Croydon Hills Primary School

Bullying & Harassment Policy

Policy Statement

Croydon Hills Primary School does not tolerate bullying or harassment in any form. All members of the Croydon Hills Community are committed to ensuring a safe and caring environment, which promotes personal growth and positive self-esteem. We believe bullying is an act of aggression causing embarrassment, pain or discomfort to another

Rationale

We aim to foster an inclusive school culture and ethos that supports all students and values the diversity of the student, staff and community population including culture, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, physical ability and economic status.

Bullying is when someone or a group of people deliberately upset or hurt another person, their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion. There is an imbalance of power in incidents of bullying with the bully or bullies having more power at the time.

Bullying may occur because of perceived differences such as culture, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability or disability, religion, body size and physical appearance, age or economic status. Bullying may be motivated by jealousy, distrust, fear, misunderstanding or lack of knowledge. It can continue over time, is often hidden from adults and will probably continue if no action is taken. When an adult becomes aware of acts of bullying by a student or individuals, appropriate actions should be taken by the school in line with the policy guidelines.

Types of bullying

1. **Direct physical bullying:** includes hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching and pushing or damaging property.
2. **Direct verbal bullying:** includes name calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, humiliation, homophobic or racist remarks, or verbal abuse.
3. **Indirect bullying:** is often harder to recognise and can be 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 or social acceptance.
4. **Cyberbullying:** is direct or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technologies. This can include harassment via mobile devices, setting up a defamatory personal website or deliberately excluding someone from social networking spaces.

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Implementation

Croydon Hills Primary will use Restorative practices in all cases of Bullying and Harassment.

The Principal and staff members must be responsible for the implementation of the policy by:

- Teaching values and strategies and encouraging appropriate behaviour
- Maintaining confidential records regarding bullying issues –these are to be kept by the Assistant Principal
- Raising awareness of the issues related to bullying and promote social skills which build desirable citizenship
- Responding to individual problems and taking action to foster tolerance
- Staff being role models of appropriate behaviour in word, action and pedagogy
- Staff being observant to signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying
- Using strategies to support those involved with bullying and to change their behaviour
- Reducing the opportunity for bullying at school by active presence of staff in and around the playground
- Building capacity of all individuals to navigate conflict. Individuals should ask the person to stop what they're doing or tell the person how they are feeling. They should always feel free to talk to and seek help from a staff member.
- Implementing the school's code of conduct for use of technology
- Using restorative practices wherever possible
- Implementing consequences consistent with Department of Education guidelines and CHPS values

Restorative practices

Restorative practices refers to a range of processes that are underpinned by the following concepts:
- misconduct is a violation of people and relationships
- these violations create obligations and liabilities
- problem-solving focuses on healing and making things right.

Restorative practices involve the development and enhancement of relationships in schools and teaching conflict resolution and other problem-solving skills. They also involve classroom management that is participatory, democratic and focused on problem-solving. Restorative practices require a shift in philosophy from traditional punitive models of behaviour management to those relational models which, as well as holding wrongdoers accountable for their behaviour, provide support for the community affected by the wrongdoing. Three specific restorative
practices are:

1. **Small group conferences** are usually confined to a small group of students or an individual student who have been involved in an incident of harm that is determined to have a less serious impact. Typically small group conferences might be used by a teacher or staff member to deal with low-level bullying before matters escalate. Parents, while not directly involved, are informed of the process and its outcomes. Follow-up is crucial for ongoing support and to ensure compliance with the agreement.
2. **Classroom conferences** involve a whole class in addressing issues such as classroom bullying and more generally, classroom disruption that has affected student wellbeing and teaching and learning in the classroom.

Community conferences bring together, in the wake of a serious incident of harm, the wrongdoer and the student being bullied or harmed, as well as their families and appropriate school personnel.

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These conferences are conducted by a trained restorative practices staff member within the school, a series of scripted questions are directed to participants in order to understand the incident and its antecedents and the effects of the incident on the community. An agreement is reached whereby all participants feel there has been some restitution and relationships have been repaired. The agreement also reflects plans to meet identified needs of the participants, such as counselling, and to implement necessary changes to school policy and practice. Follow-up is crucial for ongoing support and to ensure compliance with the agreement.

The decision to use restorative practices should be made on a case by case basis as the views of those involved in an incident should be taken into consideration. Based on the circumstances of each individual incident, teachers and staff should consider whether it is appropriate to use restorative practices for matters relating to cyberbullying.

Promoting Cybersafety and preventing cyberbullying

The internet and digital technologies are now very much a part of life and learning. As an increasingly interactive medium, digital technologies bring with them exciting new opportunities to engage children and young people in their learning. At the same time these technologies also bring some challenges. At CHPS we promote Cybersafety by:

- encouraging cybersafe behaviour across the school including Acceptable Use Agreements
- providing access to professional learning opportunities for teachers
- providing specific teaching of the safe use of technologies for students
- encouraging students to not communicate with strangers online
- warning against providing personal details to a stranger
- cautioning against adding strangers as friends on social networking websites
- encouraging students to immediately report concerns of online stranger danger to parents/carers, teachers or another adult
- explaining why students should not send, or participate in, the production or forwarding of abusive or offensive digital materials.

