



## 4.30 ANTI-BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

### POLICY

Beaumaris North Primary School is committed to providing a safe and caring environment and culture which enables positive relationships to be formed amongst all students and staff and which encourages self-esteem, cooperation, personal growth and a positive attitude to learning and teaching. A clear policy on bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment will inform the community that bullying and harassment in any of its forms will not be tolerated.

### PURPOSE

The aim of the policy is to:

- Meet Department of Education and Training (DET) accountability requirements.
- Reinforce within the school community that no form of bullying or harassment is acceptable.
- Alert the school community to signs and evidence of bullying or harassment and their responsibility in reporting it to staff whether as observer or victim.
- Ensure that all reported incidents of bullying or harassment are followed up and that support is given to both victim and perpetrator.
- Seek parental and peer-group support and co-operation at all times.
- To empower students to tell adults when bullying or harassment occurs.

### Definitions of Bullying, Cyber bullying and Harassment

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

**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.

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

BNPS will actively promote a positive and welcoming personal environment for all members of the school community. When people are bullied or harassed some effects might be anger, embarrassment, fear and humiliation, loss of self-confidence and reduced function and potential. 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.

There are also some behaviours, which, although they might be unpleasant or distressing, are **not bullying**:

- Mutual conflict - which involves a disagreement, but not an imbalance of power. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.
- Single-episode acts of nastiness or physical aggression, or aggression directed towards many different people, is not bullying
- Social rejection or dislike is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

- 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-bullying and harassment policy and practices at the commencement of their time at the school.
- All complaints of bullying or harassment will be heard in confidence and taken seriously.
- Our school will organise preventative curriculum programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving. Staff programs will occur periodically to keep staff informed of current issues/strategies for dealing with these issues.
- 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 as outlined in our Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy.

## **PROGRAM**

Constructive strategies to deal with bullying and harassment will include: education in coping strategies; assertiveness training; problem solving and social skills; counselling and behaviour modification. These strategies will be employed in preference to punitive sanctions and negative consequences.

The Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment Policy of the school will be widely promoted to students, staff, parents/carers and the local community through the school newsletter. The policy will be made available to the school community through the school website with an electronic notification from Compass to inform all parents. The school's staff induction process will inform new staff of the Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy and procedures.

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. If a teacher feels a student is at serious and imminent risk from bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment then it is their professional duty to pass on the information to an appropriate person 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.

Student programs will be organised 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. Some matters will be dealt with formally in the curriculum and in peer support programs, leadership programs, extra-curricular programs and occasional activities run by outside experts and workers. The curriculum will include anti-bullying and harassment messages and strategies in line with current DET materials e.g. ‘Bully Stoppers’ and programs outlined in our Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy.

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.

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.

Disciplinary consequences for bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment will comply with the school’s Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy and eSmart Policy. The Principal will provide disciplinary consequences including suspension in accordance with Department of Education and Training (DET) guidelines.

In cases of Suspension and Expulsion for serious disciplinary measures the school follows the DET Engaging Schools are Effective Schools: Student Engagement Policy Guidelines 2009 developed in response to ministerial Order No. 184.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

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

Links which are connected with this policy are:

- DET Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/studentengagementguidance.aspx>
- DET Bullying programs  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/what.aspx>
- DET Respectful Schools  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/Pages/respectrel.aspx>
- BNPS Internet Use Policy (re cyber-bullying)

*Ratified by School Council March 2017*

*Next Review Date 2018*