

# SYNDAL SOUTH PRIMARY SCHOOL No. 4924

<b>Anti Bullying and Harassment Policy</b>	
<b>Policy Number: 2.13</b>	<b>Date Reviewed: August 2015</b>
SYNDAL SOUTH PRIMARY SCHOOL No.4924	<b>Date Ratified by Council: August 2015</b>
	<b>Date of Next Review: 2016</b>

## 1. Policy Statement

The school aims to provide a safe and secure environment to establish the best learning conditions and promote personal growth and positive self-esteem for our children. All students and staff should feel safe at school. A clear policy on bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment will inform the community that **bullying and harassment in any of its forms will not be tolerated.**

### Aims:

- To reinforce within the school community that no form of bullying is acceptable.
- Everyone within the school community is alerted to signs and evidence of bullying and has a responsibility to report it to staff whether as observer or victim.
- To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up and that support is given to both victim and perpetrator.
- To seek parental and peer-group support and co-operation at all times.
- To ensure that students are treated with respect, courtesy and kindness regardless of age, appearance, gender, social and academic abilities or cultural or religious backgrounds and can learn and play without the disruptive influences of others.

### What are bullying, cyber bullying and harassment?

Bullying is when one or more people, deliberately upset or hurt another person, their property, reputation or social acceptance, and this action is repeated over time. There are four broad categories of bullying:

- **Direct physical bullying** e.g. hitting, tripping and pushing, invasion of personal space, unwanted touching and spitting at people or damaging property, intimidating or threatening behaviour.
- **Direct verbal bullying** e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse or threats.
- **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.

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- **Cyber bullying** - cyber bullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others.

### **What Bullying is Not**

Many distressing behaviours are not examples 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** where 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-episodes** of nastiness or meanness, or random acts of aggression or intimidation 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.

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

## **2. Guidelines**

A school-wide approach will be taken to deal with bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment in a consistent and systematic way.

All new students and staff will be informed of the anti-harassment policy and practices at the commencement of their time at the school.

All complaints of harassment will be heard in confidence and taken seriously.

Our school will organise preventative curriculum programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.

Staff programs will occur periodically to keep staff informed of current issues/strategies for dealing with these issues.

There will be disciplinary consequences, covering a range of strategies, for those in breach of the Anti-Bullying (including cyber bullying) and Anti-Harassment Policy, guidelines and procedures (see Appendix A).

All students are expected to:

- Treat others with respect, consideration, tolerance, understanding and kindness.

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- Cooperate with and observe the rights of others.
- Be aware of the acceptable and appropriate limits of behaviour.
- Use appropriate and acceptable language.
- Demonstrate self-discipline.
- Report any acts of bullying, including cyber bullying.

All staff are expected to:

- Respect and treat students equitably and justly.
- Encourage students to respect and work cooperatively with others.
- Encourage students to treat others equitably and justly.
- Promote a climate in which appropriate behaviours are fostered, including during internet use.
- Act promptly on witnessed and reported acts of bullying.
- Be alert to any signs that a child is being bullied or is bullying others.

All parents are expected to:

- Discourage their children from using bullying behaviour at home
- Be alert to any signs that their child is being bullied or is bullying others.
- Contact the school with concerns regarding bullying.

The school will inform parents on issues, suggestions and relevant readings on the prevention of bullying and on the development of resiliency in children.

### **3. Program**

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.

The Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment Policy of the school will be widely promoted to students, staff, parents/carers and the local community.

A summary of the policy will be included in the Student Enrolment Package while new staff will receive extensive documentation as part of the school's induction process.

The school leadership team and the teachers will work together to ensure the safety of all school members in situations of bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment, by thoroughly investigating all complaints while respecting the need for confidentiality, notifying parents/carers and planning interventions.

If a teacher feels a student 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.

Student programs will be organised to raise student awareness about bullying (including cyber bullying) /or harassment, to provide a forum for discussion of matters

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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. 'The Friendly Schools' and 'No Blame Approach to Bullying' programs.

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.

The school will provide specialist resources such as books, DVDs, kits and off site in-service activities to assist staff in responding appropriately to bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment issues.

Disciplinary consequences for bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment will comply with the school's Welfare and Discipline Policy. The principal or their nominee will provide disciplinary consequences including suspension in accordance with Department of Education and Training (DET) guidelines.

### **4. Links and Appendices (including processes related to this policy)**

Links which are connected with this policy are:

- DET's [Effective Schools are Engaging Schools: Student Engagement Policy Guidelines](#)
- DET's [Safe Schools are Effective School's](#)
- DET's [Student Engagement Policy Guidelines](#)
- The school's Internet Use Policy (re cyber-bullying)
- DET's [Respectful Schools](#)

Appendices which are connected with this policy are:

- Appendix A: Anti-Bullying (including cyber-bullying) and Anti-Harassment Procedures
- Appendix B: Reporting on Incident of Bullying / Harassment – Template
- Appendix C: Formal Referral of Student who has bullied / harassed other to Student Welfare Coordinator/Principal/Assistant Principal – Template

### **5. Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed annually or more often if necessary due to changes in regulations or circumstances.

