



# Olinda Primary School

## Bullying and Harassment 2017

**Principal: Cornelia Sheeran**

**School Council President: Sharryn Veto**

<b>Date Approved</b>	April 2017
<b>Approved By</b>	School Council
<b>Next Review Date</b>	April 2020
<b>Responsible for Review</b>	Principal
<b>References</b>	Victorian Government Schools Policy and Advisory Guide



# OLINDA PRIMARY SCHOOL BULLYING (INCLUDING CYBER-BULLYING) AND HARASSMENT 2017

## Rationale

Olinda Primary School is committed to providing a safe and caring environment and culture which enables relationships to be formed amongst all students and staff and which encourages self-esteem, co-operation, personal growth and a positive attitude to learning and teaching. 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

This policy aims to:

- reinforce within the school community that no form of bullying is acceptable
- reinforce that everyone in the community has a responsibility to report signs and evidence of bullying to school staff whether as an observer or a victim
- ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up and that support is given to both victim and perpetrator
- seek parental and peer-group support and co-operation at all times

## Definitions

- **Bullying** is repeated oppression, physical or psychological, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group.
- **Cyber-bullying** consists of verbal, psychological bullying, conveyed through the electronic mediums such as mobile-phones, web-logs and web-sites, on-line chat rooms and social media. It is verbal (over the telephone or mobile phone), or written (flaming, threats, racial, sexual or homophobic harassment) using the various mediums available.
- **Harassment** is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct, including gestures which is uninvited, unwelcome or offensive to a person.

## Guidelines

- A school-wide approach will be taken to deal with bullying (including cyber-bullying) and harassment in a consistent and systematic way.
- All staff will be informed of the bullying and harassment policy and practices at the commencement of their time at the school.
- All complaints of bullying and harassment will be heard in confidence and taken seriously.
- Olinda Primary School staff will plan and implement preventative curriculum programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.
- There will be disciplinary consequences, covering a range of strategies, for those in breach of the Bullying (including cyber-bullying) and Harassment Policy, Guidelines and Procedures (See Appendix A).

## Expectations

- **Olinda Primary School has a zero tolerance for any forms of bullying (including cyber-bullying) and harassment.**
- Our school will actively promote a positive and welcoming environment for all members of the school community.



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- All school staff, students and visitors will create and maintain a safe school environment, following the Play Is The Way rules.
- All reports of bullying and harassment will be taken seriously and actions will be taken immediately.

### Procedure

- 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 Bullying and Harassment Policy of the school will be promoted to students, staff, parents/carers and the local community, as appropriate.
- A summary of the policy will be included in the Student Enrolment Package while new staff will receive documentation as part of the school's induction process.
- All school teaching staff will work 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 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) 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 workers. The curriculum will include anti-bullying messages and strategies in line with current DET materials.
- Professional development will be provided for staff relating to bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment and research based programs 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.
- The principal will provide disciplinary consequences including stepping down in accordance with Department of Education and Training (DET) guidelines.

### Links and Appendices

Resources/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 Schools](#)
- DET's [Student Engagement Policy Guidelines](#)
- Olinda Primary School - ICT Acceptable Use Policy (re cyber-bullying)
- DET's [Respectful Schools](#)



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Appendices which are connected with this policy are:

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

**Evaluation**

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



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## **Appendix A- Bullying (and Cyber-Bullying) and Harassment Procedures**

### **Bullying can involve:**

- grabbing, aggressive staring, hitting, pinching, kicking, pushing and shoving
- publicly 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 which can be subtle or explicit.**

### **Subtle (*the most common*) includes:**

- offensive staring and leering
- unwanted comments about physical appearance and sexual preference
- racist or smutty comments or jokes
- persistent comments about a person's private life or family
- physical contact e.g. purposely brushing up against another's body
- offensive name calling

### **Explicit (*obvious*) includes:**

- grabbing, aggressive hitting, pinching and shoving, etc
- unwelcome patting, touching, embracing
- repeated requests for dates, especially after refusal
- offensive gestures, jokes, comments, letters, phone calls or e-mail
- sexually and/or racially provocative remarks
- displays of sexually graphic material- pornography

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

### **Bullying**

#### *Definition of Bullying*

- Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, who have more power at the time, deliberately upset or hurt another person, their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion.

#### *Types of Bullying*

There are three broad categories of bullying:

- **Direct physical bullying-** e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.
- **Direct verbal bullying-** e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks.



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- **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. Indirect bullying includes:
  - lying and spreading rumours
  - playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
  - mimicking
  - encouraging others to socially exclude someone
  - damaging someone's social reputation and social acceptance
  - cyber-bullying, which involves the use of electronic means to humiliate and distress

### 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-** in mutual conflict situations, 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-episode acts of nastiness or meanness, or random acts of aggression or intimidation-** single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression 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.

### Cyber-bullying

Is covert, psychological bullying, conveyed through the electronic mediums such as mobile-phones, web-logs and web-sites, on-line chat rooms and social media. It is verbal (over the telephone or mobile phone), or written (flaming, threats, racial, sexual or homophobic harassment) using the various mediums available.

### Harassment

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

### Why do we have policies 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*.



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## What are the effects of Bullying and Harassment?

- poor health - anxiety, depression
- lower self esteem
- reduced study performance
- missed classes, social withdrawal
- reduced career prospects

## Am I Bullying or Harassing someone?

If you are not sure about your behaviour you can:

- stop it
- check it out by asking if it is offensive or inappropriate
- apologise
- take it seriously if someone says they are feeling uncomfortable
- talk it over with a teacher, your parent/s or somebody who has an understanding of the issues

## What are some of the reactions or 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?"*  
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.



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**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 the Principal, a class teacher or an adult that you feel comfortable with
- the school will take your concerns seriously- all complaints will be treated confidentially

**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 detention
- private conference
- shared control discussion
- circle time

If the student does not take control over his/her behaviour, an Incident Report Form should be completed and submitted to the principal and class teacher (copy on file).

***Level 2***

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

Here, the Principal or nominee

- meet with the student to develop a behaviour contract
- 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***

For 'at risk' students (many risk factors, few protective factors) whose bullying or harassing behaviour is severe and for other non-at risk students whose bullying or harassing and other aggressive behaviour is resistant to change, an individual 'strength building' plan should be developed by the Principal and class teacher 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).



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***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. The principal and class teacher/s will need to be familiar with those community agencies and organisations that can offer more intensive services to the student and student's family.

**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.



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**Appendix B- Reporting on Incident of Bullying / Harassment- Template**

Staff member recording incident:

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

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

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

Name(s) of  
target(s)

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Name(s) of witnesses

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Did you observe the incident?

YES

No

If 'No' who reported the incident to  
you?

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

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What form(s) of bullying took place?

Verbal  Physical  Indirect  Cyber

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:

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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 been bullied / harassed other to  
Principal- Student Template**

*(This form may be completed by a classroom teacher, year level coordinator, 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)

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

Have parents/guardian been notified?                      YES                       No

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

Have they attended a conference?                      YES                       No

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

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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