6.6.1 Junior School Bullying Prevention Policy

Introduction

Pittwater House Junior School recognises its duty to provide students with a safe and positive learning environment where individual differences and diversity are respected and accepted. We believe every student has the right to be free from any form of bullying. Bullying is not an acceptable behaviour. It is not condoned or trivialised at Pittwater House. Every Pittwater House Junior School student has the right to be treated as a unique individual. In turn, they must acknowledge through their attitude and actions, the duty to respect the rights of others. This Bullying Prevention Policy sets out the structures and strategies relating to the prevention of bullying and our intervention if incidents of bullying do occur. It is designed to prevent incidents of bullying and also provides structures and strategies whereby any incidents of bullying made known to the School are dealt with promptly and the outcomes achieved are in the best interests of all involved.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical, psychological and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more persons. Bullying can happen in person or online, and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert).

Bullying has 3 main features:

- It involves a misuse of power in a relationship.
- It is ongoing and repeated; and
- It involves behaviours that can cause harm.

There are various categories of bullying –

Physical Bullying:
This involves repeated physical actions such as hitting, pushing, obstructing or intimidation. Damaging, stealing, or hiding personal belongings is also a form of physical bullying.

Psychological Bullying:
This is when words or actions are used in a manner that causes psychological harm. Examples of psychological bullying include repeated name calling, teasing, or making fun of someone because of their actions, appearance, physical characteristics, or cultural background.

Social Bullying:
This is when deliberate acts of repeated exclusion from participation in play or spreading of untrue stories are used to hurt or intimidate.

Cyber Bullying:
This is the repeated use of technology to threaten, embarrass, socially exclude, harass, or harm another person. It can include using social media to spread rumours, send inappropriate or abusive texts and comments, as well as sending photographic material of others. Cyber bullying can occur in chat rooms, on social networking sites, through emails or on mobile phones.

What Bullying Is Not

There are many negative situations which, whilst being potentially distressing for students and others, would not constitute bullying. These include:

Situations of Mutual conflict. This would arise when there is a disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. However, we note that mutual conflict situations need to be closely monitored as they may evolve into a bullying situation.

One Off Acts. Whilst we acknowledge that these situations can be distressing for those involved or witnessing the incident, it would not constitute bullying. These incidents may include emotional dysregulation and inappropriate behaviour where there is a loss of temper, aggression, thoughtlessness, inappropriate jokes or humour, carelessness, shouting or swearing.

Potential Signs of Bullying

Changes in a student's behaviour may be a sign that they have experienced or are experiencing bullying. These may include:

- Crying at night and/or having nightmares
- When asked what's wrong, refusal to talk or give any explanation for their distressed state
- Any unexplained bruises, cuts, or scratches
- An unwillingness or refusal to go to school
- Reports of feeling ill in the morning
- Belongings being damaged or missing belongings
- A decline in the quality of student's schoolwork
- Student asking for extra money without giving a valid reason
- Student becoming more withdrawn and losing confidence
- Student, at times, displaying bullying behaviours towards younger siblings
- Student acting unreasonably or having greater difficulties coping with challenges they previously were able to manage
- Demonstrating regression in one or more areas of development

Parents/carers are encouraged to identify and recognise potential signs of bullying and notify the school through a trusted staff member immediately (eg: Tell the class teacher, Tell the teacher on duty, Tell the Wellbeing teachers, Tell the School Counsellor).

Reporting Bullying

Students and their parents/carers are sometimes reluctant to report bullying incidents for fear it will make the matters worse. A key part of Pittwater House Junior School's Bullying Prevention Policy is to encourage reporting of bullying incidents as well as providing assurance to students and parents/carers who experience bullying that:

- Bullying is not acceptable within the School community.
- The student's and parent's concerns will be taken seriously; and
- The School has a clear strategy for dealing with issues of bullying.

