**Bullying and Harassment Policy**

Purpose:	To provide staff, students, parents and guardians with definitions of bullying (including cyber-bullying) and harassment. To reinforce within the school community that no form of bullying or harassment is acceptable in-line with Child Safe Standards in Ministerial Order 870. To outline the school's response if bullying or harassment occurs.
Scope:	All students, staff, parents and guardians .
Implemented by:	School Principal, Teachers employed in their capacity as VIT Registered Teachers.
Approved by:	To be approved following VRQA approval.
Reviewed:	Every two years or as legislative changes or improvements are identified.
Communicated via:	WP Website, Staff Induction, Meetings and Handbook, Parent Handbook, Policies and Procedures Manual.

Bullying or any form of harassment is unacceptable at Woodline Primary and will not be tolerated.

1. Policy Statement

At Woodline Primary, we wish to support each child's holistic growth and we are especially concerned with the ways in which respect for ourselves and others can build successful relationships. Our aim is to focus upon and celebrate our emotional wellbeing and demonstrate compassion, initiative, responsibility, thoughtfulness, empathy, success, confidence, enjoyment of learning, self-discipline, and co-operation. The school will provide a positive culture where bullying is not accepted, and in so doing, all will have the right of respect from others, the right to learn or to teach, and a right to feel safe and secure in their school environment.

For most problems that occur, we adopt a policy that relies not upon punishment but upon listening, looking behind the behaviour, negotiation, conflict resolution, mediation and problem solving as essential skills that our students will learn and actively practise. The protection of confidential information relating to others is a serious moral, professional, ethical and legal responsibility that our school recognises and upholds.
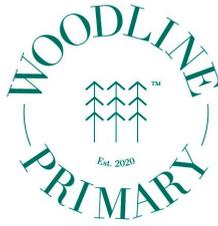
Rights and expectations

Everyone has the right to feel safe and happy while at school or travelling to and from school.

Students have the right to learn in a safe, enjoyable environment, clear in the knowledge that they are not going to be ridiculed, or put down, by their fellow students by teachers or other adults. No student should feel at risk from any kind of physical, emotional, psychological or sexual abuse.

The School recognises that in any organisation there is the potential for harassment to occur. Any form of harassment is abhorrent and unacceptable and the School is committed to eliminating it. Every report of harassment will be taken seriously and will be investigated thoroughly.

2. Aims

1. To reinforce within the school community what bullying is, and the fact that it is unacceptable.
2. Everyone within the school community to be alert to signs and evidence of bullying and to have a responsibility to report it to staff whether as observer or victim.
3. To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up appropriately and that support is given to both victims and perpetrators.
4. To seek parental and peer-group support and cooperation at all times.

Definition

Bullying is persistent and repeated physical or psychological actions by a group or an individual, between any members of our school community, which are intended to hurt another person. It can be planned and organized.

It can include, and is not limited to:

- teasing, name calling, put-downs or belittling of others' abilities/achievements;
- writing offensive notes or graffiti;
- demands for money or possessions;
- damaging, removing or hiding belongings;
- deliberate exclusion;
- physical violence e.g. hitting, pushing;
- gestures;
- coercive behaviour.
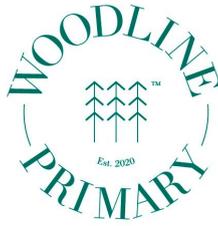
Types of bullying

Physical

- for example hitting, punching, pushing or any kind of sexual interference;
- threatening others - to harm the person or their property;
- invasion of personal space;
- hiding, damaging or destroying the property of others, simply to be spiteful.

Verbal

- for example name-calling, putting others down, paying out;
- using offensive names, ridiculing someone's name;
- making derogatory comments about a person's culture, background, customs, gender, sexuality or beliefs;
- spreading rumours about people or their families and friends;
- mocking or denigrating another person's abilities and talents.

Gesture

- for example looks, shrugs or other gestures which are associated with previous threats.

Extortion

- for example demanding money, possessions or other goods or services.

Exclusion

- for example preventing someone from joining a group.

Electronic

- for example the use of information and communication technologies such as email, (mobile) phone and text messages, instant messaging;

Bullying diminishes an individual's self-confidence and self-respect. Under this circumstance individuals cannot attain their potential. Fundamentally the opposite of bullying is respect and care for others.
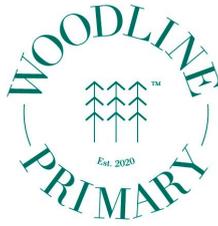
3. Implementation

1. Parents, teachers, students and the community will be aware of the school's position on bullying, through publication of this policy on the school website
2. Teachers will be regularly reminded of their duty of care regarding protection of students from all forms of bullying.
3. The school will adopt a four-phase approach to bullying.

