



## NARRE WARREN NORTH PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Bullying Prevention Policy

#### RATIONALE

Narre Warren North Primary School is committed to child safety and establishing and maintaining child safe and child friendly environments where all children are valued and feel safe. We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently through our policies and procedures.

Our school is committed to providing safe and caring environments (this includes onsite, online activities and offsite for excursions, camps, etc. and outside of school activities) and a 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 prevention (including cyber bullying) and harassment will inform the community that **bullying and harassment in any of its forms will not be tolerated.**

#### PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

Narre Warren North Primary School 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.

Narre Warren North Primary School is committed to providing a safe and respectful learning environment where bullying will not be tolerated.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- explain the definition of bullying so that there is shared understanding amongst all members of the Narre Warren North Primary School community
- make clear that no form of bullying at Narre Warren North Primary School will be tolerated
- outline the strategies and programs in place at Narre Warren North Primary School to build a positive school culture and prevent bullying behaviour
- ask that everyone in our school community be alert to signs and evidence of bullying behaviour, and accept responsibility to report bullying behaviour to school staff
- ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are appropriately investigated and addressed as per our policy and in line with the Behaviour Matrix;
- ensure that support is provided to students who may be affected by bullying behaviour (including targets, bystanders and students engaging in bullying behaviour)
- seek parental and peer group support in addressing and preventing bullying behaviour at Narre Warren North Primary School.

When responding to bullying behaviour, Narre Warren North Primary School aims to:

- be proportionate, consistent and responsive
- find a constructive solution for everyone
- stop the bullying from happening again
- restore the relationships between the students involved.

Narre Warren North Primary School acknowledges that school staff owe a duty of care to students to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm, which can include harm that may be caused by bullying behaviour.

This policy addresses how Narre Warren North Primary School aims to prevent, address and respond to student bullying behaviour. Narre Warren North Primary School recognises that there are many other types of inappropriate student behaviours that do not meet the definition of bullying which are also unacceptable at our school. These other inappropriate behaviours will be managed in accordance with our school's Student Engagement Guidelines, Cyberbullying Policy; and Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct.

## **Definitions**

### **Bullying**

In 2018 the Education Council of the Council of Australian Government endorsed the following definition of bullying for use by all Australian schools:

*Bullying is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening.*

*Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.*

*Bullying of any form or for any reason can have immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.*

Bullying has three main features:

- It involves a misuse of power in a relationship
- It is ongoing and repeated, and
- It involves behaviours that can cause harm.

Bullying can be:

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 – e.g. spreading rumours, playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate, mimicking, encouraging others to socially exclude a person and/or damaging a person’s social reputation or social acceptance.

*Cyberbullying* is direct or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technology via a mobile device, computers, chat rooms, email, social media, etc. It can be verbal, written and include images, video and/or audio.

### **Other distressing and inappropriate behaviours**

Many distressing and inappropriate behaviours may not constitute bullying even though they are unpleasant. Students who are involved in or who witness any distressing and inappropriate behaviours should report their concerns to school staff and our school will follow the school’s Behaviour Management Plan, Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy and Code of Conduct.

*Mutual conflict* involves an argument or disagreement between people with no imbalance of power. In incidents of mutual conflict, generally, both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the issue. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.

*Social rejection or dislike* is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

*Single-episode acts* of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. However, single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not acceptable behaviours at our school and may have serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour. Narre Warren North Primary School will use its Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy and Behaviour Matrix to guide a response to single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression.

*Harassment* is language or actions that are demeaning, offensive or intimidating to a person. It can take many forms, including sexual harassment and disability harassment. Further information about these two forms of harassment, including definitions, is set out in our Inclusion and Diversity Policy. Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated at Narre Warren North Primary School and may have serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour. Narre Warren North Primary School will use its Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy to guide a response to students demonstrating harassing behaviour, unless the behaviour also constitutes bullying, in which case the behaviour will be managed in accordance with this Bullying Prevention Policy.

## **GUIDELINES FOR ACTION**

Narre Warren North Primary School has a number of programs and strategies in place to build a positive and inclusive school culture. We strive to foster a school culture that prevents bullying behaviour by modelling and encouraging behaviour that demonstrates acceptance, kindness and respect.

Bullying prevention at Narre Warren North Primary School is proactive and is supported by research that indicates that a whole school, multifaceted approach is the most effective way to prevent and address bullying. At our school:

- We have a positive school environment that provides safety, security and support for students and promotes positive relationships and wellbeing.

- We strive to build strong partnerships between the school, families and the broader community that means all members work together to ensure the safety of students.
- Teachers are encouraged to incorporate classroom management strategies that discourage bullying and promote positive behaviour.
- In the classroom, our social and emotional learning curriculum teaches students what constitutes bullying and how to respond to bullying behaviour assertively. This promotes resilience, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.
- Students are encouraged to look out for each other and to talk to teachers and older peers about any bullying they have experienced or witnessed.
- Constructive strategies to deal with harassment will include: specific teaching of anti-bullying strategies such as the Three Step Telling Rule. (The child says “Stop it I don’t like it”. If the behavior continues the child says, “Stop it or I will tell the teacher”. If the behavior continues further, the child says “Stop it, I am going to tell the teacher”; education in coping strategies; assertiveness training; restorative practices, problem solving and social skills; counselling and behaviour modification. These strategies will be employed in preference to punitive sanctions and negative consequences.
- 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 messages and strategies in line with current DET materials e.g. ‘Project Rockit’, ‘Bully Busters’, e-smart and the ‘KidsMatter’ framework.
- 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.

