OakwoodSchool
Learning, Respect and Empowerment

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Introduction

Oakwood School seeks to protect its community members and nurture a culture where individual's learning and thinking are valued as a lifelong process of growth through which they become active, responsible and caring members of a changing society.

Oakwood School recognizes that bullying occurs to some extent in all schools. Research has demonstrated the long-term social and emotional impact of bullying, both for those who are being bullied and for those students who bully others. The intention of this policy is to provide an outline of the school's response to the prevention of bullying, and the promotion of well-being.
All staff have a duty of care to the children of this school, and therefore all staff are responsible for reporting incidents of bullying and harassment.

Oakwood School is very proactive around bullying. Many students come to Oakwood School because of the impact of bullying in other schools, so our classroom culture, our values and instructional practice limits any opportunity for bullying to occur.

Definition

Bullying is a repeated, unjustifiable behaviour that may be physical, verbal, and/or psychological that is intended to cause fear, distress or harm to another. It is conducted by a more powerful individual or group against a less powerful individual who is unable to effectively resist.

Bullying can come in many forms:

Physical Bullying: Physical bullying includes pushing, shoving, fighting, pinching and any other unwelcome physical contact used intentionally to intimidate or hurt someone

Verbal Bullying: Verbal bullying includes name-calling, offensive language, putting people down behind their backs.

Sexual Bullying: Including touching or brushing against one in a sexual manner, sexually oriented jokes, drawings of, or writing about someone's body, using rude names or commenting about someone's morals, unwanted invitations of a sexual nature, asking questions about someone's private life

Racial Bullying: Including name calling based on a person's race or culture

Homophobic Bullying: Bullying, harassment or discrimination on the basis of a person's sexual identity, sexual preference, sexual orientation or sexual behaviour

Telephonic: Repeatedly telephoning a targeted students home with the intention to harass or cause discomfort, or providing text-messages that threaten, hurt or intimidate

Cyber - Bullying: Is a form of bullying which is carried out through an internet service such as email, chat room, discussion group, online social networking, instant messaging or web pages. It can also include bullying through mobile phone technologies such as SMS. It may

involve text or images (photos, drawings. Examples of cyberbullying behaviour are:

- teasing and being made fun of
- spreading of rumours online
- sending unwanted messages
- defamation.

Cyberbullying can happen to anyone and the bully can act anonymously. People can also be bullied online by groups of people such as class groups or collective members of an online community.

Exclusion: Leaving others out on purpose, "freezing out" individuals to make them feel as though they don't exist, rumour mongering, or providing social invitations in front of, but not to the bullied student

Extortion: Physically stronger and more powerful students may bully others into giving up possessions, buying food and drink, doing schoolwork for them.

Oakwood School recognizes that the school environment is the most important setting for socialization outside of the home. As young people shift from being primarily family focused to defining themselves in relation to the peer group, their social experiences at school are crucial for their sense of well-being.

The School is committed to increasing the skills of students in coping strategies, problem solving and social skills. It aims to encourage:

- Open communication about bullying
- Adaptive responses to being bullied
- Peer support for students who are being bullied
- Peer discouragement of bullying behaviour.

There are a number of validated principles of successful practice to reduce bullying in schools. The School has identified a number of these and have adopted the following Health Promoting School Model Practices.

Policy and Practice
It is the responsibility of the School community to ensure that each individual feels safe and supported. Management and classroom practices should enhance a positive social environment and hence reduce the likelihood of bullying occurring. The school is committed to treating reports of bullying with clear and consistent action. To ensure the policy's effective implementation,
- Community awareness of the impact of bullying needs to be maintained at a high level, recognizing that everybody has a part to play in prevention and management of the issues around bullying.
- If bullying occurs, the best method of addressing the issue will be identified drawing on a range of strategies including
  - Method of shared concern
  - Regular SSG's and Care Team Meetings and referral to mental health services
  - Cognitive restructuring
  - Restorative justice
  - Social skill development
  - Mediation conciliation

- Practical strategies
- Visualization

Care Teams/ Wellbeing Team

Communications channels should be broad to ensure multi-disciplinary and multi-faceted approach to managing bullying incidents. This may include case conferences, well-being team meetings and use of outside agencies

Further information and resources

Please refer to Oakwood School's Student Engagement and Student Wellbeing Policy for further information regarding Student Safety. This can be found on the Oakwood School website www.oakwoodschool.vic.edu.au or obtained from the school office.

Complaints

Should any member of the school community wish to lodge a complaint, this will be done in accordance with Departmental Policy and Guidelines- Addressing parent concerns and complaints effectively.

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis following analysis of school data on reported incidents of, and responses to bullying to ensure that this policy remains up to date, practical and effective.

Review cycle

This policy was last updated May 2018 and is scheduled for review in May 2019.