Derrimut Primary School

Bullying Prevention

A Guide for teachers, students and families

to **grow** healthy and resilient people that **thrive** in a culture of mutual and reciprocal respect

Bullying is not an acceptable behaviour at Derrimut Primary school.

All students, staff and parents have a right to participate and learn; and the right to work in a safe, secure and non threatening environment, which promotes learning in a culture of respect, team work and engagement.

Therefore it is the responsibility of the whole school community to ensure this and to assist that bullying of any kind is **not tolerated**

All members of our learning community are committed to building positive working and learning relationships and to working through conflict in a respectful and collaborative manner.

This document defines what bullying behaviour is and isn't and what parents, teachers and students can do to ensure a safe learning environment.

Please read in conjunction with our

- Bullying and harassment prevention policy

- Classroom codes of cooperation

- Acceptable use policy

- Grievance procedures

References

Framework for student support services in Vic schools

DEECD website: Safe schools are effective schools

Effective schools are Engaging schools: Student Engagement Policy guidelines DEECD

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Understanding Bullying

Definition:

Bullying may be defined as coersion or the creation of fear in others through the use of strength or power. It often involves repeated attack, whether verbal, physical, social or psychological and it usually sees the bully in a position of power over the bullied. Power imbalance is the hallmark of bullying.

Forms of Bullying

Verbal- name calling, put downs, threatening

Physical- hitting, punching, kicking, poking, tripping, stealing, pushing

Social -ignoring excluding ostracizing, alienating

Psychological- spreading rumours, stalking, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions

Signs and Symptoms of bullying

There are many signs and symptoms of bullying. Quite often, adults are the last to know when a child is experiencing bullying. Quite often parents will pick up on changes in behaviour first. It is important to contact the school straight away so that the report can be investigated and action taken

- **Emotional**- personality changes, mood swings, sleep disturbance, insomnia, nightmares, depression, frequent tears, eating disorders-(over under eating)

- **Physical-** Signs of torn clothing, unexplained injury, headaches, stomach aches, negative body language, nervous habits.

- **Social**-loss of confidence, withdrawal from friends

- Behavioural- outburst of temper, problematic behaviour

- School-unwillingness to go to school, withdrawal from peer group, truancy, misbehaviour requesting changes in transport, decline in work standards or out put

- Home- unwillingness to leave the house, withdrawal from family members, bullying behaviour towards parents or siblings, demands for extra money at school

- Community- unwillingness to be out in the community or to participate in social events

What the student can do

"Bullying is never a joke. It's no shame to name when you're in pain. You always have choices when you are being bullied."

When the Bullying or harassment occurs:

- Look for support from those near by

- Be firm and clear-be confident. Tell them to stop

- Get away from the situation as quickly as possible

After the harassment has occurred seek advice:

- Don't blame yourself for what has happened

- Talk to a friend or teacher, another adult or someone you can trust

- Keep speaking out until someone listens

When talking to an adult about harassment be clear about

- What has happened to you

- How often it has happened

- Who was involved

- Where it happened

- How you felt about what happened.

What other students can do

"In cases of bullying or harassment there is no such thing as an innocent bystander."

Observers/ By-standers should:

- Resist from joining in

- Let the bully know his/her actions are wrong

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- Support the bullied student

- Report the matter to a staff member or adult with whom you feel comfortable

What Parents can do

- Continue their support of their child's emotional growth and the process of development of positive values

- Be vigilant for signs of distress

- Advise school of bullying if their child feels too threatened to do so

- Be role models themselves in avoiding bullying behaviour of their children, other children or adult

- Work in partnership with the school and be willing to actively supporting the school process

- Communicate with the child that they need to work with the school to solve the conflict and that it will take time and commitment to try new things

What staff can do

Act on every reported incident of bullying

Respond in a pastoral manner to all students involved in the incident

Be role models of appropriate behaviour and avoid all forms of bullying behaviour against students, staff or community

Be observant for signs of suspected bullying

Maintain appropriate supervision-be to line/ class/ duty on time

Respond proactively in all classroom situations to disallow promotion or acceptance of bullying behaviours

Endeavour to assist victims of bullying and reduce distress through restorative justice practices

