

MACCLESFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL BULLYING and HARASSMENT POLICY

Wellbeing is a focus of Macclesfield Primary School. We all have a right to be respected and a responsibility to respect each other as we strive to develop a safe and supportive learning community at Macclesfield Primary School.

Bullying and harassment are not acceptable in such an environment. Macclesfield Primary School is committed to preventing and eliminating bullying in all its forms. We do this by teaching students skills, which foster respect for self and others through embedding **our school values of respect, responsibility, success, caring and safety** in all that we do.

All students have the right to be listened to and be heard and to know that steps will be taken to resolve any reported problems, incidents or issues.

What is bullying?

Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. Cyber bullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies such as internet and mobile phones.

Conflicts or fights between equals and single incidents are not defined as bullying.

Bullying in any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved including bystanders.

What is harassment?

Harassment is behaviour that targets an individual or group due to their identity, race, culture or ethnic origin; religion; physical characteristics; gender; sexual orientation; marital, parenting or economic status; age; ability or disability and that offends, humiliates, intimidates or creates a hostile environment.

Harassment may be an ongoing pattern of behaviour or it may be a single act.

Some examples of bullying or harassment include:

- teasing
- name calling and 'put-downs'
- spreading rumours
- making threats
- excluding people from activities/groups
- physical aggression such as shoving, hitting, throwing things at someone
- anti-social behaviour such as spitting, swearing
- pushing, damaging or hiding someone's property
- threatening or offensive gestures
- threatening or offensive SMS, emails or social media (see links to DECD policy)
- mocking people because of their disability, race, gender or sex
- sexual harassment
- bystander bullying

Children who are being bullied or harassed may display the following signs and symptoms:

Emotional

- personality changes
- mood swings: angry or tearful outbursts
- disturbed sleep (bedwetting in the case of younger children)
- signs of depression and low self esteem
- psychosomatic complaints: headaches, stomach aches

Physical

- nervous tics and cowed body-language
- overeating or under eating
- self harm
- signs of bruising, cuts and torn clothing

Social

- withdrawal from family and friends
- reluctance to join in social activities

Behavioural

- truancy
- school reluctance
- misbehaviour in class
- change in routines to and from school

Home

- bullying or taunting of siblings
- withdrawn or aggressive behaviour towards family members
- requests for extra money and the "losing" of valuable things

Academic

- decline in work output and school grades

WHAT WE DO TO REDUCE BULLYING OR HARASSMENT.

At Macclesfield Primary we take a whole-school approach to the issue of bullying. We use prevention, intervention and post-intervention strategies.

Our intervention focuses on:

- the children involved
- the family
- the school

Prevention strategies include:

- Ensuring adequate student supervision.
- Curriculum programs that teach students about our values, respectful relationships, safety, confidence, resilience, empathy and getting along with each other. These are reinforced at the weekly assembly and in classrooms.
- Teaching students to support their peers.
- Conduct regular Bully Audits

- Analyse Peace Room data
- Teach conflict resolution strategies / assertiveness training.
- Encourage children to speak about incidents of bullying that they have witnessed
- Annually acknowledge the school's Student Code of Conduct. This is sent home at the beginning of the year and returned to the school sighted and signed by both parent and student.

Intervention strategies include:

- Counselling students.
- Talking with parents/caregivers.
- Putting consequences in place.
- Using Restorative Practices.
- Peer support, monitoring by older students.
- Observe and monitor children in the playground.
- Recording of incidents.

Post-Intervention strategies include:

- Monitoring the situation to ensure safety and well-being.
- Collecting data and reviewing policy.
- Teaching conflict resolution strategies and assertiveness training.
- Keeping parents informed if necessary

What will happen if you are bullying or harassing students?

- You may be counselled by a staff member. You may be given the opportunity to resolve the situation and discuss the issue with the person you bullied.
- Your parents/caregivers will be contacted if necessary.
- If you persist in bullying you will be referred to the principal for counselling and your parents/caregivers will be contacted again to develop a solution to the problem. An age appropriate consequences will also be applied. This may include:
 - Sit Out in the Peace Room
 - Counselling program
 - Loss of privileges
 - Take Home
 - Internal suspension
 - External suspension.
- If bullying continues your parents/caregivers, with other agencies, will be called in to discuss further action.
- Police may also be called in to investigate

What do staff members do to stop bullying and harassment?

- Have a commitment to stop bullying incidents and keep students safe
- If bullying has occurred it is recorded and parents are notified
- Intervene speedily to all witnessed or reported bullying and follow-up regularly.
- work with the child to gain their trust and discuss ways that the behaviour can be addressed with the students involved in the bullying
- explore the belief systems of the child (self-esteem issues/self protective behaviours)
- Empower victims to work out ways to help themselves

- Incorporate positive, preventative, anti-bullying strategies in their classroom programs. Adopt positive classroom management strategies
- Are positive role models to students in their behaviour and communication style.
- Are familiar with our school's Bullying Policy and how the school deals with bullying.
- Highlight our policy and procedures to students and parents/caregivers regularly.
- Ensure that all the areas of our school have a visible staff presence at breaks, when moving to a specialist teaching class area, and before and after school.
- Attend relevant behavioural management workshops where possible
- Communicate through newsletters/websites information about stopping bullying for students/parents
- Be aware of children who actively provoke bullying. These children will require more specific assistance which may include accessing outside support agencies.
- Be aware of the children who may display behaviours that could lead to bullying.

