NEERIM SOUTH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy

| **Respect** | **Learning** | **Teamwork** | **Perseverance** |

1. Rationale

1.1. Neerim South Primary School promotes a supportive, cooperative atmosphere in which students can learn to the best of their ability and teachers can carry out their work to the best of their ability.

1.2. The school will provide a positive culture where bullying is not accepted, and in so doing, all will have the right of respect from others, the right to learn or to teach, and a right to feel safe and secure in their school environment.

1.3. The school recognises that bullying and harassment could occur between any school community members.

1.4. Each member of the school community including teachers, non-teaching staff, volunteers, parents and students has the right:

- To be treated equally and without discrimination regardless of race; gender; age; religion; sexuality; health or economic circumstances; industrial activity; disability; political beliefs or activity, marital, parental or carer status; personal association with a person who is identified by reference to any of the aforementioned attributes.
- To be treated with respect and politeness by other students, parents, volunteers and staff
- To be treated with understanding.
- To obtain maximum benefit from all lessons, classes and school related activities and programs.

1.5. We acknowledge that harassment and bullying are behaviours that are unacceptable and have a negative and detrimental impact on a school community's environment and therefore needs to be actively discouraged and eliminated (if they occur) from our school.

2. Aims

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

2.2. Everyone within the school community to be alert to signs and evidence of bullying and to have a responsibility to report it to staff whether as observer or victim.

2.3. To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up appropriately and that support is given to both victims and perpetrators.

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

3. Definitions

3.1. Bullying

Bullying is repeated deliberate acts which can be physical, verbal or psychological or a combination of any of these. It is a clear form of harassment.

A person is **bullied** when one or more other people expose them regularly and over time to negative or harmful actions.

Bullies are people who deliberately set out to intimidate, exclude, threaten and/or hurt others repeatedly.

3.2. Harassment

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

3.3. Cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying consists of covert, psychological bullying, conveyed through any electronic medium such as mobile phones, web-sites, email, and social media. It can be verbal, written or photographic.

4. Implementation

4.1. Bullying and harassment will be addressed, individual differences will be respected and students and staff will be supported in their pursuit of learning and teaching.

4.2. The school will adopt a four-phase approach to bullying:

A. Primary Prevention measures:

- Professional development for staff relating to bullying, harassment and proven counter measures.
- Community awareness and input relating to bullying, its characteristics and the school's programs and response.
- Programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.
- Where possible, constructive strategies will be employed in preference to punitive sanctions and negative consequences.
- Each classroom teacher to clarify at the start of each year the school policy on bullying.
- The curriculum to include anti-bulling messages and strategies.
- Junior Council, peer support delegates, staff and students to promote the philosophy of 'No Put Downs'.

B. Early Intervention measures:

- Promote the reporting of bullying incidents involving themselves or others, by both children and staff.
- Regular reminders by classroom teachers and the principal to students and staff to report incidents of bullying.
- Encourage parents to contact the school if they become aware of a problem.
- Designate a safe and quiet place for children to access at recess and lunch times – Garden Area (teachers to confirm a practical location).
- Public recognition and reward for positive behaviour and resolution of problems (eg Ticket in the Tin, Respect Awards etc).

C. Intervention:

- Once identified each bully, victim and witness will be spoken with, and all incidents or allegations of bullying will be fully investigated and documented (while respecting the need for confidentiality).
- Students and staff identified by others as bullies will be informed of allegations.
- Both bullies and victims will be offered counselling and support.
- If student bullying persists, parents will be contacted and consequences implemented consistent with the school's Student Code of Conduct.
- If staff bullying persists, the principal will commence formal disciplinary action.

D. Post Violation:

- Consequences for students will be individually based and may involve:-
    - exclusion from class
    - exclusion from yard

- withdrawal of privileges
- school suspension
- ongoing counselling from appropriate agency for both victim and bully

- Reinforcement of positive behaviours.
- Classroom Meetings.
- Support Structures.
- Ongoing monitoring of identified bullies.
- Rewards for positive behaviour.

- Consequences for staff will be individually based and may involve:
  - Counselling
  - a period of monitoring
  - a formal support group
  - disciplinary actions

5. Evaluation:
5.1. This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's five-year review cycle.

6. See Also
6.1. Appendix A – What are bullying, cyber-bullying and harassment?

6.2. Appendix B - Procedures

6.3. Appendix C – Reporting template

6.4. Appendix D – Formal referral of student who has bullied / harassed other to the Student Welfare Officer.

Revision History

Date	Description	Author
25/08/2015	Ratified by School Council	Environment SC
28/06/2016	Add Revision History, Version Number and Valid To date	Environment SC
19/08/2019	Approved and endorsed by School, Council	Environment SC

Appendix A

Why do we have a Policy on these?

