

Bullying and Harassment Policy

DEFINITION

What is bullying?

Bullying is repeated and unreasonable behaviour directed towards an employee or group of employees that creates a risk to health and safety. It can be subtle or hidden and can include behaviour such as: deliberately changing work rosters to inconvenience particular employees, verbal abuse, intimidation, excluding, threatening behaviours, sabotaging someone's work and ridiculing someone's opinions. A person is bullied when they are intentionally exposed regularly and over time to negative or harmful actions by one or more other people.

Cyber-bullying consists of 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.

What is not bullying?

Reasonable management actions carried out in a fair way are not bullying. For example:

- Setting performance goals, standards and deadlines
- Deciding not to select an employee for promotion
- Informing an employee about unsatisfactory work performance
- Informing an employee about inappropriate behaviour
- Implementing organisational changes

RATIONALE

Dandenong Valley SDS is committed to providing a safe and caring environment and culture which enables positive relationships to be formed amongst all students and staff and which encourages self-esteem, cooperation, 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

- To provide clear definitions of what is and what is not bullying and harassment
- To reinforce within the school community that no form of bullying or harassment is acceptable.

- To provide clear advice on the roles and responsibilities of the whole school community, including students, parents, caregivers and teachers for preventing and responding to bullying behaviour
- To provide clear procedures for everyone to report incidents of bullying to the school
- To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up and that support is given to any person who has been affected by, engaged in or witnessed bullying behavior
- To seek the support and co-operation of the whole-school community at all times.

IMPLEMENTATION

- Dandenong Valley SDS will provide a positive culture where bullying is not accepted.
- A school-wide approach will be taken to deal with bullying (including cyber 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 the school.
- All complaints of harassment will be heard in confidence and taken seriously.
- A formal investigation will be undertaken and disciplinary action may result where necessary.
- Our school will organise preventative curriculum programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.
- Staff programs will occur periodically to keep staff informed of current issues/strategies for dealing with these issues

EVALUATION

The program and policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three year review cycle to ensure that:

- the aims of the policy are appropriate and meet the needs of the school population
- appropriate and sufficient resources are available
- the policy reflects the aims of the School Strategic Plan

Ratified by School Council: 18th Feb 2015

Last Reviewed: April 2018

Appendix 1: Procedure for addressing bullying concerns

If you believe you are being bullied:

- If possible, attempt to resolve the problem with the person(s) involved.
- Report your complaint to the Principal.
- If your complaint involves the Principal, report it to the Regional Director.

If you observe another employee being bullied, report it to the Principal.

If you make a complaint you are responsible for ensuring that you:

- Make the complaint honestly and in good faith
- Provide all the relevant facts
- Co-operate with the investigation and resolution processes

If a complaint is made about you, you are responsible for ensuring that you:

- Co-operate with the investigation and resolution processes and maintain confidentiality
- Provide a written or verbal response to the complaint which has been made
- Provide all relevant facts to the person conducting the investigation

Management Responsibility

- Behave consistently with the Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Remain sympathetic, sensitive and serious, recognising that it is serious to the person making the complaint
- Enquire into the matter within 2 working days
- Resolve the complaint as soon as possible
- Determine an appropriate investigator and if possible, mediate the complaint

Outcomes

If bullying complaints are substantiated, management may take the following actions:

- Require an apology from the respondent
- Make changes to work practices
- Undertake disciplinary action
- Require employees to participate in training
- Place notes in personnel files
- Any other action deemed fair and reasonable

References:

Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004

Workplace Bullying - prevention and response Worksafe Victoria October 2012