COLONEL LIGHT GARDENS PRIMARY SCHOOL – BULLYING AND HARRASMENT PREVENTION POLICY

(17/10/24)

Vision

Colonel Light Gardens Primary School provides a safe, supportive and connected learning environment. We promote learning success and positive wellbeing through the development of inclusive respectful relationships and proactive education around bullying and harassment.

We each have a role to play to prevent bullying and harassment; to respond when it happens and support those affected by and involved in bullying. In collaboration with families, bullying (including cyberbullying that has an impact on student wellbeing), will be investigated by the school.

Any form of bullying, including cyber bullying, harassment and violence, is not acceptable in our school. The aim of this policy is to prevent and deal with any behaviour deemed as bullying.

Below is the new nationally agreed definition of bullying, which all Australian schools now use, explains bullying as the following:

> *Bullying is the ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical, and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more personal who feel unable to stop it from happening.*

> *Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records).*

> *Bullying of any form or for any reason can have immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.*

Our Approach to Bullying Prevention

At Colonel Light Gardens Primary School, we will plan, implement and review our bullying prevention strategies. We will do this with our students, staff, families, Governing Council and local community.

We are committed to:

- creating a welcoming and inclusive school environment where everyone feels included and belongs to our school community

- promoting and modelling positive behaviours while fostering respect for diversity and inclusivity among students and families

- using consistent age-appropriate language among staff, students, parents and carers that encourages positive behaviours and social interactions

- working with the Governing Council, Sub Committees, site leadership, department staff and the local community to implement strategies and educate our community to prevent and reduce bullying.

Responsibilities in our community

Student responsibilities	Description
Build skills, knowledge and confidence	Develop the ability to recognise and respond to bullying effectively.
Participate in decision making	Engage in decisions that enhance student safety and wellbeing.
Take a stand against bullying	Speak up, intervene safely, and seek help from trusted adults when witnessing bullying.
Support friends and peers	Encourage friends to seek help from trusted adults if they experience bullying.
Seek help from trusted adults	Ask for assistance if someone's behaviour affects you or someone else's safety or right to learn.
To enquire if you are unsure about certain behaviours	Consult a trusted adult if you're unsure whether behaviour constitutes bullying.
Adhere to a zero-tolerance policy against bullying	Support and follow the school's zero tolerance policy against all forms of bullying.

Staff responsibilities	Description
Explain respectful relationships and bullying	Provide opportunities to educate students about respectful relationships, how to recognise bullying and cyberbullying, including how to recognise and respond to it.
Teach Kid Safe: Child Protection Curriculum (KS:CPC)	Implement the KS:CPC from reception to year 6, including strategies for recognising bullying, harassment, and discrimination, understanding rights and knowing actions to take.
Adhere and follow reporting and	Ensure that students have safe ways to report bullying and

responding requirements	are informed about these reporting methods. Respond to any reported incidents in accordance with the school behaviour policy.
Collaborate with students on solutions	Work with students to find solutions to bullying and involve them in decision that impact their safety and wellbeing.
Use restorative practices	Implement restorative practices to help students repair and restore relationships that have been harmed by bullying.
Participate in decision making	Engage in decisions that enhance student safety and wellbeing.
Adhere to a zero-tolerance policy against bullying	Support and follow the school's zero tolerance policy against all forms of bullying.

School leaders' responsibilities	Description
Engage in and facilitate professional development for staff and community	Provide educational opportunities for staff and community engagement.
Build skills, knowledge and confidence in staff to recognise bullying and harassment	Develop the ability to recognise and respond to bullying effectively.

