



# Bullying and Harassment Prevention Policy

## Policy Statement

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Northcote Primary School is a safe and caring school that promotes learning, personal growth and positive self-esteem for all students. We value and nurture a culture of mutual respect, appreciation of individual difference and positive resolution of conflict.

At Northcote Primary School, bullying or harassment of any kind is strictly unacceptable behaviour. All members of the school community have the right to operate in an environment free from physical, sexual, racial, cultural or religious harassment. The school advises students to be aware of how their behaviour can affect others in the school community. It is the right and responsibility of every student to report incidents of bullying or harassment, whether it happens to them or to someone else.

## Definitions

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### Bullying

*'Bullying and harassment are often thought of separately; however both involve a more powerful person or group oppressing a less powerful person or group, often on grounds of difference. These differences can be related to culture, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, sexual orientation, ability or disability, religion, body size and physical appearance, personality, age, marital status or economic status.'* (Bullying – No Way! National Website).

Bullying involves the inappropriate use of power by one or more persons over another less powerful person or group and is generally an act that is *repeated* over time. Bullying can take many forms that are often interrelated, and can include:

- **Verbal:** name calling, put downs, threats
- **Physical:** hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting
- **Social:** ignoring, excluding, ostracizing, alienating
- **Psychological:** spreading rumours, stalking, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions.

### Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying consists of covert, psychological bullying, conveyed through electronic mediums such as (but not limited to) mobile phones, apps, websites, chat rooms, multi-player games and social media. Cyber bullying can be verbal (over the phone/internet) or written (flaming, threats, racial, sexual and homophobic harassment) using different electronic mediums.

### Harassment

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

## **Guidelines**

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A school-wide approach will be taken to deal with 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 Northcote Primary School.

Should bullying or harassment occur, the student involved and staff members should take the following actions:

1. Tell the perpetrator that you disapprove of what is happening and ask him/her to stop.
2. If the unacceptable behaviour continues, students are expected to report to a staff member.
3. Staff members are to treat all incidences of bullying immediately and seriously, with the view to resolving conflict in a positive way.

These consequences are not in strict sequence, and any or all of them may be applied at the staff member's discretion, dependent on the situation. At any time parents/carers may be invited to school to discuss the behaviour of a child who is causing concern as well as the child who is being bullied.

## **Program**

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Our school has adopted the **Bounce Back** program as a preventative program to promote resilience, life and social skills, conflict resolution and problem solving to reduce the incidences of bullying and harassment.

The school leadership team and the teaching and support staff 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 that 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 to ensure appropriate support for the student. Teachers must ensure that they fully document their interaction with the student and verify the actions taken. Class teachers and the Principal / Assistant Principal closely monitor students who have been involved in a bullying incident.

The Northcote Primary School Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy and Northcote Primary School ICT Acceptable Use Policy can also be read in conjunction with this policy.

## **Evaluation**

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

This policy was last ratified by School Council: