



# MORELAND PRIMARY SCHOOL – NO 2837

## BULLYING AND HARASSMENT PREVENTION POLICY

### PURPOSE

Moreland 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
- make clear that all forms of bullying at Moreland Primary School will not be tolerated
- 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
- ensure that support is provided to students who may be affected by bullying behaviour (including victims, bystanders and perpetrators)
- seek parental and peer group support in addressing and preventing bullying behaviour at Moreland Primary School.

When responding to bullying behaviour, Moreland Primary School aims to:

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

Moreland 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.

### SCOPE

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our school's policies including *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy*, *Inclusion and Diversity Policy*, *Duty of Care Policy* and *Statement of Values and School Philosophy*.

### POLICY

#### Definitions

**Bullying occurs when someone, or a group of people, deliberately and repeatedly upset, harass, intimidate, threaten or hurt another person or damage their property, reputation or social acceptance. There is an imbalance of power in incidents of bullying, where the bully or bullies have more power than the victim due to their age, size, status or other reasons.**

**Bullying may be direct or indirect, physical or verbal, and includes cyberbullying. Bullying is not a one-off disagreement between two or more people or a situation of mutual dislike.**

#### Bullying can be:

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



# MORELAND PRIMARY SCHOOL – NO 2837

## BULLYING AND HARASSMENT PREVENTION POLICY

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.

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

- **Our 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.**

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

*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 harassment, nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If someone is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion, they are not being bullied. Harassment, nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different people is not the same as bullying. However, single episodes of harassment, nastiness or physical aggression are not acceptable behaviours at our school.

Many distressing behaviours may not constitute bullying even though they are unpleasant. Students who are involved in or who witness any distressing behaviours of concern are encouraged to report their concerns to school staff.

## **BULLYING PREVENTION**

Moreland 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 Moreland Primary School is proactive and is supported by research that indicates that a whole school, multifaceted approach is the most effect way to prevent and address bullying. At our school:

- We promote the keys to success of getting along, emotional resilience and confidence from You Can Do It – Program Achieve to support children in fostering and maintaining positive relationships
- 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.

For further information about our engagement and wellbeing initiatives, please see our *Student Wellbeing and Engagement* policy.

## **THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN WITH RESPECT TO BULLYING AND HARASSMENT AT MORELAND PRIMARY SCHOOL**

To be, and feel, safe and accepted in the classroom and in the playground

To be treated fairly and respectfully at all times

To state beliefs and opinions without fear of put downs or repercussions

To be listened to

To be able to learn to the best of their abilities

To develop positive relationships

To have personal and school property respected

To expect a resolution of their problems, to be able to tell their side of the story in a dispute within a supportive environment and to be taught strategies to solve problems.

## **THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHILDREN WHO WITNESS INCIDENTS OF BULLYING**

If students who are witnesses to bullying have the courage to speak out, they may help to reduce pain for other potential victims.

At Moreland Primary School, we encourage students to:

- report cases of bullying
- refuse to be involved in any bullying situation.

If a student is present when bullying occurs, we ask that they:

- take some form of action - if appropriate
- report the incident or suspected incident and help break the code of secrecy

## **WHAT THE SCHOOL WILL DO TO PREVENT BULLYING AND HARASSMENT ON THE PREMISES**

Moreland Primary School staff members will:

- work hard to develop positive relationships with all children
- model appropriate language and behaviour
- be observant of signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying
- follow up children's absences if a child is absent the school will contact the parent as soon as possible
- make efforts to remove opportunities for bullying
- actively patrol the playground and designated 'hot spots' during yard duty
- arrive at class on time and, where appropriate, move promptly between lessons
- take steps to help victims and remove sources of distress without placing the victim at further risk
- report suspected incidents to the appropriate staff member such as class teacher, year coordinator, Assistant Principal, Principal, who will follow the designated procedures

The school recommends that parents:

- watch for signs of distress in their child, eg 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 him/her to report and deal with the problem. The child can gain much respect through taking the initiative and dealing with the problem without parental involvement

Created: February 2018

Review: February 2020

- inform the school if bullying and/or harassment is suspected
- keep a written record (who, what, when, where, why, how)
- do not encourage their child to retaliate
- communicate to their child that parental involvement, if necessary, will be appropriate for the situation
- be willing to attend interviews at the school if their child is involved in any bullying incident
- be willing to inform the school of any cases of suspected bullying even if their own child is not directly affected.



### INCIDENT RESPONSE

#### Reporting concerns to Moreland Primary School

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.

