

BULLYING PREVENTION AND RESPONSE POLICY

Rationale

The Otumoetai Intermediate School Board seeks to develop high standards of behaviour in order to fulfil the charter expectation and the requirements of NAG 5 of developing a safe, physical, emotional, caring and inclusive environment so that effective teaching and learning can take place.

As part of the National Administration Guidelines requirements, our school will have a bullying prevention policy in place. It is about having a whole school approach that includes staff, students, school management, BOT, parents and whānau.

Policy

All bullying behaviour, including verbal, physical, emotional and cyber bullying is completely unacceptable in our School. All instances of bullying (alleged or observed) will be taken seriously and followed up in line with this policy.

The School is committed to ensuring that all staff and students are able to work and learn in an environment free from harassment so that they are able to meet their potential.

Definition

Bullying covers a range of behaviour which is unwelcome, unsolicited and non-reciprocal.

- Non-sexual harassment may take many forms including:
intimidation or bullying of individuals or groups verbally and/or
- Physically, including threats of harassment or discrimination against others on the basis of their race, colour, culture or religious/spiritual beliefs, discrimination against others on the basis of gender or sexual orientation, indirect harassment such as spreading rumours, harmful gossip, exclusion or deliberate rudeness that is intended to harm, ridicule, diminish or marginalise others.
- Inappropriate use of emails, mobile phones or social media.
- The creation of pages or websites that encourage or facilitate any form of harassment.
- Sharing images of others (manipulated or not manipulated) without explicit consent.

Education, Publicity and Prevention

A whole-school approach is taken to ensure a safe school environment. The approach is expected to be long-term and sustainable.

All members of the school have a responsibility to recognise bullying and to take action when they are aware it is happening.

The School's philosophy about harassment and the range of remedies available will be made explicit to students, staff and parents in the following ways.

Students, through:

- the Health programme.
- special guidance programmes such as Anti-Bullying through Assemblies.
- clear and explicit standards set by teachers in their individual classrooms.
- homeroom Activities.
- awareness of digital citizenship and acceptable use of ICT Policy that they are required to sign prior to use.
- peer support, school leaders and other student lead groups.
- through these programs students will be encouraged to report harassment / bullying that occurs inside or outside the school. (when it impacts on safety and learning in the school)
- they will be given clear options as to who they can approach including staff, senior students and parents.
- observers of harassment will be encouraged to report incidents.

Staff, through:

- using good data systems to collect relevant information.
- staff training including such principles as Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L).
- dealing with students with Special Needs.
- professional development.
- a staff meeting will be held annually to discuss the issue and to review strategies and remedial approaches.
- monitoring the adherence to the 'Use of ICT Policy'.

Parents / Caregivers, through:

- school communication eg, Newsletter, Website, Facebook page.
- parent meetings.
- parent courses.

Board of Trustees, through

- meetings and associated reading, staff contact.
- professional development / training.
- results of student and parent / caregivers surveys.
- ERO Audit check on Health and Safety.

Responsibility for education and training will be borne by:

- the Senior Management team and in particular the deputy principal for student Pastoral Care and Guidance who will evaluate and continually review the operation of this policy, reporting to the Principal and Board as required.
- the Teaching Team Leaders who will coordinate teaching about harassment with the aim of increasing understanding and awareness of the issue and the procedures for dealing with it.
- the Staff Professional Development programme, which will include training and information about the effects of harassment and the many ways of dealing with it.
- Annual Surveys will be carried out in relation to student safety.

Response

All staff should treat any report of bullying, including cyberbullying, seriously and take appropriate action as outlined in this policy.

All personal assault / harassment / bullying complaints, including those involving digital technology, will be dealt with speedily, fairly and in confidence, as much as is appropriate.

It is imperative that every effort is made to ensure that confidentiality be maintained for all parties during and after the investigation.

It is important to "label" what the student has done, rather than labelling the student.

If the matter when first reported is "low level" harassment the target and initiator are to be interviewed by the Deputy Principal separately. Written notes are to be taken. The target is to be encouraged to report any further incidents and the initiator is to be warned that if it does not stop, it *will* be reported and more serious action will be taken. Restorative Practice may be an option at this time.

Note (1)**If the Complaint is of a serious nature that threatens the Health and Safety of Others:**

On receiving the complaint the student's teacher, team leader or senior management team will determine the seriousness of the harassment. If it is of a violent nature or an immediate safety issue (including emotional/psychological harm) the Principal is to be informed immediately and all key personnel who have been involved with the target and / or the student doing the harassing are to be called together. Where possible written evidence is to be produced.

At this meeting decisions are to be made in relation to:

- contact with the student doing the bullying.
- negotiating a pathway forward through restorative processes, parent meeting.
- and/or discipline procedures.
- contact with Parents of Initiator and Target.
- contact with Outside Agencies.
- contact with Police (School Community Officer).
- stand down / Suspension or other disciplinary procedure.
- contacting the Board of Trustees.

Students breaching this policy while under the jurisdiction of the School will be dealt with in accordance with the school's discipline procedures and may be liable to stand-down, suspension, exclusion and/or expulsion in accordance with the Education Act and the Education (Stand-Down, Suspension, Exclusion and Expulsion) Rules 1999.

Outside School

Students breaching this policy while not under the jurisdiction of the school but whose action impacts on safety and learning within the school may also be dealt with according to this policy. This, in particular but not exclusively, relates to cyberbullying which is located in the digital environment, rather than in a physical location.

Specific Responses:

Note (2): If the complaint is of a serious nature where health and safety is a potential issue refer to Note (1).

When a staff member is approached by a student with a complaint of harassment by another student, she / he must first listen to the student or students, and make such enquiries as may be necessary to clarify exactly what has been happening.

The student(s) should be assured that they have acted correctly in reporting the bullying. They are to be given appropriate support.

The staff member should make a written summary of the information and pass it on to their team leader, the Deputy Principal (Pastoral Care) or other Senior Management Team member as appropriate.

The emphasis must be on changing the behaviour of the bullying student(s), while providing support for the student(s) who has been harassed.

The staff member now dealing with the complaint is to attempt to give advice on how to deal with any repeat incidents that may happen again before the intimidation can be dealt with. (eg, Report any further incidents immediately).

The team leader or senior management team shall:

- ascertain / confirm the details of the alleged harassment.
- depending on the seriousness or the on-going nature of the complaint decide whether or not to inform the Principal [Rf. Note1] and / or outside agencies (CYFS; Police etc).
- advise the alleged initiator that s/he is the subject of a complaint.
- in cases where the facts are clear and acknowledged, resolution may be achieved informally by discussion between the parties without the need for initiating disciplinary procedures. (Restorative Practice).
- notify the parents / caregivers of the student who reported being bullied (complainant).
- notify the parents / caregivers of the student alleged to have carried out the bullying (initiator).
- record the incident on the Student Management System.
- arrange counselling of the complainant and / or alleged initiator if necessary.
- where circumstances warrant options may include:
 - (i) transfer the complainant and / or alleged initiator to another class.
 - (ii) allow the complainant to remain at home.
 - (iii) impose disciplinary procedures on the initiator.
 - (iv) other appropriate action.

Follow up should be discussed with the student. It is important that the staff member checks a week or so later with both the student and the person to whom the information was sent.

Other courses of action

If “in School” remedies fail to address the reported concerns, the following courses of action are available to the complainant:

- seek to make a complaint through the Human Rights Commission
- a complaint to the Police
- a referral to NetSafe (bearing in mind that the School can contact NetSafe for advice about cyberbullying at any time - not only following an incident).