Proactively assist students exhibiting bullying behaviour through restorative justice practices
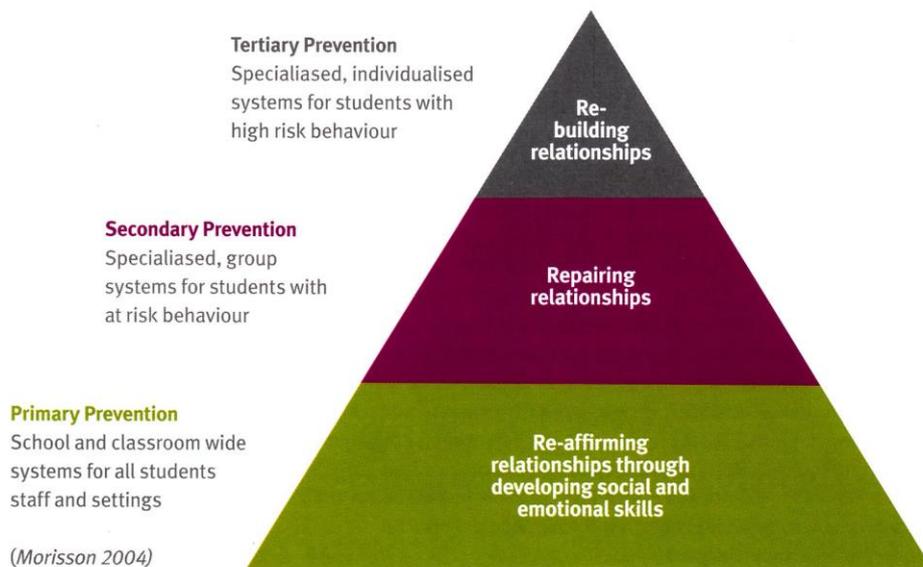
Appendix 4 – Restorative practices

The interest in restorative justice principles and practices in Victorian schools has increased in recent years. The main reasons for the introduction of restorative practices are:

- to improve student behaviour management outcomes
- as one of a range of school improvement strategies, particularly in the social–emotional domain such as social skills and student engagement (DEET 2004).

Restorative practices are best incorporated within a whole-school approach and can be represented by a range of informal and formal strategies such as use of affective language, class circles and community conferencing. Restorative practices involve the use of transferable values and principles to promote social equity in relationships, empathy and personal accountability. An effective restorative approach couples control with support, and confronts and shows disapproval of the wrongdoing.

Hierarchy of restorative practices

Tertiary Prevention
Specialiased, individualised systems for students with high risk behaviour

Re-building relationships

Secondary Prevention
Specialiased, group systems for students with at risk behaviour

Repairing relationships

Primary Prevention
School and classroom wide systems for all students staff and settings

(Morisson 2004)

Re-affirming relationships through developing social and emotional skills

Restorative practices:

- are underpinned by student learning and facilitate an environment of safety, trust and connectedness (Bond et al. 2001, Fuller 1999)
- promote awareness of others, responsibility and empathy (Hopkins 2002)
- involve direct and voluntary participation of those affected by misconduct in its resolution (Braithwaite 2001b)
- promote relationship management rather than behaviour management (Cameron & Thorsborne 2001)
- separate the deed from the doer (Marshall et al. 2002)
- are systematic, not situational (Armstrong 2004)
- are concerned with establishing or re-establishing social equality in relationships; that is, relationships in which each person's rights to equal dignity, concern and respect are satisfied (Morrison 2002).

What the School Does

At Derrimut PS we aim to build a sense of belonging and to promote well being. Through our engagement and anti bullying approaches we aim to

- Raise awareness of what makes students resilient and to develop strategies to reduce vulnerabilities and increase coping skills

- Use strategies for whole groups, such as a school or year level, for small groups and individuals

- Minimise the effects of risk factors such as substance abuse, family conflict, homelessness, abuse and neglect and a range of emotional disorders

Strategies

At Derrimut PS we believe that developing a safe and orderly learning environment enables students to connect to peers, teachers and community in a healthy and positive way that will in turn impact positively on their learning. We do this by:

1. Building mutual respect and promote safety at school
   This is achieved by:

   a. Development and implementation of programs that promote and support a problem solving approach that leads children to be proactive and independent in their approach to solving issues

   b. Supervision and support by staff in the yard and regular monitoring so that trouble spots do not develop

   c. Supervision of students in the classroom and the development of positive inclusive behaviours

   d. Clear expectations regarding participation and behaviour developed in conjunction with students and clearly displayed in the classroom

   e. Staff seeing themselves responsible for every child in the school, not just the ones in their class and being consistent in the application of these expectations

   f. Modelling of non bullying manner. All parties involved use quiet respectful tones at all times

2. Implement a comprehensive curriculum to engage students intellectually and promote cooperative and team behaviours

   a. Build self esteem and self expression through Health & PE and the Arts and a comprehensive extra curricula program that builds strong community partnerships

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b. An inquiry based program that enhances and develops student voice, thinking, problem solving and team work

3. Enhance School Attendance
   Regular school attendance is one of the major factors contributing to students' wellbeing and success.

   a. Implement "It's Not Ok to Be Away" program for positive reinforcement and education

   b. Liaise closely with parents and guardians regarding enhancement of student attendance

   c. Closely monitor and report on student attendance through daily roll and SMT tool