In most circumstances, we encourage students to speak to their Home Group teacher. However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff. Parents or carers who may develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Moreland Primary School should contact the Principal or Assistant Principal on 9386 2510.

#### Investigations

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

1. record the details of the allegations in SENTRAL and
2. inform the team leader and/or Assistant Principal/ Principal.

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

- speak to the students involved in the allegations, including the victim/s, the alleged perpetrator/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 school 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 either the team leader, Assistant Principal or 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 Principal.

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, Moreland 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 victim student
- whether the perpetrator student or students have displayed similar behaviour before
- whether the bullying took place in a group or one-to-one context
- whether the perpetrator demonstrates insight or remorse for their behaviour
- the alleged motive of the behaviour, including any element of provocation.

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

- Offer counselling support to the victim student or students, including referral to the Moreland Primary School Counsellor, SSSO, or external provider.
- Offer counselling support to the perpetrator student or students.
- Offer counselling support to affected students, including witnesses and/or friends of the victim student
- 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.
- Implement disciplinary consequences for the perpetrator students, 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.
- Facilitate a Student Support Group meeting and/or Behaviour Support Plan for affected students.
- Prepare a plan restricting contact between victim and perpetrator students.
- Provide discussion and/or mentoring for different social and emotional learning competencies of the students involved by drawing upon the You Can Do It program and enacting role play scenarios.
- Monitor the behaviour of the students involved for an appropriate time and take follow up action if necessary.



# MORELAND PRIMARY SCHOOL – NO 2837

## *BULLYING AND HARASSMENT PREVENTION POLICY*

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

Moreland Primary School understands the importance of monitoring the progress of students who have been involved in or affected by bullying behaviour. Our ability to effectively reduce and eliminate bullying behaviour is greatly affected by students reporting concerning behaviour as soon as possible, so that the responses implemented by Moreland Primary School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES:**

Please refer to Moreland Primary School's Student Engagement and Inclusion policy on our website

[www.morelandps.vic.edu.au](http://www.morelandps.vic.edu.au)

### **EVALUATION**

This policy will be reviewed on an [annual basis/1-2 year basis] following analysis of school data on reported incidents of, and responses to bullying to ensure that this policy remains up to date, practical and effective.

Data will be collected through:

- discussion with students
- assessment of school based data, including the number of reported incidents of bullying in each year group and the effectiveness of the responses implemented.

Proposed amendments to this policy will be discussed with student representative groups, parents groups, school council and staff.

### **REVIEW CYCLE**

This policy was updated 27 February 2018 and will be reviewed in February 2020.



## **APPENDIX**

### **BULLYING – A note on the role of Bystanders**

The people who have the most influence in determining the amount and degree of bullying in a school are not the adults, but the students. The challenge is to change their reactions to bullying. From the student's point of view, bullying has a clear social purpose – impressing an audience of bystanders and raising one's own social status.

Stopping bullying requires changing the audience's response to it. We need to focus less on the rule-breakers and more on the majority of students who don't break the rules: the bystanders and the audience for acts of bullying.

A key step is for adults to avoid the tendency to attribute students' behaviour to 'the way they are' rather than the situation they're in. Bystanders who don't intervene aren't heartless and apathetic; they are subject to a common set of social pressures and haven't learned how to deal with them.

Just telling bystanders to 'stand up' to bullying makes little sense, no more sense than telling a child to be a good reader or become a good football player without first providing instruction, guidance, coaching and support.

Changes in behaviour will begin when students are shown how much influence they can have in making our school a better place. Here are some key points for consideration:

- The vast majority of our students don't bully and don't approve of bullying
- People want to do good and be helpful
- Students make mistakes and make poor choices – our school is not trouble free.

Problems are part of life and learning.

- Viewing them as such will make discussing them a lot less emotional and students will be more open to sharing them.
- Students are subject to social pressures and need to think for themselves and problem-solve.
- Students shouldn't feel guilty if they don't act courageously in the face of bullying.
- Being compassionate towards bullies doesn't mean the behaviour is being condoned.

Students who make mistakes need compassion and will accept guidance and direction when given respect, care and support.

- Students who bully aren't always bad kids or inherent troublemakers – some just need to learn how not to bully others and how to get on well with others.

Teaching children social skills is a lifelong process. They need ongoing reminders to think about the choices they make when interacting with people, including their choice of words, body language and facial expressions. Adults need to support children with understanding options and choices, but more importantly how to develop resilience to cope with other people's behaviours.