Bullying & Harassment Policy

Rationale

- Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, deliberately and repeatedly upsets or hurts another person. Bullying usually involves an imbalance of power with the bully or bullies perceived to be in a superior position due to age, size, status or other reasons.
- Categories of bullying include:
  - **physical bullying –** hitting, kicking, pinching, pushing, tripping or other acts of physical violence towards a student and/or their personal property
  - **verbal or written bullying –** targeted name calling or teasing, insults, teasing, intimidation, homophobic or racist remarks, inappropriate comments relating to gender, sending offensive notes to another student, spreading rumours, encouraging others to socially exclude someone
  - **cyberbullying** – bullying behaviour using digital technologies including social networking sites, texting, emails and other inappropriate online behaviours
- Bullying can cause physical or psychological harm, or a combination of both. Victims have reported psychological injury including increased anxiety and hyper vigilance, fear of attending school, diminished self-esteem, recurrent thoughts and memories of the bullying, depression, anger and post-traumatic stress.
- Many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management.
- Mutual conflict involves an argument or disagreement between people but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.
- Social rejection or dislike is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.
- Single-episode acts of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If someone is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied. Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different people is not the same as bullying. However, this does not mean that single episodes should be ignored or condoned as these are unacceptable behaviours.
- A school's duty of care to its children is a duty to take reasonable steps to minimise the risk of foreseeable injury.
- It is essential that schools work with children, parents, carers and the wider community to promote bullying prevention and to develop appropriate response strategies.

Purpose

- To create a safe and respectful school environment and prevent bullying, cyber bullying and other unacceptable behaviours.
- To ensure Deer Park West Primary School complies with DET policy and guidelines.
- To further empower children who are key stakeholders within our organisation.
- To ensure the school has in place strategies to enhance compliance with the Child Safe Standards 2, 4 and 7.
- To ensure the school discharges its duty of care towards children.

Implementation

- Deer Park West Primary School has **zero tolerance of bullying and of harassment in any form.**
- The wellbeing of every child at the school is our highest priority.
- The school encourages all children to speak up when bullying or harassment is encountered.
- The school will:
  - develop a **comprehensive written bullying prevention policy** which:
    - adequately defines all types of bullying
    - comprehensively sets out what behaviour will not be tolerated
    - clearly details what disciplinary action the school may take
    - details any other actions or responses that the school will take e.g. restorative practices
  - promote and support safe and respectful learning environments where bullying is not tolerated
  - provide clear definitions of what is and what is not bullying, including descriptions of the different subtypes of bullying
  - put in place whole-school strategies and initiatives as outlined in DET's anti-bullying policy
  - develop a Student Engagement Policy that includes processes and strategies to prevent and respond to incidents of bullying and other forms of unacceptable behaviour.
  - Involve children, staff and parents/carers in updating the Student Engagement Policy.
  - take a whole-school approach focusing on safety and wellbeing
  - consistently respond to all incidents of bullying that have been reported to the school and ensure that planned interventions are used to respond to these incidents
  - ensure that support is provided to any child who has been affected by, engaged in or witnessed bullying behaviour
  - provide regular updates, within the bounds of privacy legislation, to parents/carers about the management of incidents
  - address cyber bullying as part of its *Internet/Social Media Policy*
- The school will ensure the policy is easily accessible within the school community and published on the school's website.
- If circumstances warrant, the school may consider using Bullying No Way! and the National Safe Schools Framework.
- For further information, the school will refer to the DET resources at the website below.
- Please refer also to the school's *Duty of Care Policy* and the *Student Engagement Policy.*

Evaluation

- This policy will be reviewed annually as part of preparing the Annual Report or if DET guidelines change (latest DET update late February 2016).

This update was ratified by School Council on 13 September 2016