## **Appendix A**

### **Anti-Bullying (including cyber-bullying) and Anti-Harassment Procedures**

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

To provide a safe and friendly school 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*.

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

- poor health - anxiety, depression
- lower self esteem
- reduced learning performance
- missed school days, social withdrawal

#### **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

#### **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?”*

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

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

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

### **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.

### **Bullying can involve**

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

### **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

**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 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

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- offensive name calling

*Explicit (obvious)* they include:

- grabbing, aggressive hitting, pinching and shoving, etc
- unwelcome patting, touching, embracing
- offensive gestures, jokes, comments, letters, phone calls or e-mail
- sexually and/or racially provocative remarks

## 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 teacher, Student Welfare Worker, Principal or Assistant Principal that you feel comfortable with
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## 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 below.

### **Level 1**

If the bullying or harassment incident is minor or first time occurrence, teachers may elect to use one or more anti-bullying practices:

- stopping the bullying/re-statement of rules and consequences
- restorative questioning
- think time
- private conference

If the student does not take control over his/her behaviour, an Incident Report Form should be completed and submitted to the Assistant Principal.

### **Level 2**

If the bullying or harassment continues, or in instances of severe bullying or harassing, a referral should be made to the Assistant Principal.

Here, the Assistant Principal (or another who has responsibility for student welfare) may:

- provide discussion/mentoring of different social and emotional learning competencies including structured learning activities
- conduct a restorative conference separately with the perpetrator and "target"

### **Level 3**

An individual 'strength building' plan should be developed by the Assistant Principal for the following students:

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1. 'at risk' students (many risk factors, few protective factors) whose bullying or harassing behaviour is severe
2. other students whose bullying or harassing and other aggressive behaviour is resistant to change,

This plan will be developed in consultation with student, parents/carers and teachers. Individual strength-building plans and associated interventions help connect the student to positive people, programs and actions in the community, school and home as well as develop the student's inner social and emotional strengths (skills, values).

### **Level 4**

Students whose severe bullying or harassing behaviour resists school efforts and represents a significant threat to the safety and wellbeing should be referred to outside agencies for evaluation.

**Note:** The school may choose, if bullying or harassment persists or the initial incident is of such magnitude, that parents/carers will be contacted and consequences implemented consistent with the school's Student Code of Conduct. Furthermore, the principal may commence formal disciplinary action in line with '*Effective Schools are Engaging Schools - Student Engagement Policy Guidelines*' (DET) at any stage in the process depending on contextual information relating to the severity of the bullying (including-cyber bullying) and harassment.



**Appendix B**

**Reporting on Incident of Bullying / Harassment – Template**

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Staff member recording incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_/\_\_/\_\_

Name of student(s) who appears to have instigated bullying

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of target(s)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of witnesses

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Did you observe the incident? YES  No

If 'No' who reported the incident to you? \_\_\_\_\_

Brief description of incident (what was allegedly said or done to the student who appears to have been bullied?)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What form(s) of bullying took place? Verbal  Physical  Indirect  Cyber

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Other  Please detail: \_\_\_\_\_

Was the incident of bullying: Mild  Severe

Describe how you responded (Did you use a school anti-bullying practice?)

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Describe how student responded to your intervention

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**Where / when / time incident took place:**

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

When: before school  recess  lunch  in class  after school

Time: \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ am/pm

Date incident took place: \_ / \_ / \_

**Additional comments:**

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## Appendix C

### Formal Referral of Student who has bullied / harassed others to Student Welfare Coordinator / Principal / Assistant Principal – Template

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*(This form may be completed by a classroom teacher, coordinator, aide, school administrator or Student Wellbeing Coordinator)*

Staff member recording incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_                      Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of student being referred: \_\_\_\_\_

Year/Class: \_\_\_\_\_

History of incident(s) of bullying (dates, description)

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Have parents/guardian been notified?                      YES                       No

If 'No' why not? \_\_\_\_\_

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Have they attended a conference?                      YES                       No

If 'No' why not? \_\_\_\_\_

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Are they willing to participate?                      YES                       No

If 'No' why not? \_\_\_\_\_

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What appears to be the reason for the student's bullying behaviour (family, peer, school, personal, other)?

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What practices have been tried?

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Impact

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What has been the student's attitude towards student(s) who have been targets? (e.g., any concern or remorse expressed)?

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A brief description of academic performance of student over past year or more.

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Distinguishing 'at risk' factors of student (e.g. limited English: economic disadvantage of family; ADHD)

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