The Department provides a website 'Learning On Line' with policy advice, resources, classroom activities and professional learning actions to support the safe and responsible use of digital technologies. This can be accessed at
http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/support/Pages/safeandresponsibleuse.aspx

References

- Building Respectful and Safe Schools-Department of Education
- CHPS values in Strategic Plan
- The Classroom Codes of Conduct – Classroom agreements
- The Student Code of Conduct – Student wellbeing booklet
- Bullying No Way

APPENDIX

Croydon Hills Primary School - Guidelines for Handling Bullying

Review

As part of school's cyclic process

Guidelines for Handling Bullying

Croydon Hills Primary School does not tolerate bullying in any form. All members of the Croydon Hills Community are committed to ensuring a safe and caring environment, which promotes personal growth and positive self-esteem. We believe bullying is an act of aggression causing embarrassment, pain or discomfort to another:

- It can take a number of forms: physical, verbal, gesture, extortion and exclusion.
- It can be carried out online through email, chat rooms, wiki spaces or instant messaging. Examples of cyber bullying include teasing, spreading rumours, sending or forwarding unwanted images or defamation.
- It is an abuse of power.
- It can be planned and organised or it may be unintentional.
- Individuals or groups may be involved.

Some examples of bullying may include:

- Any form of physical violence such as hitting, pushing, or spitting on others.
- Interfering with another's property by stealing, hiding, damaging or destroying it.
- Using offensive names, teasing or spreading rumours about others or their families.
- Using put-downs, belittling the abilities and achievements of others.
- Making degrading comments about another's culture, religion or social background.
- Excluding others from a group.
- Making suggestive comments or other forms of sexual abuse.
- Ridiculing another's appearance.
- Forcing others to act against their will.

If we are bullied:

- We may feel frightened, unsafe, embarrassed, angry or unfairly treated.
- Our work, sleep and ability to concentrate may suffer
- Our relationships with our family and friends may deteriorate
- We may feel confused and not know what to do about the problem

What the school will do:

- Foster a supportive environment, which encourages positive relationships
- Provide a safe and fair environment for individuals, staff and visitors
- Make efforts to remove opportunities for bullying by appropriate supervision of children
- Where bullying does occur, develop strategies to support the victim and to change the behaviour of the perpetrator

Staff will:

- Reduce opportunities for bullying to occur by actively supervising high risk areas
- Be role models in word and actions
- Use effective supervision and monitoring to deter cyber bullying

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- Be observant for signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying.
- Build awareness and understanding of general issues related to tolerance, fairplay and bullying through classroom discussions and the curriculum
- Ensure children are aware of their rights and responsibilities, and are aware that they will be supported in dealing with individual problems
- Assist children to develop strategies for dealing with bullying and develop pro social behaviours
- Take action with bystanders or "urgers"
- Use direct positive responses towards the recipient which communicates "You are important. I believe this is a problem for you"
- Respond to suspected incidents of bullying in accordance with school policies and procedures
- Use Restorative Practices where
  - ➢ Misconduct is viewed as a violation of people and relationships
  - ➢ Violations create obligations and liabilities
  - ➢ Problem solving focuses on healing and making things right

Individuals will be encouraged to:
- Treat others the way they would like to be treated
- Develop an understanding that they can have a positive influence on the behaviour of those around them
- Look after those around them
- Try to work out the problem themselves by asking the person to stop what they are doing and telling the person how they are feeling
- Talk to and get help from a staff member if the above steps don't work or if they are feeling unsafe at any time
- Refuse to be involved in any bullying situation and if they are present when it occurs take some form of preventative action (if appropriate) or report the incident to an adult

Parents can:
- Be alert to any signs that your child has been bullied
- Teach your child positive values of honesty, tolerance, right and wrong
- Encourage your child to talk to you about any problems or concerns
- Encourage your child to feel okay to ask others for help and to keep their own safety in mind
- Ensure your child knows how to report bullying and to ask for help when needed
- Report your concerns to a teacher. Don't try to sort it out for yourself
- Make sure you are modelling healthy behaviours to your child, especially in relation to conflict resolution and anger management
- Help protect your child from harassment and cyber bullying by closely monitoring internet use and installing internet filters
- Discuss agreement codes with your child

Procedures for dealing with complaints of bullying at Croydon Hills Primary School

All complaints of bullying will be handled as promptly as possible, noting that it is important to provide all those involved with an opportunity to discuss the issue and be informed of the school's course of action. The Principal/Assistant Principal will be notified of all complaints of bullying and will be kept informed of progress.

1. When a student or parent raises a complaint of bullying with a staff member, the staff member will explain to them these procedures and ensure that they are kept informed of what action the school takes.

2. Any student accused of bullying (as a result of a complaint) or suspected of bullying by a staff member will be interviewed by their class teacher in the first instance. Where the case involves serious bullying, the Principal/Assistant Principal will also be involved.

3. The teacher or Principal/Assistant Principal will also interview the child who has been bullied.

4. The teacher or Principal/Assistant Principal may also request an interview with the parents of the offending child.

5. The teacher or Principal/Assistant Principal will inform the parents of the child who has been bullied and take action, as appropriate, to provide support/counselling for the child. Restorative practices will be used wherever possible

6. Where a case of bullying has been confirmed, the teacher will, in consultation with the Principal/Assistant Principal, determine appropriate action. Depending on the seriousness of the case, they may involve; timeout, strict supervision, counselling and/or suspension.