions taken.

**PROMOTION OF POSITIVE BEHAVIOURS THROUGH A STAGED RESPONSE**

**See page 6 Bell PS Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy**

**FLOW DIAGRAM of STRATEGIES and INTERRVENTION at Bell PS**

1. If the incident is the first time and minor teachers may elect to use one or more anti-bullying practices:

* stopping the bullying/re-statement of rules and consequences
* restorative questioning
* private conference
* shared control discussion
* think time detention ( wasted minutes 6 minutes)

2. If the student does not take control over his/her behaviour referral will be made to the student welfare coordinator or principal/assistant principal.

3. If the incident is more severe or there are repeated incidents a referral will be made to the student welfare coordinator or principal/assistant principal. Consideration for an internal or external suspension process will then be initiated in accordance with the DEECD Guidelines. ( A process to support all those involved ( those exhibiting the behaviours and those affected by the behaviour) will be undertaken via Individual Behaviour Plan and the use of restorative discussion where safe and appropriate.. Individual strength-building plans and associated interventions aim to help connect the student to positive people, programs and actions in the community, school and home as well as develop the student’s inner social and emotional strengths (skills, values).

4 Extreme incidents or escalation of behaviours will require completion of a DEECD critical incidents report and external suspension and possible referral to outside agencies

Immediate safety of child assured. Automatically 6 wasted minutes and removal from class. Safety of child

**PROMOTION OF POSITIVE BEHAVIOURS THROUGH A STAGED RESPONSE**

External Suspension

External referral where necessary

Critical incident report procedures

Children’s Parents informed and Individual Behaviour Plan developed with Classroom teacher SWC Parents and Children

Assessment /investigation of context and actions

Month or term ban on IT use

Internal suspension for those exhibiting bullying behaviours

Restorative Justice meeting of children and bystanders

**Professional Training and Resources**

Professional development will be provided for staff relating to bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment and proven strategies to address these issues in classrooms will be shared with all staff. Bell PS is a cyber-safe school with teachers undertaking the Esmart cyber safety training.

The school will provide specialist resources such as books, videos, kits and off site in-service activities to assist staff in responding appropriately to bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment issues.

**LINKS AND APPENDICES (**including processes related to this policy)

DEECD’s Respectful Schools <https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/stuman/wellbeing/respectfulsafe.pdf>

DEECD Bully Stoppers <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/default.aspx>

DEECD Restorative Practice Rationale and Application

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

Appendices which are connected with this policy are:

Bell PS Student Engagement and Wellbeing Framework and Policy Bell PS ICT Acceptable Use Policy

Bell PS Student Code of Conduct

Annual Bullying Survey or Students Attitude to School Survey

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed yearly or more often if necessary due to changes in regulations or circumstances.

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| Area | Responsibility | Review |
| Understanding policy | All staff  Induction and start of year processes staff |  |
| Curriculum  Student awareness | All Staff |  |
| Pro social behaviours AUS Vels | All staff |  |
| Communication with parents | Leadership team  Start of Year and student booklet |  |
| Disciplinary consequences and Resolution  Review of bullying incidents to identify hot spots | Wellbeing team Leadership team |  |
| Professional development | Education committee |  |

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| --- | --- |
| **Date Implemented** | 2014 |
| **Author** |  |
| **Approved By** | School Council |
| **Approval Authority (Signature & Date)** |  |
| **Date Reviewed** | May,2014 |
| **Responsible for Review** | Assistant Principal |
| **Review Date** | March, 2017 |
| **References** |  |

1. <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/parentseen.aspx> (accessed 20/3/2014) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)