

# Padthaway School Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy

## The meaning:

A definition for bullying is: Repeated verbal, physical or social behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. Cyber bullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies.

A definition for harassment is: Behaviour that targets an individual or group due to characteristics held by that group (identity, race, culture, etc.) that offends, humiliates, intimidates or creates a hostile environment. Harassment may be an ongoing pattern of behaviour or it may be a single act.

Padthaway School will provide a safe, inclusive, supportive and ordered learning environment free from bullying, harassment and violence. Bullying, including cyber bullying, harassment and violence, is not acceptable in this school. The school will work with the school community and other services and agencies to support its students in being responsible and productive members of this community.

At our school students are expected to be respectful and cooperative community members. Bullying will be addressed through restorative practices that empower individuals to speak up and assert themselves. This is an important lifelong skill.

## Code of Conduct: Rights and Responsibilities

All students, staff, parents/caregivers have the **RIGHT** to:

- be treated with courtesy, kindness and respect
- express feelings and opinions respectfully
- work and play in an atmosphere of harmony and co-operation
- expect that the co-created school values and essential agreements will be consistently implemented and that there will be respect for the rights of all involved
- be valued as an individual
- learn in a supportive atmosphere



All students, staff, parents/caregivers have the **RESPONSIBILITY** to:

- treat others with courtesy, kindness and respect
- actively listen to others
- maintain a safe and secure school environment
- manage impulsivity
- model and support co-created school and classroom values
- develop and take responsibilities for their own actions
- value others, for their individual differences and similarities
- work to achieve their personal best whilst allowing others to do the same
- not take part in bullying in any way, with zero tolerance
- report incidents of bullying
- understand and not tolerate the participatory role of bystanders



The elimination of bullying at Padthaway School is everyone's responsibility. A person who is bullied does not have the problem alone because bullying adversely affects everyone in the community in one way or another.

For example:

- The student who is bullied and their family, suffer emotional and physical distress
- No one is safe whilst bullying is happening. Bullying creates a climate of intimidation and fear in which effective learning cannot take place
- Students who are aware of bullying but do nothing about it may feel guilty and ashamed and allow it to continue

Both students who bully and are the bystanders can:

- become desensitised to cruelty and injustice
- fail to develop social responsibility
- in some cases, become involved at a later stage in workplace bullying and/or other forms of anti-social behaviour
- affect the way in which the school is perceived in the community
- facilitate the setting-up of humiliating experiences

## Cyber Bullying

The widespread availability of the internet provides unique opportunities to communicate and learn. Most people use the internet as a tool for communication and education however, some of these individuals use the power of the internet for bullying and harassment. We can minimise the harm that such individuals do by teaching students how to use the internet safely and responsibly. Padthaway School teaches a Cyber safety curriculum in each year level.

The term *cyber ethics* refers to a code of safe and responsible behaviour for the internet community. Practising good cyber ethics involves understanding the risks of harmful and illegal behaviour online and learning how to protect internet users from such behaviour. It also involves teaching young people, who may not realise the potential for harm to themselves and others, how to use the internet safely and responsibly.

### What makes cyberbullying so different than in-person bullying?

- It is often anonymous and unlimited by time and place so the victim has little respite from the abuse.
- There is an element of disinhibition due to anonymity where students who would not normally participate do so. It can reach hundreds or even thousands of people quickly. The victim can feel even more isolated.
- It often involves repeated episodes of aggression and an imbalance of power. The victim may feel escape is impossible.

### An Educator's guide to Cyberbullying and Cyber threats defines the behaviour as verbal aggression such as:

- **Harassment** or repeated insults through various forms.
- **Defamation** of a person's character through derogatory postings, rumours, or images.
- **Flaming** or fighting messages using anger and vulgar language.
- **Outing** or deceiving someone into sharing secrets or private information.
- **Polling** such as posting an image on a voting website to make fun of a person's looks.
- **Impersonation** or identity theft to embarrass or destroy a person's identity.
- **Cyber Stalking** including sending intimidating or threatening messages.
- **Sexting** including sexual solicitation and/or exploitation.
- **Unsafe digital communities** with shared interests, such as social communities that validate eating disorders, violence, or drug use.

**What is being done at Padthaway School to protect our students:**

- Children are explicitly taught about Cyber safety.
- Clear policies have been developed around computer access and internet access.
- All teachers, administrators and counsellors are given training in the prevention of Cyber bullying.
- Information is provided to parents and community members in regard to Cyber safety.
- By incorporating technology into the classrooms teachers can focus on the ethical use of technology.
- Interventions in regard to cyber safety focus on restoration, rather than punishment.

**Recommendations for staying safe while using the internet at home and at school include:**

- Talk to an adult immediately if you see something you are not comfortable with.
- Be open and honest with parents/caregivers about your Internet usage.
- Talk to parents/caregivers about your different online experiences, the good and the bad.
- Tell parents/caregivers if anyone online makes you feel uncomfortable or scared.
- Don't give out personal details.
- Use advanced search to narrow results.
- Use internet content filters.
- Don't chat to people you don't know.
- Don't open unexpected email attachments.
- Don't follow email links you are not expecting.
- Don't follow email links that request personal details.
- Use an email junk-mail filter and anti-virus software.

## Guidelines for students, teacher and parents on what to do in bullying situations

Terminology to be used within the school community

- Avoid the term “victim” and use “recipient ” or “target” instead.
- Avoid the term “the bully” and use “the student who bullied” instead.
- Avoid the term “weaker” and use “in a less powerful (or more vulnerable) position” instead.