Bullying incidents can be advised to the School verbally or in writing through any of the following avenues:

- To the child's teacher; -
- School Counsellor; or
- Head of Wellbeing

The School's Response to Bullying

Bullying behaviours can vary and, as a consequence, each incident needs to be dealt with based on individual circumstances. However, in all circumstances, the School:

- Regards bullying incidents seriously,
- Provides assurance to the victim that confidentiality will be respected,
- Allocates time and resources to investigate the situation and gather information, including discussing the event with the victim, the alleged bully and any possible witnesses,
- Due consideration given to understand any concerns of individuals involved,
- Creates a specific Safety Plan for the student experiencing the bullying,
- Creates a specific Intervention Plan for the student who has displayed the bullying behaviour,
- Maintains confidential records of reported bullying incidents,
- Will escalate its response when dealing with persistent bullying behaviour and/or severe incidents,
- Notifies and consults with all respective parents/carers,
- Deals appropriately and firmly with those engaging in bullying,
- Aims for the restoration of respectful and safe relationships,
- Takes into consideration individual circumstances and context,
- Offers counselling options to the students involved in the incidents of bullying,
- Implements effective follow up strategies.

For persistent or severe bullying, the School may:

- Respond with disciplinary action at the Head of School's discretion including suspension and expulsion of persistent bullying,
- Request cooperation with the parents /carers of the student who has displayed bullying behaviours for external specialist support, and
- Contact external authorities such as: Police Liaison Officer, Student's psychologist etc

Bullying Prevention Strategies

Pittwater House Junior School recognises that the implementation of whole-school prevention strategies is the most effective way of eliminating, or at least minimising incidents of bullying within our community.

The following initiatives form part of our overall bullying prevention and intervention strategy to create a 'no bullying' culture at Pittwater House Junior School, but rather a culture of kindness and respect through:

- A structured curriculum that provides age-appropriate information and skills relating to bullying (including cyber-bullying) and bullying prevention, over the course of the academic year.
- The inclusion of the "URSTRONG" Program, supported by The Friendship Journal, delivered by the grade teachers, and at times, the School Counsellor.
- A consistent whole-school approach enabling the students, teachers, and parents to use the common language to support students.
- A skills-based strategy that empowers students to self-govern and make healthy choices in their relationships.
- Student friendly language and pedagogy that promotes learning, retention and application of knowledge and skills.
- A proactive system that teaches interpersonal skills and conflict resolution at an early age.
- Education, training, and professional development of staff in bullying prevention and response strategies.
- Regular provision of information to parents/carers to raise awareness of bullying as a school community issue.

- Equip parents/carers to recognise signs of bullying, as well as provide them with clear paths for raising any concerns relating to bullying directly with the school.
- Promotion of a supportive environment and safe school culture, that encourages the development of positive relationships and communication between staff, students, and parents/carers.
- Promotion of responsible upstander behaviour amongst students, staff, and parents/carers.
- Encouraging reporting of incidents of alleged bullying by students, upstanders, parents/carers and staff.
- Risk assessments of bullying within the School are undertaken by surveying students to identifying bullying issues that may ordinarily go unnoticed.
- Records of reported bullying incidents are maintained and analysed in order to identify persistent bullies and/or victims and to implement targeted prevention strategies where appropriate.
- Review of issues of concern at weekly Pastoral /Grade/Stage Meetings and weekly M2L's.
- Friend-O-Meter and other posters displayed strategically within the School and classrooms. - Promotion of student awareness and a 'no-bullying' environment across the School.
- Students provided with opportunities to develop positive attitudes and the Schools' HEROIC Values.
- Students engage in discussions about acceptance and understanding of others and their personal needs in learning spaces, the playground, and in other aspects of school-life.
- Staff act as positive role models, demonstrating our no-bullying culture in action.
- Ensure every member of the School community is aware of what constitutes bullying and what does not constitute bullying.
- Communication of this Policy to all Pittwater House Junior School stakeholders.
- Bullying prevention and intervention strategies are reviewed against best practice; and
- Provide opportunity for ongoing consultation and feedback from all stakeholders in relation to the effectiveness of this Policy.

Useful Anti-Bullying Websites

Bullying. No Way! https://bullyingnoway.gov.au

National Centre Against Bullying www.ncab.org.au

Australian Federal Police 'Think U Know' www.thinkuknow.org.au www.kenrigby.net

Kids Help Line https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/bullying

URSTRONG www.urstrong.com

Junior School Bullying Prevention Framework (link here)

Related Policies
The K-2 Behaviour Management Policy
The 3-6 Behaviour Management Policy
The Junior School Child Safe Policy

Version	Revision Details	Revised by:	Authorised by:	Date:
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3	Replaces old policy	A. Tickle	JSW	30 Aug 2023