ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Rationale

Eltham Primary seeks to create a school where all members of the school community are safe, included and equal. Bullying can be violent, exclusive and discriminatory, and as such, bullying is a threat to all of these outcomes.

Research performed in 2009 indicates that 1 in 4 students in Year 4 and Year 6 experience frequent bullying, with a much higher percentage experiencing occasional bullying. A summary of other bullying statistics is provided in Attachment 2.

Eltham Primary School does not tolerate any form of bullying, and views all forms of bullying as unacceptable.

Aims:

- To create a culture of inclusion

- To reinforce within the school community what bullying is, and the fact that it is unacceptable

- To articulate the signs and evidence of bullying and to ensure bullying is reported whether a person is an observer or a victim

- To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are responded to consistently and effectively

- To seek parental and peer-group support and co-operation at all times.

Definition:

Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological aggressive behaviour by a person or group directed towards a less powerful person or group that is intended to cause harm, distress or fear.

Types of bullying behaviour.

There are some specific types of bullying behaviour:

- verbal or written abuse - such as targeted name-calling or jokes, or displaying offensive posters

- violence - including threats of violence

- sexual harassment - unwelcome or unreciprocated conduct of a sexual nature, which could reasonably be expected to cause offence, humiliation or intimidation

- homophobia and other hostile behaviour towards students relating to gender and sexuality

- discrimination including racial discrimination - treating people differently because of their identity

- cyberbullying - either online or via mobile phone.

What is not bullying?

There are also some behaviours, which, although they might be unpleasant or distressing, are not bullying:

- mutual conflict - which involves a disagreement, but not an imbalance of power. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation

- single-episode acts of nastiness or physical aggression, or aggression directed towards many different people, is not bullying

- social rejection or dislike is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

Bullying roles.

People in a bullying scenario may take on one of the following roles:

- a person who engages in bullying behaviour

- a target who is subjected to the bullying behaviour

- an assistant who assists the bullying behaviour and actively joins in

- a supporter who encourages and gives silent approval to the bullying, by smiling, laughing or making comments

- a silent bystander who sees or knows about someone being bullied but is passive and does nothing, this may be an adult bystander

- a defender who supports the student who is being bullied by intervening, getting teacher support or comforting them.

Creating a Safe, Inclusive and Equitable Environment

Safety starts in the classroom. Students should also feel and be safe everywhere at school, in the classrooms, the library, the toilets and the playground. Risks to this safety include but are not limited to:

- Child is bullied

- Child doesn't know they are being bullied

- Child is too frightened to report bullying

- Child doesn't report bullying because they think nothing can be done

- People are unaware of the procedure when they witness bullying.

To provide a safe, inclusive and equitable environment, the school:

- Teaches positive behaviours through the School-wide Positive Behaviour System. The EPS Student Engagement and Wellbeing policy outlines our School Wide Positive Behaviour Supports (SWPBS) framework that explicitly defines, teaches and reinforces positive behaviours at EPS

- Teaches strategies that promote student resilience are also explicitly taught through SWPBS

- Teaches the types of bullying and roles people can play in bullying

- Teaches the process for students to report all incidents of bullying, including the process when a child is frightened of reporting the incident

- Utilises the SWPBS data collection system for the identification of patterns of bullying, including identifying 'hot spots' in the school

- Utilises the School Wide Positive Behaviour Supports (SWPBS) weekly lessons to reinforce these lessons

There are additional supports available to students involved in bullying incidents, such as the Kid's Helpline phone counselling service - ph.1800 55 1800

Response to incidents:

Reporting

It is the role of all students, parents and staff to report incidents of bullying. Whilst reporting can be difficult, particularly for students who fear reprisal, incidents must be reported to school staff. If parents become aware of a bullying incident, they must report it to their child's teacher and/or the principal. Teachers who become aware of bullying incidents will immediately contact the principal.

Planned Interventions

When a bullying incident is reported, it is vital there is a consistent response from the school.

- Once an incident of bullying has been reported, the matter will be investigated and addressed by the classroom teacher and principal. This will involve mediation and conferencing with both the student targeted and the student engaged in bullying behaviour

- There will be appropriate disciplinary action for the student engaging in bullying behaviour. This may include a Behaviour Action Plan being developed

- If appropriate a Student Support Group may be formed to support the student targeted by bullying behaviour

- If necessary, counselling will be provided for both the student targeted by and the student engaging in bullying behaviour

- The parents of all students involved will be contacted and updated throughout the response process. If Behaviour Action Plans and Student Support Groups are necessary, parents will be directly involved in these processes

- The privacy of all parties will be recognised within the bounds of privacy legislation

- Support in the form of mediation, conferencing and counselling will be provided to all students who witness and/or report bullying behaviours

Procedures for Critical Incidents

The Principal will contact the DET Emergency and Student Critical Incident Unit (ESMU). The ESMU provides a single reference point to assist schools in responding to and reporting emergency matters and critical incidents including criminal and unwanted activities. Critical incidents are determined at the principal's discretion and include but are not limited to physical assault, sexual assault, criminal activity involving theft or serious damage of property, serious threats or homophobic bullying.

If parents are concerned or have complaints regarding the school's anti-bullying processes, they may contact the principal, then if required the Department of Education and Training:

http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/complaints/Pages/default.aspx

Attachment 1: Document Control

Document Control

Policy Title: Eltham Primary School Anti-Bullying Policy

Revision Date: May 2017

Next Revision: 2018

Revision Frequency: Annual

Revised by: Education Policy Sub-committee

Endorsed by School Council:

Attachment 2: Bullying Statistics

The following statistics are derived from the 2009 Australian Covert Bullying Prevalence Study, which is still used by federal and state governments.

Subsequent studies have been less comprehensive, but indicate that prevalence rates are falling as a result of anti-bullying campaigns and educational initiatives.

Likelihood percentages are combined results for Year 4 and Year 6 students, who participated in the survey and indicated they were subjected to the type of bullying.

Type of Bullying	Likelihood (%)
Frequent Bullying	27%[2]
Occasional Bullying	36%[3]
Any Bullying	70%[4]
Covert Bullying	16%[5]
Exclusion	42%[6]
Hurtful teasing of a child	>33%[7]
Hurtful lies about a child	33%[8]
Child doesn't know they are being bullied[9]	At least 34%[10]

[2] Edith Cowan University, Australian Covert Bullying Prevalence Study, p. xxi
[3] ibid, pp. 94, 96
[4] ibid, pp. 94, 96
[5] ibid, p. xxii
[6] ibid, pp. 79, 81 (Year 4 and Year 6)
[7] ibid, p. xxi. Hurtful teasing is the most prevalent type of bullying, but exact figures weren't provided by the Study
[8] ibid, pp. 79, 81 (Year 4 and Year 6)
[9] This is dependent on the type of bullying: 67% of children who suffer covert bullying do not think they have been bullied
[10] ibid, p. 93