Guidelines to be followed within the school community

- All students are acknowledged and valued as individuals regardless of gender, racial, cultural, religious, physical or intellectual differences.
- The principal and staff have a responsibility to fairly, reasonably and consistently implement the DECD Code of Conduct.
- All students are informed that if they are bullied or harassed, teachers are available to support them and to stop it from happening. Incidents must be reported to a teacher be it the class teacher, the teacher on duty or a person with whom they feel comfortable.
- All students are informed that if they witness bullying or are aware of it occurring in other ways, incidents must be reported to a teacher whether it is the class teacher, yard duty teacher or a person with whom they feel comfortable.
- All parents are informed that if they believe that their child or another child is being bullied, they should contact the school
- All teachers are informed that if they feel bullied they must report the incident to the principal or line manager.
- All teachers are informed of the procedures that must be followed if an incident of bullying is reported to them.
- All teachers have a responsibility to respond to, investigate, follow up and monitor incidents of bullying.

## Procedures for identifying and dealing with bullying

1: The staff member investigating the report should:

- Establish the facts
  - a. What was said and/or done to the recipient
  - b. The time and place the incident occurred
  - c. The reaction of the recipient
  - d. Whether it is the first time the recipient has experienced bullying behaviour and, if not, whether the same person or group was involved
  - e. Whether the recipient knows of anyone else experiencing the same treatment
  - f. Whether there were any witnesses to the incident

These facts will be ascertained using a range of strategies which best suit the child's age and emotional state eg. Drawings, written conversations, group interviews, one on one interviews and verification techniques. This information must be recorded and kept for future reference.

2. Strategies the school will use to respond to a confirmed incident of bullying:

- Record any statements from the recipient of bullying
- Record any statements from witnesses
- Record any statements from the student who allegedly bullied
- Discuss a range of possible solutions to manage the situation and find a resolution to which all parties involved agree
- Advise all involved that they may make additional reports if they are not satisfied that the issue has been resolved
- Advise the parents of the recipient, and the student who bullied, of the incident
- Monitor and record the situation on an ongoing basis
- Where necessary provide support and the opportunity for counselling for the recipient and the student who bullied
- Develop an Individual Behaviour Management Plan, where necessary, for the student who bullied and the recipient, to promote and establish positive peer relationships
- Establish behaviour management strategies for the student who has bullied.

3. If bullying by a student persists, strategies to eliminate further incidents may include recommendations to seek placement of the student in an alternative setting such as suspension or exclusion. Parties involved will be advised of their right of access to the Department of Education and Childhood Development and complaints procedures or to seek external review through the office of the State Ombudsman.

# Our Whole School Approach to Bullying and Harassment Prevention

## Restorative Practices

The fundamental concepts of Restorative Practice include an understanding of violation of people and relationships, resultant obligations and liabilities, restorative justice to heal and put things right and seeking to heal and put things right. These fundamental concepts have the relationship and putting it right at its core. Restorative Practice is based on an old common sense understanding of wrongdoing and the underlying need in all of us to be connected. Wrongdoing is therefore damage to the connection, and restorative justice seeks to understand, make amends and put things right. The healing of the relationship invariably concerns all those connected to or affected by the wrongdoing thus allowing everyone to begin their “journey to belonging.”

## Essential Agreements

At Padthaway School our values and essential agreements, co-created with students, are stated positively and support the principles and practices of the school wellbeing program and endeavour to develop:

- an understanding and use of common language
- social skills and social competencies.



# Responsibilities of Principal, Staff and Students

## Promoting Positive Behaviours

### Responsibilities of Staff

Staff, you have a moral and legal responsibility to support all learners in environments free of harassment or bullying. In your supervisory and duty of care role you:

- Build relationships of trust with students, parents and wider community members
- Support team members to implement the agreed Code of Conduct
- Use preventative intervention strategies and inclusive teaching methodologies to build protective factors in children
- Be a positive role model for others
- Provide effective support for all involved in bullying, teasing, alienation or discrimination
- Manage incidents and learn from them
- Conduct regular safety audits: document, collect data, analyse, intervene, monitor, evaluate
- Participate in review of programs, policies and procedures
- Engage in relevant training opportunities.

### Responsibilities of Parents

Parents, you have a moral and legal obligation to protect and raise children in safety, free of harassment or bullying:

- Stay in touch with your child, be aware of and attend to changes in feelings or behaviours
- Support everyone's right to feel safe, be active in developing and supporting safe school policy
- Take interest in what your child enjoys and achieves
- Work with the school in resolving issues
- Notice small steps/good efforts your child makes
- Listen carefully, understanding child concerns
- Model appropriate behaviour in your own relationships with others and with school staff
- Communicate an understanding that bullying is everyone's problem
- Avoid comparing your child with others, tell and show love for your child for their own sake
- Try not to involve children in adult problems.



## Responsibilities of Students

Students, you have a right to fair and safe treatment, learning in environments free from harmful bullying or harassment. You have a responsibility to:

- Be fair and honest
- Treat others well as you like to be treated
- Listen politely to others
- Speak in a respectful tone of voice
- Act and move in safe ways
- Use good manners
- Keep hands off others' belongings and work
- Allow others their personal space
- Look with care and respect at others
- Give and seek help when needed
- Engage in fair resolution when a problem arises
- Be accountable for choices you make
- Take part in learning to develop your understanding of anti-bullying, anti-harassment and laws relating to discrimination and exclusion
- Think positively, avoiding mean thoughts of others
- Play by the rules – follow the School Code of Conduct.