



Owen Primary School Policy Bullying and Harassment

Ratified: term 4, 2011
Review Date: term 2 2015, Term 1 2017, Term 1 2018,
Next Review: Term 1, 2020

Rationale

The DECD School Discipline Policy states that:

...school communities, services and agencies will work together to create learning communities which are:

- safe
- inclusive
- conducive to learning
- free from harassment and bullying.

Bullying and harassment are not acceptable in any form, by any person, at Owen Primary School.

Definitions

Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. Cyberbullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies.

Conflict or fights between equals and single incidents are not defined as bullying.

Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved including bystanders.

Bystanders are aware of something happening but do not act to stop it. Bystanders do not actually need to be present. Groups and communities, such as schools, can even be said to show bystander behaviour. Bystander behaviour includes:

- watching an argument on the street
- gathering to watch a playground fight
- knowing that someone is being hurt but not intervening or seeking help
- failing to investigate and be proactive about the bullying in your school.

Although we might not be directly involved, our behaviours can contribute significantly to what takes place.

Some behaviours can make the problem worse:

- giving 'silent approval' by not becoming involved
- assisting by joining in
- reinforcing by encouraging, cheering and laughing, even if not actively participating.

Alternatively, some behaviours can be helpful:

- trying to stop the bullying behaviour by defending the person being bullied, reporting the behaviour
- challenging and positively influencing individual and group attitudes and beliefs
- learning and teaching about the deeper issues which underlie bullying behaviour.

Harassment is behaviour that targets an individual or group due to their identity, race, culture or ethnic origin; religion; physical characteristics; gender; sexual orientation; marital, parenting or economic status; age; ability or disability and that offends, humiliates, intimidates or creates a hostile environment.

Harassment may be directed randomly or towards the same person(s). It may be intentional or unintentional, i.e. words or actions that offend and distress one person may be genuinely regarded by the person doing them as minor or harmless.

Bullying behaviour

Deliberately and repeatedly name-calling, making sexist or racist remarks, spreading rumours, texting abusive messages, threatening someone or excluding someone from games and groups are all examples of bullying or harassment.

Not all distressing or hurtful behaviour is bullying. For example: a single incident of malicious or aggressive behaviour.

Bullying and harassment are repeated actions. A single incident will still be responded to as part of the school's behaviour management processes as unacceptable behaviour.

Cyber-bullying can occur from a single act when the message or picture is sent to more than one person. For example, a bully may only press 'send' once, but the choice to send the message to multiple addresses, makes the action more than a single incident.

dislike

Although social rejection can be hurtful, it is not bullying unless accompanied by repeated and deliberate attempts to distress or hurt.

conflict

Arguments can be distressing but it is not bullying when two people are both upset and neither one is misusing power over the other. Conflict may still give rise to unacceptable behaviour which will be responded to as part of the school's behaviour management processes.

STRATEGIES TO DEAL WITH BULLYING***At Owen Primary School we will:***

- openly talk about bullying – what it is, how it affects us and what we can do about it.
- teach our children the skills which will build their self-esteem and empower them to take the responsibility for themselves – and give them the opportunity to practise these skills.
- implement the policy which clearly states what actions we will take to deal with bullying behaviour.

Responsibilities of staff:

- be role models in word and action at all times
- ensure that our classroom management practices support respect for others
- be observant to signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying
- deal with all reported and observed incidents of bullying as set out in this policy
- ensure that children are supervised at all times
- during yard duty make efforts to remove occasions for bullying by actively patrolling
- report incidents of bullying to the Principal

Responsibilities of children:

- to 'tell' (eg. a parent, teacher, staff member) if they are being bullied or if they see someone else being bullied
- to help someone who is being bullied
- to not bully others and not be a bystander

Responsibilities of parents

- to act in a way which models positive behaviour
- to watch for signs that their child may be being bullied eg. unwillingness to attend school, a pattern of headaches, missing equipment, requests for extra money, damaged clothes or bruising
- to speak to someone on staff (classroom teacher first) at Owen Primary School if their child is being bullied, or they suspect that this is happening
- to encourage their child to 'tell' if they are bullied

Response to Bullying

- both sides will be listened to
- clarification will be sought from others that have witnessed the incident(s)
- both the parents of the victim and the parents of the person responsible for the incident will be notified
- a range of strategies will be used to ensure the behaviour stops and the victim feels safe. These include;
 - separate play times
 - conflict resolution
 - restricted play spaces
 - behaviour checklists
- Should the behaviour continue, more serious consequences will follow
 - parent meeting
 - suspension
 - exclusion
- Support and strategies will be provided on an ongoing basis for the victim of bullying.
- Those who have bullied others will be supported to change their behaviour.