## **INCIDENT RESPONSE**

### **Reporting concerns**

Bullying complaints will be taken seriously and responded to sensitively at our school.

Students who may be experiencing bullying behaviour, or students who have witnessed bullying behaviour, are encouraged to report their concerns to school staff as soon as possible.

Our ability to effectively reduce and eliminate bullying behaviour is greatly affected by students and/or parents and carers reporting concerning behaviour as soon as possible, so that the responses implemented by Narre Warren North Primary School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

We encourage students to speak to their classroom teacher. However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff including teachers, wellbeing staff, school leadership and Education Support Staff.

Parents or carers who develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Narre Warren North Primary School should contact the Assistant Principal or Student Wellbeing Coordinator.

## **Investigations**

When notified of alleged bullying behaviour, school staff are required to:

1. record the details of the allegations on Sentral; and
2. inform the Assistant Principal or Student Wellbeing Coordinator.

The Assistant Principal is responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, the Assistant Principal may:

- speak to the those involved in the allegations, including the target/s, the students allegedly engaging in bullying behaviour/s and any witnesses to the incidents
- speak to the parents of the students involved
- speak to the teachers of the students involved
- take detailed notes of all discussions for future reference
- obtain written statements from all or any of the above.

All communications with the Assistant Principal in the course of investigating an allegation of bullying will be managed sensitively. Investigations will be completed as quickly as possible to allow for the behaviours to be addressed in a timely manner.

The objective of completing a thorough investigation into the circumstances of alleged bullying behaviour is to determine the nature of the conduct and the students involved. A thorough understanding of the alleged bullying will inform staff about how to most effectively implement an appropriate response to that behaviour.

Serious bullying, including serious cyberbullying, is a criminal offence and may be referred to Victoria Police. For more information, see: [Brodie's Law](#).

## **Responses to bullying behaviours**

When the Assistant Principal has sufficient information to understand the circumstances of the alleged bullying and the students involved, a number of strategies may be implemented to address the behaviour and support affected students in consultation with the principal, teachers, SSS, and Department of Education and Training specialist staff.

There are a number of factors that will be considered when determining the most appropriate response to the behaviour. When making a decision about how to respond to bullying behaviour, Narre Warren North Primary School will consider:

- the age and maturity of the students involved
- the severity and frequency of the bullying, and the impact it has had on the target student
- whether the student/s engaging in bullying behaviour have displayed similar behaviour before
- whether the bullying took place in a group or one-to-one context
- whether the students engaging in bullying behaviour demonstrates insight or remorse for their behaviour
- the alleged motive of the behaviour, including any element of provocation.

*The school may implement all, or some of the following responses to bullying behaviours:*

- Offer counselling support to the target student or students, including referral to Chaplain or SSS
- Offer counselling support to the students engaging in bullying behaviour, including referral to Chaplain or SSS
- Offer counselling support to affected students, including witnesses and/or friends of the target student, including referral to the Chaplain or SSS
- Facilitate a restorative practice meeting with all or some of the students involved. The objective of restorative practice is to repair relationships that have been damaged by bringing about a sense of remorse and restorative action on the part of the person who has bullied someone and forgiveness by the person who has been bullied.
- Facilitate a mediation between some or all of the students involved to help to encourage students to take responsibility for their behaviour and explore underlying reasons for conflict or grievance. Mediation is only suitable if all students are involved voluntarily and demonstrate a willingness to engage in the mediation process.
- Facilitate a Student Support Group meeting and/or Behaviour Support Plan for affected students.
- Prepare a Safety Plan or Individual Behaviour Plan restricting contact between target and students engaging in bullying behaviour.
- Provide discussion and/or mentoring for different social and emotional learning competencies of the students involved.
- Monitor the behaviour of the students involved for an appropriate time and take follow up action if necessary.
- Implement year group targeted strategies to reinforce positive behaviours, e.g Bonus Play
- Implement disciplinary consequences for the students engaging in bullying behaviour, which may include removal of privileges, detention, suspension and/or expulsion consistent with our Student Wellbeing and Engagement policy, the Ministerial Order on Suspensions and Expulsions and any other relevant Department policy.

Narre Warren North Primary School understands the importance of monitoring and following up on the progress of students who have been involved in or affected by bullying behaviour. Where appropriate, school staff will also endeavour to provide parents and carers with updates on the management of bullying incidents.

The Assistant Principal is responsible for maintaining up to date records of the investigation of and responses to bullying behaviour.

