



## Anti-Bullying Policy

**At Virginia Primary School we want all students to feel safe. We strive to be a learning environment which is: *Safe, Inclusive, Conducive to learning and free from harassment and bullying***

**Therefore we take bullying seriously. This policy explains what bullying is, how to report it and what we do to try and stop it from happening.**

### At Virginia Primary School we believe that:

Bullying interferes with everyone's right to learn and feel secure.

- Bullying is an abuse of power.
- Bullying is not simply about difference. It may occur because of people's inability to accept and value differences.
- Bullying includes racist or sexual harassment or any other form of discriminatory behaviour.
- Bullying is everyone's business.
- Bullying can involve violence.

### A definition of bullying

Bullying is deliberate, hurtful gestures, words or actions, which are repeatedly used towards another person over time. It is repeated, unjustifiable behaviour that may be physical, verbal and/ or psychological. It is an abuse of power intended to cause fear, distress or harm to others.

### School related bullying can include:

Teasing, hair pulling, gossiping, threatening, stealing, pushing, shoving, excluding, isolating or intimidating through insults, gestures and sexist, racist, homophobic or other remarks.

### Examples of bullying are:

- Leaving people out of conversations often.
- Being repeatedly hit or kicked.
- Spreading rumours.
- Making jokes at someone else's expense.
- Taking others belongings.
- Being a bystander and watching or encouraging bullying by others is also unacceptable. This school does not accept that it is ok to stand by and watch a fight or intimidation of others.
- Bullying through electronic technology.

(Please refer to our Cyber-bullying Policy for more information.)

### All bullying is wrong and must be stopped

Our school has a Behaviour Code that supports student safety.

### If you are bullied this is what you should do:

- In the first instance try to ignore the insults by walking away with your head up high.
- Do not answer back with verbal or physical violence.
- If safe, tell the person to stop the behaviour.
- Tell someone you can trust.
- If you are a witness to bullying immediately refer what has happened to an adult.
- Bystanders - helpful bystanders report and support. Being an unhelpful bystander by watching or encouraging bullying of other is also unacceptable.

### Who to report it to

If you have been bullied you need to tell someone you can trust so that they can help you.

## How to report

Tell the trusted adult what has happened, where the bullying happened, how often it has happened and what you have done to try to stop it happening.

## What should parents do about bullying?

- Discuss the problem with your child. Tell your child to report it to an adult at school, **this is NOT dobbing**.
- Discuss the problem with their teacher and a member of the Leadership Team.
- Advise your child but try not to do everything in his or her place. If you take over completely your child will believe they have no skills to stop bullying. Our goal is to teach these skills to minimise repeated incidents.
- Do not encourage verbal or physical violence as a suitable means of defence.
- Do not trivialise the problem.
- Guide your child towards out of school activities. Having friendships outside of school is known to build self-confidence and resiliency levels.

## What we will do about incidents of bullying (Intervention Strategies)

- We will listen and talk to the person who has been bullied. Negotiation with the person will determine what process occurs next. It is vital that they feel empowered in order to build confidence and self-worth.
- If agreed, we may use a process called a 'restorative chat' to help those involved understand each other better and improve their relationships with each other OR use another proactive strategy. We will use our school values of **Respect, Caring, Fairness, Achievement and Diversity** to support the process.
- Implement consequences for those who bully, harass and/ or commit acts of violence which reflect the severity of the incident
- We will put negotiated consequences in place for the person who has been bullying others. These may include a sincere apology, a signed contract between the students involved, restricted play, time-out, take home or suspension.

## What we do at Virginia Primary School to reduce bullying

### *Prevention strategies include:*

- Using our Proactive Program's approach and the Child Protection Curriculum to teach students about respectful relationships, taking responsibility for their own actions, the importance of friendly, caring interactions with others and developing their own self-worth and that of others.
- Developing resilience by teaching students about bullying, conflict resolution, anger management and problem solving in class, in small groups or individually as required.
- Teaching for and about diversity.
- Identify and define the difference between everyday conflict and bullying and harassment
- Developing programs to help students participate and have a say in their learning (Student Voice).
- Providing professional learning for staff in techniques and resources such as Restorative Practice, Kidsmatter, Circle time, Bullying No Way and Values Education.

### *A Restorative Chat*

This is a process used to address wrongdoing at Virginia where we aim to repair relationships. Both parties firstly need to understand what has happened and who has been affected. Questions are asked of both parties:

#### To the wrongdoer

- What happened?
- Who do you think has been affected by what you did? In what way?
- What do you need to do to make things better?
- What can you do differently so that this does not happen again?

#### To the affected person

- What happened?
- How did you feel when this happened?
- How has this affected you?
- What needs to happen to make things better?
- How can we make sure this doesn't happen

We then look to the future. A sincere apology may be made and/or a consequence given in order to repair damage done to the relationship. Measures, such as a signed contract may be drawn up, aiming to guide students and prevent the bullying behaviour arising again. Students generally leave this meeting feeling optimistic that things have changed and hopeful of a better future.

We continue to monitor the safety and welfare of those involved and provide support to the families so that students can re-engage with their schooling as soon as possible. We work with parents to ensure strategies to prevent and deal with bullying are shared. Self-worth remains intact for both parties.