To provide a safe and friendly school environment for students and staff and to encourage care, courtesy and respect for others. All persons have a legal right to protection from harassment under the *Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act* and the *Victorian Equal Opportunity Act.*

What are Bullying, Cyber Bullying and Harassment?

What Bullying is Not

Many distressing behaviours are *not* examples of bullying even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management. There are three socially unpleasant situations that are often confused with bullying:

Mutual Conflict

In mutual conflict situations, there is an argument or disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the problem. However, unresolved mutual conflict sometimes develops into a bullying situation with one person becoming targeted repeatedly for 'retaliation' in a one-sided way.

Social Rejection or Dislike

Unless the social rejection is directed towards someone specific and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others, it is not bullying.

Single-episode acts of nastiness or meanness, or random acts of aggression or intimidation

Single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If a student is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied.

Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different students is not the same as bullying.

Bullying

"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."[1]

Types of Bullying

There are three broad categories of bullying:

1. **Direct physical bullying** – e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.
2. **Direct verbal bullying** – e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.
3. **Indirect bullying** – this form of bullying is harder to recognise and often carried out behind the bullied student's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Indirect bullying includes:

   - lying and spreading rumours
   - playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
   - mimicking
   - encouraging others to socially exclude someone
   - damaging someone's social reputation and social acceptance
   - cyber-bullying, which involves the use of electronic means to humiliate and distress

Bullying can involve

- grabbing, aggressive staring, hitting, pinching, kicking, pushing and shoving
- publicly excluding a person from your group
- knocking a person's books or belongings out of their hands or off their desk
- teasing a person because of their looks

Cyber-bullying

Consists of covert, psychological bullying, conveyed through any electronic medium such as cell-phones, web-logs and web-sites, on-line chat rooms, 'MUD' rooms (multi-user domains where individuals take on different characters) and Xangas (on-line personal profiles where some adolescents create lists of people they do not like). It is verbal (over the telephone or mobile phone), or written (flaming, threats, racial, sexual or homophobic harassment) using the various mediums available.

Cyber-bullying can involve

- *Flaming* – online fights using electronic messages with angry or vulgar messages
- *Harassment* – repeatedly sending nasty, mean and insulting messages
- *Denigration* – posting or sending gossip or rumours about a person to damage his/her reputation or friendships
- *Outing* – sharing someone's secrets or embarrassing information or images online

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[1] www.education.vic.gov.au

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- *Exclusion* – intentionally and cruelly excluding someone from an online group
- *Cyber-stalking* – repeated, intense harassment and denigration that includes threats or creates significant fear

Harassment

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

Harassment is usually directed at a person because of their gender, race, creed or abilities – it can be subtle or explicit

Subtle (the most common) they include:

- offensive staring and leering
- unwanted comments about physical appearance and sexual preference
- racist or smutty comments or jokes
- questions about another's sexual activity
- persistent comments about a person's private life or family
- physical contact e.g. purposely brushing up against another's body
- offensive name calling

Explicit (obvious) they include:

- grabbing, aggressive hitting, pinching and shoving, etc
- unwelcome patting, touching, embracing
- repeated requests for dates, especially after refusal
- offensive gestures, jokes, comments, letters, phone calls or e-mail
- sexually and/or racially provocative remarks
- displays of sexually graphic material – pornography
- requests for sexual favours
- extreme forms of sexual harassment

What are the effects of Bullying and Harassment?

- poor health - anxiety, depression
- lower self esteem
- reduced study performance
- missed classes, social withdrawal
- reduced career prospects

What are some of the feelings victims of bullying or harassment may experience?

- **"I will ignore it and it will go away."**
  If anything it will make things worse - you will give the impression that you agree with the situation.
- **"I don't want to cause trouble."**
  Most causes of harassment are sorted out quite simply. By speaking up, action can be taken to address the problem.
- **"Am I to blame?"**
  Victims of harassment or bullying sometimes feel that it is their fault. Victims are made to feel guilty by the offender and often blame themselves. It is your right to have a safe environment free from harassment or bullying.

- **"Am I imagining things?"**
  Often our hunches are correct. Rather than put up with nagging doubts, talk to someone about your feelings.

Bullying or harassment can often make people feel:

- embarrassed or ashamed
- offended or humiliated
- intimidated or frightened
- uncomfortable

Am I bullying or harassing someone?

If you are not sure about your behaviour you can:
- check it out by asking if it is offensive or inappropriate
- stop it
- apologise
- take it seriously if someone says they are feeling uncomfortable
- talk it over with an adviser or somebody who has an understanding of the issues

What should you do if you see another person being bullied or harassed?

Tell the person being bullied that you witnessed the incident and advise them to report it to an appropriate person. Let them know that you are willing to provide information on what you saw if required.

However, if your friend is harassing another person, let them know that their behaviour is unacceptable.