Parents and caregivers' responsibilities	Description
Ensure online safety outside school hours	Monitor children's use of technology and social media at home to keep them safe online.
Educate children to identify and report bullying	Educate children on how to recognise and report bullying, and work with the school to ensure their safety.
Discuss safety issues, including bullying and cyberbullying	Talk to children about the dangers of bullying and cyberbullying, helping them understand its harm and how to respond, using consistent messages with the school.
Report concerns about bullying	Inform school staff about any concerns regarding bullying.
Support the school in addressing bullying incidents	Collaborate with the school to resolve bullying incidents and ensure children continue attending school during this process.
Support school messaging on bullying, harassment, and violence	Reinforce the school's messages regarding bullying, harassment, and violence, at home.
Seek external professional support if needed	Obtain professional support for children if additional help is required.

Bullying and harassment resolutions and reporting

Colonel Light Gardens Primary School is committed to resolving bullying issues by collaborating with students, parents, and caregivers. Bullying can be reported to any staff member or the leadership team, either via email or face-to-face. All reports will be documented and taken seriously, and our actions will focus on restoring and maintaining a safe and positive learning environment and school culture. If necessary, we will seek advice, counselling, and support from external services.

Reporting and responding to incidents of bullying and harassment

The staff member investigating the report will gather as much information as possible.

- Staff will respond to and record all allegations of bullying and harassment.
- Students directly involved will have the opportunity to be heard.
- Staff will provide support to all children while allegations and incidents are investigated and resolved.

Intervention and Support

When addressing an incident, we will determine whether it meets the definition of bullying and if it poses an immediate risk to student or staff safety. Staff may employ various strategies to address the situation.

Practices	Descriptions
Restorative practices	Engage in activities to repair relationships and resolve conflicts.
Parent or carer meeting	Organise meetings with the families of both the victim and the perpetrator to discuss the situation and agree on a way forward.
School-based consequences	Implement consequences such as loss of privileges or modified learning tasks that address behaviours of concern and encourage relationship repair.
Reflection and reset space	Utilise designated spaces during learning time or breaks for students to reflect and reset.
Limited play areas	Restrict access to certain play areas or provide additional supervision during activities.
Suspension and exclusion	Apply more serious measures such as suspension or exclusion if necessary.

Extra levels of care and support

Educators will check on all students involved in a bullying incident, ensuring all students are safe, feel heard, and that relationships have been repaired or restored. They will continue to talk to students, parents and carers about the actions taken and if these have been effective.

If families are not happy with the steps taken by the school, they can call the department's complaints management line on 1800 677 435. To ensure this policy is effective, it will be monitored and evaluated as part of the school's regular three-year cycle of policy review, where amendments will be made and submitted to the Education Sub Committee and then the Governing Council. Any changes will be communicated to the school community.

We will conduct annual bullying audits as well as the wellbeing and engagement collection data to monitor trends within our school.

Further information on Bullying and Harassment

Bullying: Ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening. Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records).

Harassment: Behaviour that targets an individual or group due to their identity, race, culture, ethnic origin; religion; physical characteristics; gender; parental or economic status; age, ability or disability. It offends, humiliates or creates a hostile environment. It may be an ongoing pattern or a single act and it can be intentional or unintentional.

Discrimination: Discrimination happens when people are treated differently to others. This can be because of their: identity, race, culture or ethnic origin; religion; physical characteristics; gender; age or ability. Discrimination interferes with people's right to fair treatment and equal opportunities.

Violence: Violence is the intentional use of physical force or power. It can be threatened or actual, against another person. It may result in psychological harm or injury. It might include provoked or unprovoked acts. It can be one incident, a random act or can happen over time.

Bullying is not: It is important to understand that bullying is not falling out with friends, name calling, arguments or when the occasional trick or joke is played, or when students are being mean on purpose. It is bullying if it is repeated and intentional. Children sometimes say things when they have friendship issues because they are upset and challenged. It is an important part of children's development to learn how to deal with friendship breakdowns, changes and dynamics, through developing social skills to help with communication of feelings and the restoration of relationships.

Upstander: An upstander is someone who speaks or acts in support of an individual or cause, particularly someone who appropriately intervenes on behalf of a person being bullied.

Effects of bullying and harassment

The elimination of bullying and harassment at Colonel Light Gardens Primary School is everyone's responsibility. A person who is bullied (the recipient or target) is not the sole victim as bullying affects everyone in the community. For example:

- The student who is bullied and their family, suffer emotional and physical distress.