*Data will be collected through:*

- discussion and consultation with students and parent/carers
- assessment of school-based data, including the number of reported incidents of bullying in each year group and the effectiveness of the responses implemented
- Attitudes to School Survey
- Parent Opinion Survey

**Resources:**

- Bully stoppers - <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/default.aspx>

- Safe schools - <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/safeschools.aspx?Redirect=2>
- Respectful relationships - <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/pages/respectfulrelationships.aspx>
- Bullying no way - <https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/>
- School-wide positive behaviour support – <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/management/improvement/Pages/swpbs.aspx>.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Parent Complaints policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Cyberbullying Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Child Safe Policy

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle or more often if necessary due to changes in regulations or circumstances.

Ratified by School Council: 14<sup>th</sup> March 2017

Updated and ratified by School Council: 12<sup>th</sup> November 2019

# Appendix A – Information on Bullying

## 1. What are Bullying, Cyber Bullying and Harassment?

### 1.1 Bullying

#### *Definition of Bullying*

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:

4. **Direct physical bullying** – e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.
5. **Direct verbal bullying** – e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.
6. **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

#### *What Bullying is Not*

Many distressing behaviours are not Narre Warren North Primary's 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.

### **1.2 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.

### **1.3 Harassment**

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

## **2. Why do we have a Policy on these?**

To provide a safe and friendly college environment for students and staff and to encourage care, courtesy and respect for others. All persons have a legal right to protection from harassment under the *Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act* and the *Victorian Equal Opportunity Act*.

## **3. What are the effects of Bullying and Harassment?**

- poor health - anxiety, depression
- lower self esteem
- reduced study performance
- missed classes, social withdrawal
- reduced career prospects

### **3.1 Am I bullying or harassing someone?**

If you are not sure about your behaviour you can:

- check it out by asking if it is offensive or inappropriate

- stop it
- apologise
- take it seriously if someone says they are feeling uncomfortable
- talk it over with an adviser or somebody who has an understanding of the issues

### 3.2 What are some of the feelings victims of bullying or harassment may experience?

- *"I will ignore it and it will go away."*

If anything it will make things worse - you will give the impression that you agree with the situation.

- *"I don't want to cause trouble."*

Most causes of harassment are sorted out quite simply. By speaking up, action can be taken to address the problem.

- *"Am I to blame?"*

Victims of harassment or bullying sometimes feel that it is their fault. Victims are made to feel guilty by the offender and often blame themselves. It is your right to have a safe environment free from harassment or bullying.

- *"Am I imagining things?"*

Often our hunches are correct. Rather than put up with nagging doubts, talk to someone about your feelings.

### 3.3 Bullying or harassment can often make people feel:

- embarrassed or ashamed
- offended or humiliated
- intimidated or frightened
- uncomfortable

## 4. What should you do if you see another person being bullied or harassed?

Tell the person that you witnessed the incident and advise them to report it to an appropriate person. However, if your friend is harassing another person, let them know that their behaviour is unacceptable.

Bystanders who do nothing to stop bullying may be contributing to the problem by providing an audience for the bully.

### 4.1 Bullying can involve

- grabbing, aggressive staring, hitting, pinching kicking, pushing and shoving

- publicly excluding a person from your group
- knocking a person's books or belongings out of their hands or off their desk
- teasing a person because of their looks

#### 4.2 Cyber-bullying can involve

- *Flaming* – online fights using electronic messages with angry or vulgar messages
- *Harassment* – repeatedly sending nasty, mean and insulting messages
- *Denigration* – posting or sending gossip or rumours about a person to damage his/her reputation or friendships
- *Outing* – sharing someone's secrets or embarrassing information or images online
- *Exclusion* – intentionally and cruelly excluding someone from an online group
- *Cyber-stalking* – repeated, intense harassment and denigration that includes threats or creates significant fear

#### 4.3 Harassment is usually directed at a person because of their gender, race, creed or abilities – it can be subtle or explicit

*Subtle (the most common)* they include:

- offensive staring and leering
- unwanted comments about physical appearance and sexual preference
- racist or smutty comments or jokes
- questions about another's sexual activity
- persistent comments about a person's private life or family
- physical contact e.g. purposely brushing up against another's body
- offensive name calling

*Explicit (obvious)* they include:

- grabbing, aggressive hitting, pinching and shoving, etc
- unwelcome patting, touching, embracing
- repeated requests for dates, especially after refusal
- offensive gestures, jokes, comments, letters, phone calls or e-mail
- sexually and/or racially provocative remarks
- displays of sexually graphic material – pornography
- requests for sexual favours
- extreme forms of sexual harassment will lead to criminal prosecution

#### 5. What do you do if you are being bullied or harassed?

- tell the person you don't like what they are doing and you want them to stop

- discuss the matter with a Coordinator, Student Welfare Coordinator or peer mediator, peer support leader or a teacher that you feel comfortable with
- the school will take your concerns seriously - all complaints will be treated confidentially

### **5.1 How will your complaint be dealt with?**

Your concerns will be taken seriously. All complaints will be treated confidentially.

School procedures for responding to a student who bullies or harasses others are set out in the policy.