BULLYING & HARASSMENT POLICY

Rationale

- Northcote Primary 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 and have a sense of wellbeing and belonging.
- Our 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.
- Schools must include a statement about bullying and cyberbullying behaviours in the Rights and Responsibilities section of their Student Engagement Policy.
  Note: A Student Engagement Policy should include a positive statement about Northcote Primary School's values and philosophy, and the related programs and strategies being implemented by Northcote Primary School to promote student engagement, high attendance and positive behaviours see: Department resources

Purpose

- To create a safe and respectful school environment and prevent bullying, cyber bullying and other unacceptable behaviours.
- To seek parental/care-giver and peer-group support and co-operation at all times.
- To ensure Northcote Primary School complies with DET policy and guidelines.
- To further empower children who are key stakeholders within our organisation.
- To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are following up appropriately and that support is given to both victims and perpetrators.
- To ensure Northcote Primary School has in place strategies to support compliance with the Child Safe Standards 2, 4 and 7.
- To ensure Northcote Primary School discharges its duty of care towards students.

Definitions

Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, deliberately upsets or hurts another person or damages their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion. There is an imbalance of power in incidents of bullying with the bully or bullies having more power at the time due to age, size, status or other reasons.

Cyberbullying is direct verbal or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technologies. This includes harassment via a mobile phone, setting up a defamatory personal website or deliberately excluding someone from social networking spaces. People can also be bullied online by groups of people such as class groups or collective members of an online community.

Homophobic Bullying on the basis of sexuality is a common experience for young people who are same sex attracted or for those who may not behave according to gender stereotypes.

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

Categories of bullying include direct physical bullying (hitting, kicking, pinching, pushing or damaging property), direct verbal bullying (name calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, racist remarks or verbal abuse), indirect verbal bullying (lying or spreading rumours, playing nasty jokes, mimicking or encouraging others to socially exclude someone) and cyberbullying (direct verbal or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technologies including harassment using a mobile phone, setting up a defamatory website or deliberately excluding someone from social spaces).

Many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management.

Mutual conflict involves an argument or disagreement between people but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution. 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. If someone is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied. Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different people is not the same as bullying. However, this does not mean that single episodes should be ignored or condoned as these are unacceptable behaviours.

Implementation

- Northcote Primary School has zero tolerance of bullying and of harassment in any form.
- The wellbeing of every child at Northcote Primary School is our highest priority.
- Northcote Primary School encourages all students to speak up when bullying or harassment is encountered e.g.
    - tell the person you don't like what they are doing and you want them to stop
    - discuss the matter with a teacher that you feel comfortable with
    - Northcote Primary School will take your concerns seriously - all complaints will be treated confidentially
- Everyone within Northcote Primary School community will be alerted to signs and evidence of bullying and has a responsibility to report it to staff whether as observer or victim.
- Northcote Primary School will:
    - promote and support safe and respectful learning environments where bullying is not tolerated
    - provide clear definitions of what is and what is not bullying, including descriptions of the different subtypes of bullying
    - put in place whole-school strategies and initiatives as outlined in DET's anti-bullying policy
    - develop a Student Engagement Policy that includes processes and strategies to prevent and respond to incidents of bullying and other forms of unacceptable behavior
    - involve children, staff and parents/carers in updating the Student Engagement Policy
    - include a statement about bullying and cyberbullying behaviours in the Rights and Responsibilities section of their Student Engagement Policy
    - work in partnership with parents/carers to reduce and manage bullying
    - take a whole-school approach focusing on safety and wellbeing
    - consistently respond to all incidents of bullying that have been reported to Northcote Primary School and ensure that planned interventions are used to respond to these incidents
    - ensure that support is provided to any child who has been affected by, engaged in or witnessed bullying behaviour
    - provide regular updates, within the bounds of privacy legislation, to parents/carers about the management of incidents
    - address cyber bullying as part of its *Internet/Social Media [eSmart] Policy*

- Our school has adopted the 4R's program (Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships) as a preventative program to promote resilience, life and social skills, conflict resolution and problem solving to reduce the incidences of bullying and harassment.

- Constructive strategies to deal with 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.
- If a teacher feels a child 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.
- Programs will be organised to raise children's 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 providers.
- 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.
- Northcote Primary 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.
- If circumstances warrant, Northcote Primary School uses the following resources to support: Bucket Books (P-2) – 'Have you filled a bucket today?' by Carol McCloud, 'How full is your bucket?' by Tom Rath/Mary Reckmeyer, 'Bullying No Way!' (3-6), 'Bounce Back – Tony Noble and Helen McGrath (P-6), Project Rockit (3-6), Kids Matter
- Northcote Primary School will ensure the policy is easily accessible within Northcote Primary School community, published on Northcote Primary School's website and included as part of the Student Enrolment Package.
- Pro formas for reporting bullying are available from Northcote Primary School.
- For further information, including information on sexual diversity, Northcote Primary School will refer to the DET resources at the website below.
- Please refer also to Northcote Primary School's *Duty of Care Policy, Mobile Phones, Use by Children Policy*, the *Student Engagement Policy,* the *Gender identity Policy* and the Child Safe Standards.

Evaluation

- This policy will be reviewed annually as part of preparing the Annual Report or if guidelines change (latest DET update late April 2018).

This update was ratified……………………

Reference:

www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/bullying.aspx

References: http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/excursions.aspx