

Spensley Street Primary School

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS POLICY

RATIONALE

Spensley Street is a school that is committed to promoting harmony, respect, understanding and fairness between members of the school (students, staff, parents and carers), and with people in the wider community. In order to provide an environment which fosters the personal, social, intellectual, physical and creative development of each child, all members of the school community will behave in such a way as to promote the rights, responsibilities and mutual respect of all. Healthy Relationships between all members of the school community will be fostered and encouraged through the modelling of desired behaviour and the implementation of school programs.

DEFINITION

Healthy relationships are those that foster positive interactions between individuals and groups. A school community that enjoys healthy relationships has members (staff, students, parents and carers) who:

- are respectful, inclusive, supportive, positive, kind, helpful, fair and resilient;
- are proactive and take responsibility for their own behaviour; and
- see individuals inclusive of their gender, abilities, race, sexuality, religion, culture and socio-economic factors.

In particular, healthy relationships do not encourage or tolerate any form of bullying or discrimination.

Bullying behaviour can involve verbal, physical or emotional abuse and can occur by active/overt (eg. name calling, physical assault), or passive/covert (eg. refusal to sit next to someone/ failing to intervene against taunts or assault) means.

The expression 'bullying' is used in a broad sense and specifically includes sexual harassment, racial and religious vilification.

For what bullying is and is not please refer to attachment to SSPS Healthy Relationships Policy. (DET Student Wellbeing Definition, "What is Bullying?")

Discrimination means direct or indirect discrimination on the basis of an attribute.

Direct discrimination occurs if a person treats someone with an attribute less favourably than the person treats someone without that attribute, or with a different attribute, in the same or similar circumstances.

Indirect discrimination occurs if a person imposes a requirement, condition or practice-

- (a) that someone with an attribute does not or cannot comply with; and
- (b) that a higher proportion of people without that attribute, or with a different attribute, do or can comply with; and
- (c) that is not reasonable.

PRINCIPLES

- For general principles about Healthy Relationships refer to the school's philosophy and vision statement.
- Children learn more effectively in a safe and supportive environment.
- SSPS Codes of Practice and Conduct (student, principal class, school council, staff and community) are reflected in this document.
- DET guidelines and Commonwealth and State legislation apply to this policy.
- Individuals should have the freedom to express who they are with confidence. All members of the school community are entitled to feel safe, respected and valued.
- Healthy relationships are a shared responsibility of all members of the School community.

GOALS

- Establish a belief in all members of the school community that healthy relationships are desirable and attainable.
- Encourage all members of the school community to reflect on, and be responsible for, their own behaviour.
- Create an environment where all members of the school community are safe, respected and valued and there is a shared understanding that bullying is not acceptable.
- Support all students by teaching and modelling appropriate social skills and fostering resilience.

STRATEGIES

Common strategies for School Community

- Staff, students and parents/carers are expected to model behaviour that reflects the Healthy Relationships Policy.
- Staff, students and parents/carers are expected to report bullying behaviour, knowing they will be supported when they do.

Staff

- Staff ensure curriculum offered to students is developmentally appropriate in order for individuals to achieve success.
- Staff receive professional development in all areas that promote healthy relationships.
- Staff plan and implement programs that involve the explicit teaching of social skills, assertiveness, resilience and conflict resolution.
- Pro-social skills will be modelled and taught.
- Staff provide a classroom environment that is co-operative and appreciates diversity.
- Staff model healthy relationships with students, other staff, parents and carers.
- Staff follow school wide strategies for early intervention of bullying, should it occur, and a plan to monitor and restore well-being.

Students

- Students are expected to contribute to and be involved in decision making including classroom programs, Junior School Council and class meetings.
- Students are encouraged to use resilient behaviours such as assertiveness, seeking help and being proactive.
- Students are expected to be respectful, inclusive, supportive, friendly, positive, kind, helpful and to take responsibility for their own behaviour.

Parents/Carers

- The Principal liaises with parent groups regarding all matters relating to Healthy Relationships.
- The school provides information that will promote healthy relationships to parents and carers.

General

In order to foster a healthy relationships culture within the school, the principles and goals of this policy will be considered by all members of the school community whenever school publications are prepared, information sessions held, school programs developed and communication occurs between members of the school community and between the school and the wider community.

REFERENCES

SSPS Codes of Practice and Conduct.

School Vision Statement

School Philosophy

SSPS Teaching and Learning Policy

SSPS Inclusion Policy

SSPS Equal Opportunity Policy

SSPS Health and P.E. Policy

SSPS Changes Programme

Bounce Back Programme

Milojevic at al. *Moving Forward. Students and teachers against racism.* 2001, Eleanor Curtain Publishing, Armidale, Victoria.

DET website www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing

Bullying No Way web site - www.bullyingnoway.com.au

Equal Opportunity Act 1995 (Vic)

Original Policy: 2002

Policy Reviewed: 2007

Attachment to SSPS Healthy Relationships Policy

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, upset or create a risk to another person's health and safety - either psychologically or physically - or their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion.

Types of Bullying

There are three broad categories of bullying.

Direct physical bullying e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging their property.

Direct verbal bullying e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.

Indirect bullying - This form of bullying is harder to recognise and is often carried out behind the bullied student'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
- cyber-bullying, which involves the use of email, text messages or chat rooms to humiliate and distress.

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:

Mutual conflict

In mutual conflict situations, 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.

Social rejection or dislike

Unless the 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.

Single-episode acts of nastiness or meanness, or random acts of aggression or intimidation

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. However, since the school has a duty of care to provide a student with a safe and supportive school environment, single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression should not be ignored or condoned.