As a student, what can I do to stop bullying or harassment?

- Be courageous. If you witness bullying, don't join in. Take a stand by telling the person doing it to stop or walk away and tell an adult.
- Show care and respect for others in and outside the classroom. Make a special effort towards a student who seems lonely or who is having a hard time by inviting them into your friendship group.
- Have a variety of friends to mix with at recess or lunch time.
- If you get involved in bullying yourself, remember how it felt when someone was unkind to you. Apologise, stop it and make amends.
- Is it possible for you to help resolve the conflict?
- It is better to speak out about bullying rather than not say anything. Saying nothing will not help the person being bullied or help the bully change their behaviour.

If you are being bullied or harassed:

- Act confidently, even if you feel scared.
- Tell the person/people that you don't like what they are doing or what they are saying. Tell them to stop. Look at them directly and say confidently: 'Stop it' 'That's not OK' or 'I don't like it when
- Take a deep breath. Remind yourself that the person who is bullying has the problem, not you. Don't take it on board. Use helpful self-talk like: This is about them, not me'. Walk away.
- Tell your parents, your teacher, staff member or friend you trust. It is your right to be safe and treated with respect. Staff will help keep you safe.
- Stay away from places in the school environment that aren't comfortable for you.
- Avoid trying to get even. It often makes the problem worse.
- Your parents will be notified and kept informed of any subsequent action being taken.

THESE ARE SOME STRATEGIES THAT TEACHERS USE TO HELP THE VICTIM THAT PARENTS MIGHT FIND USEFUL

- Listen to the student and take seriously their feelings and fears.
 - Children need to release painful, negative feelings to have the energy to deal with bullying and get back a sense of power.
- Make it clear that bullying is unacceptable.
- Help students work out if and why she/he is being bullied. This empowers students and creates awareness that sometimes children of similar age can have a conflict without bullying being involved.
- Resist taking full control of any incident of bullying, unless it is an emergency, because this is likely to make the student feel less in control.
- Help the student to work out what ideas she/he has about coping.
 - Write them down.
 - Then talk with the student about which ones might help or not help and why.
 - Choose an idea that the student would like to try and then practice what to do when she/he is bullied.
 - Help the student to check out how it works.
- If the bullying is verbal teasing the student may be able to be helped to learn to “bounce back” from it, so the child who is doing the bullying does not get any satisfaction out of it.
- Some students are helped by imagining a special force field around them to protect them from the hard words that will bounce off.
- Work on improving the student’s confidence by concentrating on the things she/he can do well.
- Talk to the student about how she/he can reduce their risk of being bullied while recognising that the bully is in the wrong (the student needs to be safe, but should not have to change her/his life to avoid being bullied).
- Do not bully the bully.
- Be aware of group dynamics and how social networks can positively (and negatively) influence behaviour of students. Peers can be effective in resolving conflicts.

Ways that PARENTS or a TRUSTED ADULT maybe able to help if a child is being bullied or harassed or participating in behaviour that is leading to others being bullied or harassed.

Build Her/His Self Confidence

- By recognising and affirming her/his positive qualities - by valuing her/him for who he or she is.

Take an active interest:

- In your child’s social life.
- In what is happening at school.
- ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD:
 - to bring friends home.
 - to accept and tolerate differences in others.

Discuss With Your Child

- The school’s expectations about behaviour.
- Ways to respond if her/his rights are infringed.

Encourage constructive responses

- Physical bullying or persistent teasing should be reported.
- Hitting back or retaliating with name calling won’t solve the problem.

Set an example

- Be firm but not aggressive in setting limits.
- Be positive in the things you say and do.

Be alert for signs of distress

- Unwillingness to attend school.
- Dropping off in the quality of school work.
- Damaged clothing or frequent loss of personal property.
- Loss of confidence or mood changes.
- Withdrawal from social activities.
- Self harm

Act

- If your child is being bullied at school, discuss the issue with the class teacher or the principal and keep them informed of any further subsequent issues.
- Read the schools policies and information from DECD
- be aware of the home environment and how this may influence the situation
- attend a parenting workshop
- look for workshops that may assist your child (eg building self-esteem and dealing with conflict)
- if threats are being received on your phone or computer report them to the police

LINKS

Here are some other agencies and reference material that you may find useful to read:

Agencies and websites:

Department of Child Education and Development www.decd.sa.gov.au

Parenting SA (www.parentingsa.gov.au) and Parent Helpline 1300 364 100

Head Room www.headroom.net.au

Books:

Boys in Schools: Addressing the real issues behaviour, values and relationships.
Editors Rollo Browne and Richard Fletcher

Queen Bees & Wannabes. Helping your daughter survive cliques, gossip, boyfriends and other realities of adolescence. Rosalind Wiseman

Bullying in Schools: What to do about it. Ken Rigby