

BULLYING

POLICY

Information for students, teachers, staff and parents:

Wodonga West Primary School is committed to providing an environment which is free from bullying and safe and happy for all members of the school community. This policy governs all members of our school community.

Bullying is viewed by Wodonga West Primary School as unacceptable behaviour. It makes everyone feel uncomfortable and denies them a fair go both in and out of the classroom.

Any reports of bullying will be taken seriously and will be investigated thoroughly.

Wodonga West Primary School recognises that everyone has a legal right to feel, and be, safe from bullying.

What is bullying:

Bullying is when someone deliberately and repeatedly hurts or frightens someone else. Bullying can be verbal, physical, racial or sexual conduct which is unwelcome, uninvited, unreciprocated, offensive, intentional and/or repeated.

No bullying is acceptable. No incident is too small to warrant complaint. Remember you may not be the only person feeling uncomfortable.

Types of bullying:

There are three broad categories of bullying:

DIRECT PHYSICAL BULLYING: this form includes hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property, physically threatening, giving intimidating looks

DIRECT VERBAL BULLYING: this form includes name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, or verbal abuse

INDIRECT BULLYING: this form of bullying is harder to recognise and often carried out behind the bullied person'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 and cyber bullying.

CYBER BULLYING is defined as "Bullying that is carried out through an internet service, such as email, chatroom, discussion group or instant messaging. It can also include bullying through mobile phone technologies such as short messaging service (SMS). Examples of cyberbullying include teasing, spreading rumours online, sending unwanted messages of defamation".

(www.netalert.gov.au)

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:

1. **Mutual Conflict:** 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.

2. Social rejection or dislike: unless 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.
3. Single episode acts: 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.

Aims:

- To reinforce within the school community what bullying is, and the fact that it is unacceptable.
- 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.
- To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up appropriately and that support is given to both victims and perpetrators.
- To seek parental and peer-group support and co-operation at all times.

Effects of Bullying:

- Bullying interferes with the rights of others and can cause severe personal distress and lowered self esteem.
- Bullying may affect school work and people's health.

Procedures for Dealing with Bullying:

Wodonga West PS has procedures to deal with bullying.

- Bullying should be reported to a trusted teacher or adult. An incident report will be filled out and the information is entered on our computer tracking program.
- The Action Plan (attached) will be followed. There will be a warning, discussion (to confirm story, and consequence. The consequence will be dependent on the nature of the incident.
- Confidentiality will be respected.
- If bullying is established, parents will be notified. Bullying may result in suspension.
- Counselling may be arranged if needed for students.

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed with student, parent and community input as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in....

November 2009

References: Circular 41/2002 VicHealth Publicity for Partnership Campaign Together We Do Better: Department Participation
www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/bullying/index.htm

Safe Schools are effective Schools DE&T publ'n May 2006