A. Primary Prevention:

1. Professional development for staff relating to bullying, harassment and emotional awareness through regular listening time and Professional Development based on Aware Parenting Principles, such as understanding why behaviours happen and assisting children to work through feelings and emotions that may be affecting their behaviour.
2. Community awareness relating to bullying (including cyber-bullying), its characteristics, its effects on victims and the school's programs and response.
3. To provide programs that promote resilience, emotional awareness, self-reflection, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.
4. A Student Attitudes to School Survey will be administered and acted upon annually.
5. Staff to model empathy, connection and understanding to each other and students.

B. Identifying/Reporting:

1. Promote children and staff reporting bullying incidents involving themselves or others.
2. Teachers will notify the Principal of all complaints of bullying from students or parents and will be kept informed of progress in dealing with these.
3. Classroom teachers and Principal will remind students to report incidents of bullying to their teachers on a regular basis.
4. Parents may contact the Principal if they become aware of a bullying problem.
5. Woodline Primary understands that documentation of known or suspected bullying incidents is a critical component of an effective bullying prevention effort.
6. The form of records relating to suspected or confirmed instances of bullying will be determined by the nature of the offence but may be in the form of an incident report, documented concern or complaint, behavioural management record, or individual student file.
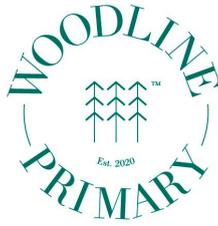
C. Intervention:

1. Once identified, each bully, victim and witnesses will be spoken with by the Principal, and all incidents or allegations of bullying will be fully investigated and documented.
2. The Principal will determine if what has occurred is bullying (including cyber-bullying), harassment or another type of behavior. If it is not deemed as bullying, further support may be given to all children involved in alignment with our behavioural management plan.
3. If the behavior falls within the definition of bullying (or cyber-bullying) the offending student(s) will be instructed to stop the behavior and his/her parents will be notified and restorative practices will be used where practicable via listening time and attachment play.
4. The parents of the student(s) involved will be informed of this process and the outcomes.
5. Both affected persons will be offered counselling, listening time and support.
6. If student bullying persists, parents will be contacted again and further support offered and strategies implemented consistent with this policy and the behaviour management plan.
7. The behavior of all students involved will be monitored by all school staff.
8. If the Personal Behaviour Management Plan is not followed, the question of the offending student's enrolment will be referred to the School Board for consideration as per the Behaviour Management Policy and Enrollment Agreement Policy.

Parents' course of action:

1. If a child has disclosed some type of bullying or a parent has witnessed it, we encourage the parent to contact the Principal immediately.
2. A parent can alert the Principal via email, phone call or a meeting with the Principal.
3. The Principal will aim to respond to contact within 24 hours.
4. The Principal will speak with all children involved separately and then contact their parents via email, phone call or face to face meeting to discuss a course of action.

Cyber Bullying

Cyber-bullying consists of covert, psychological bullying, conveyed through an electronic medium such as:

- mobile phone (texting, videos);
- blog or social media;
- verbal (over the phone);
- written (threats, racial, sexual or homophobic harassment).

Woodline Primary is committed to the National Safe Schools Framework. All students should be able to learn and develop in safe, supportive and respectful environments. Woodline Primary acknowledges that it has a responsibility to provide safe online environments and teach children how to use technology in positive and productive ways.

Woodline Primary will only be using technology in the upper primary years, Grade 4, Grade 5 and Grade 6. However, children may have access to technology at home, so we aim to educate children and their parents on safe technology use.
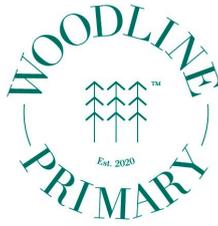
In this regard:

1. Woodline Primary will promote safe technology use via written information in newsletters and emails for parents to be informed of changing technology and safety issues.
2. In the lower years, we will have discussions in class with the children on being safe on technology at home.
3. For the upper primary years we will develop whole school policy and procedures on the use of the internet at school and at home.
4. Develop and implement 'Acceptable Use Policies' and 'Codes of Conduct' to provide specific usage guidelines and consequences of breaches to ensure ICT is used responsibly and productively within the school environment. Include clear incident response flow charts to ensure all students, staff and, where relevant, parents are aware of how to deal with a breach of a policy or code of conduct. Keep records of e-safety incidents, resulting outcomes and follow up actions.
5. Students in Grade 4 and above will be required to sign agreements on what is 'acceptable use'. These agreements could be co-signed by parents, or a copy could be provided to parents, to increase awareness of the expected behaviours and consequences.
6. Plan the inclusion of Cyber-safety issues within the curriculum
7. Maintain an annual policy review cycle.

Table of Amendments

Version number	Date	Short description of amendment
1.0	June 2020	New Policy

Scheduled review date	December 2021

Related Resources:

- Woodline Primary Philosophy and Vision
- Behaviour Management Policy
- School Code of Conduct
- Management of Complaints and Grievances Policy
- Student Welfare Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Enrolment Policy