4. Practice Inclusive Teaching and learning

   a. Teachers model and teach inclusive teaching and learning practices

   b. Programs are developed on a needs basis in conjunction with SSSO support on self awareness, building friendships and personal safety

   c. Children are recognised for their efforts in being a good citizen trough awards and recognition at whole school and year level assemblies

5. Encourage Supportive Relationships through:

   a. Developing caring classroom climates where students feel comfortable in discussing any concerns they may have with the teacher

   b. Implement supportive peer and mentor relationships

   c. Focus on group work and cooperative group skills that encourage positive and respectful interaction

   d. Encourage frequent communication between teacher and parent/guardian to maintain the supportive partnership for learning

6. Ease Transitions

   a. Effective relationship building and orientation transition program from Kinda to Prep and from Year 6 to year 7

   b. Development of an agreed and viable curriculum based on developmental stages of children's learning in literacy and numeracy

   c. Transition activities for students moving into a new year level

   d. Composite classes to develop wide range of acquaintances and friendships

    e.   Home classrooms built around a community cluster to further develop sense of learning community and reduce isolation

    f.   Teachers in teaching teams where every child is the responsibility of every teacher

7.   Involve families and the wider community to improve student outcomes

    a.   Develop extra curricular links with community groups

    b.   Develop community wide activities to break down isolation barriers

    c.   Support families by providing a tailored communication strategy that is reflects the communities diversity

8.   Intervention Despite our range of prevention strategies some students remain vulnerable to harm and need early intervention strategies to strengthen and support their coping and resilience skills as well as protecting their wellbeing

    a.   Assess risks and identify needs through documented procedures in wellbeing policy and curriculum management folder

    b.   Provide school based counselling and support

    c.   Develop and implement programs that improve skills in foundational literacy and numeracy skills eg Reading recovery, ESL programs and individual learning plans

    d.   Ensure continuity of care by quality of communication and effective timely resourcing

    e.   Monitor and evaluate student support programs

Cyber Bullying

What is cyber bullying? Taken from website http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/Schools

Cyber bullying can be conducted in many ways, using different media including:

- the sending of abusive texts or emails
- taking and sharing unflattering or private images, including naked or sexual images
- posting unkind messages or inappropriate images on social networking sites
- excluding individuals from online chats or other communication
- assuming the identity of the victim online and representing them in a negative manner or manner that may damage their relationship with others
- repeatedly, and for no strategic reason, attacking players in online gaming.

Like other forms of bullying such as verbal abuse, social exclusion and physical aggression, cyber bullying has the potential to result in the target of bullying developing social, psychological and educational issues.

While cyber bullying is similar to real life bullying it also differs in the following ways:

- it can be difficult to escape and invasive—it can occur 24/7 and a person can be targeted while at home
- it can involve harmful material being widely and rapidly disseminated to a large audience, for example, rumours and images can be posted on public forums or sent to many people at once
- it can provide the bully with a sense of relative anonymity and distance from the victim, so there is a lack of immediate feedback or consequences.

Cyber bullying can happen to anyone, not just those generally considered vulnerable. Confident, outgoing individuals can also be targeted.

Research has identified that girls are more likely to report that they have been victims of cyber bullying than boys, potentially because they engage in a higher level of technology-assisted social communication such as using SMS, emailing and social networking.

One or more of the following signs and changes in behaviour could indicate that a student is being cyber bullied.

- Decline in academic performance and social interaction.
- Dislike and avoidance of school, sometimes resulting in higher absenteeism.
- Complaints of feeling unwell though parents report no specific illness.
- Having less to do with friends.
- Increased social exclusion and peer rejection.
- Falling behind in homework.
- Poorer physical health and sleepiness.
- Increased negative self-perception.
- Increased reluctance to participate in regular school activities, including classroom discussions.
- Becoming withdrawn, appearing depressed or anxious, having mood swings, crying for no apparent reason.

- Suicidal thoughts—this should be reported to the administration and the parents/carers immediately for appropriate action.

The above signs should be considered in light of the student's usual behaviour.

Some of the signs above may also be indicators of more general social issues, specific mental health issues, or may even reflect developmentally appropriate behaviours for teens as they seek to establish their identity. Exploring any significant concerns with students and parents/carers is an important first step toward identifying issues and developing strategies to overcome them.

All students are expected to follow the cyber safety rules as outlined in the Derrimut PS internet code of practice.

Staff at Derrimut PS will respond quickly to any reported incidences of bullying including cyber bullying.

To assist the school, families are encouraged to:

Discuss the seriousness of this form of bullying and its impact on those being bullied and that it is unacceptable behaviour

Inform the school of any cyber bullying

Support the schools policies and procedures

Implement prevention procedures such as protecting students' phone numbers, not responding to sms messages.

Cyber bullying is a criminal offence

Derrimut PS will not tolerate any form of cyber bullying.

Resources:

Cyberquoll learning about internet safety

http://www.cyberquoll.com.au/index.html

Cyber smart

http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/