Bystanders who <u>do nothing</u> *to stop bullying may be contributing to the problem by providing an audience for the bully.*

What can you do if you are being bullied or harassed?

- Tell the person you don't like what they are doing and you want them to stop
- Discuss the matter with your teacher, Student Welfare Coordinator/Chaplain, friend, classmate or student leader.
- The school will take your concerns seriously - all complaints will be treated confidentially.

Appendix B

Procedures for responding to a student who bullies or harasses others

Level 1

If the bullying or harassment incident is minor or first time occurrence, teachers may elect to use one or more of the following anti-bullying practices:

- stopping the bullying/re-statement of rules and consequences
- restorative questioning
- think time detention
- private conference
- shared control discussion

Level 2

If the bullying or harassment continues, or in instances of severe bullying or harassing, a referral should be made to the principal who may:

- meet with the student to develop a behaviour contract
- provide discussion/mentoring of different social and emotional learning competencies including structured learning activities
- conduct a restorative conference separately with the perpetrator and "target"

If the student does not take control over his/her behaviour, an **Incident of Bullying/Harassment Report Form (Appendix C)** should be completed and submitted to the principal or student welfare coordinator.

Level 3

For 'at risk' students (many risk factors, few protective factors) whose bullying or harassing behaviour is severe and for other non-at risk students whose bullying or harassing and other aggressive behaviour is resistant to change, an individual 'strength building' plan should be developed by the principal in consultation with student, parents/carers and teachers. Individual strength-building plans and associated interventions help connect the student to positive people, programs and actions in the community, school and home as well as develop the student's inner social and emotional strengths (skills, values and beliefs).

If the student does not take control over his/her behaviour at this point, a **Formal Referral of Bullying/Harassment Report Form (Appendix D)** should be completed and submitted to the principal or student welfare coordinator.

Level 4

Students whose severe bullying or harassing behaviour resists school efforts and represents a significant threat to the safety and wellbeing should be referred to outside agencies for evaluation. The principal will need to be familiar with those community agencies and organisations that can offer more intensive services to the student and student's family.

Note: The school may choose, if bullying or harassment persists or the initial incident is of such magnitude, that parents/carers will be contacted and consequences implemented consistent with the school's Student Code of Conduct. Furthermore, the principal may commence formal disciplinary action in line with '*Effective Schools are Engaging Schools - Student Engagement Policy Guidelines'* (DET) at any stage in the process depending on contextual information relating to the severity of the bullying (including-cyber bullying) and harassment.

Respect   **Learning**   **Teamwork**   **Perseverance**

Appendix C

Incident of bullying / harassment

Staff member recording incident: _____

Date _____ / _____ / _____

Name of student(s) who appears to have instigated bullying

_____

Year/Class: _____

Name(s) of target(s) _____

_____

Name(s) of witnesses _____

_____

Did you observe the incident?   YES ☐   NO ☐

If 'NO' who reported the incident to you? _____

Brief description of incident (what was allegedly said or done to the student who appears to have been bullied?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What form(s) of bullying took place?

Verbal ☐   Physical ☐   Indirect ☐   Cyber ☐

Other ☐   Please detail: _____

Was the incident of bullying: Mild   ☐   Severe ☐

Describe how you responded (Did you use a school anti-bullying practice?)

_____

_____

_____

Describe how student responded to your intervention

_____

_____

_____

Where / when / time incident took place:

Location: _____

When: before school ☐ recess ☐   lunch ☐   in class ☐   after school ☐

Time:___ am/pm

Date incident took place: _ / _____ /

Additional comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

NEERIM SOUTH PRIMARY SCHOOL
Anti-bullying and harassment policy and procedures (including cyber-bullying).

Appendix D
Formal referral of student who has bullied / harassed other to principal

(This form may be completed by a classroom teacher, year level coordinator, school administrator or Student Welfare/Wellbeing Coordinator)

Staff member recording incident: _____

Date:/ __ /   Position: _____

Name of student being referred: _____

Year/Class: _____

History of incident(s) of bullying (dates, description)

_____

_____

_____

_____

Have parents/guardian been notified?   YES ☐   NO ☐

If 'NO' why not?_____

Have they attended a conference?   YES ☐   NO ☐

If 'NO' why not?_____

Are they willing to participate?   YES ☐   NO ☐

If 'NO' why not?_____

What appears to be the reason for the student's bullying behaviour (family, peer, school, personal, other)?

_____

_____

What practices have been tried?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What was the impact of these practices?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What has been the student's attitude towards student(s) who have been targets? (e.g., any concern or remorse expressed)?

_____

_____

_____

_____

A brief description of academic performance of student over past year or more.

_____

_____

_____

Distinguishing 'at risk' factors of student (e.g. limited English: economic disadvantage of family; ADHD)

_____

_____

_____