- No one is safe while bullying is happening. Bullying creates a climate of intimidation and fear where effective learning can't take place.

- Students who are aware of bullying, but do nothing about it, may feel guilty, ashamed and powerless.

Bullying and harassment can cause physical and psychological harm. Physical harm can include injury and theft or damage to belongings. Psychological harm can include anxiety, school refusal, lack of interest in school, isolation and depression. Psychological harm can be long lasting.

Students who bully and the bystanders can:

- Become desensitised to cruelty and injustice

- Fail to develop social responsibility

- Can create a pattern of bullying into adulthood

- Affect the way the school is perceived in the community,

- Affect the way the bully/bystander is perceived in the community.

Types of bullying and harassment

Emotional: being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding equipment, threatening gestures), ridicule, humiliation.

Verbal: verbal abuse, name calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, or threats.

Physical: hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching, pushing or damaging and stealing belongings.

Social: social exclusion, lying, spreading rumours, unkind facial expressions or body language, mean and condescending looks, playing jokes to embarrass and humiliate, mimicking and damaging someone's reputation or social relationships.

Cyberbullying: is online bullying. It uses technology, including social media platforms. Verbal and social bullying can be cyberbullying when they occur online. Cyber bullying includes:

- abusive and hurtful messages

- videos and images, including images that have been changed and AI generated images

- sharing personal images and videos without consent

- pretending to be someone else online to be hurtful

An Educator's Guide to Cyberbullying and Cyber Threats defines cyberbullying in these different forms:

Harassment: repeatedly sending nasty, mean and insulting messages.

Denigration: Sending or posting gossip or rumours about a person to damage their reputation or friendships.

Flaming: online fights using electronic messaging with angry and vulgar language.

Impersonation: pretending to be someone else and sending/posting material to get that person in trouble or to damage their friendships or reputation.

Outing: sharing someone's secrets or embarrassing information or images online.

Trickery: talking someone into revealing secrets or embarrassing information, and then sharing it online.

Exclusion: Intentionally and cruelly excluding someone from an online group.

Cyberstalking: repeated, intense harassment and denigration that includes threats or creates significant fear.

What makes cyberbullying so different from in-person bullying?

Cyberbullying presents unique challenges because it is often anonymous and can occur at any time and place, providing the recipient with little respite from the abuse. The anonymity can lead to disinhibition, where individuals who might not typically engage in bullying behaviours do so, potentially reaching a wide audience and further isolating the target. Cyberbullying frequently involves repeated aggression and an imbalance of power, leaving the target feeling trapped and unable to escape the abuse.

Signs and symptoms of bullying and harassment

A child may indicate, by different signs or behaviour, that they are being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and investigate further if a child:

- Suddenly does not wish to attend school

- Regularly feels unwell

- Does not complete work to their normal standard

- Becomes withdrawn and isolated

These signs and behaviours can indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be taken seriously.

Sources of further information, support and help

There is a wealth of resources and guidance on bullying, and wellbeing strategies, that offer significant support for teachers, parents, and children. Here's a brief selection of helpful tools and strategies that have proven beneficial.

https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/bullying

Interactive resources for children and families, including support.

https://www.counsellingconnection.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/MY-CHILD-BEING-BULLIED.pdf

My Child Being Bullied: A life Effectiveness Guide: Australian Institute of Professional Counsellors

https://www.vic.gov.au/bully-stoppers

Lots of materials and information for families.

https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/

Evidence informed resources and activities.

Wellbeing

https://beyou.edu.au/

Knowledge, tools and resources to creative positive and inclusive behaviours.

Cyber safety

https://www.commonsense.org/education/digital-citizenship/curriculum

Toolkits for parents in the resource section.

https://www.esafety.gov.au/

Australia's independent regulator for online safety.

https://www.esafety.gov.au/parents

Resources for parents and caregivers.