

Westgarth Primary School is a community of students, staff*, friends and family working together to create a diverse, engaging and respectful learning environment.

Rationale

Westgarth Primary School is committed to providing a safe and supportive work environment where diversity is valued and everyone is treated with respect, fairness and dignity.

Westgarth Primary School is committed to providing a positive culture that ensures that staff and school community members are provided with a safe and bully free environment, and that staff and the school community are made aware of the actions that constitute bullying, and for all to accept that workplace bullying is not tolerated.

Aims of this policy

- To maintain a safe and healthy workplace for all staff and school community members;
- To identify, acknowledge and deal promptly and effectively with any alleged incidents of bullying, harassment and discrimination;
- To develop preventative and harm minimisation strategies throughout the school;
- To provide guidance for pro-active preventative intervention measures when a single instance of unreasonable behaviour is reported.
- To educate the community about what constitutes bullying;
- To educate the community about the impact of bullying.

*Staff refers to all teaching members, School Support Officers, Teacher Aides, contact workers and education support staff and leadership.

Definition

What is Bullying.

Workplace bullying is repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed towards an employee, group of employees or a community member that creates a risk to health and safety. The following types of behaviour, where repeated or occurring as part of a pattern of behaviour could be considered bullying.

Workplace bullying falls within 4 main forms: physical, verbal, covert and cyber based, which creates a risk to health and safety.

Approval date:	Approved by:	Next Review:	Page:
Nov 2014	School Council	Nov 2017	1

These categories can take many forms, including:

- Assigning meaningless or impossible to achieve tasks
- Belittling or humiliating comments
- Changing rosters to deliberately inconvenience staff;
- Deliberately withholding resources or information essential for work performance;
- Denying opportunities for training and development;
- Gender, sexuality, religious or racially based comments.
- Intimidation
- Isolation and exclusion from work related events;
- Misusing complaints or unsatisfactory performance processes against another member of school.
- Psychological harassment;
- Spreading misinformation and malicious rumours;
- Under-work;
- When someone, or a group of people, deliberately upset or hurt another person or damage their property or reputation¹

What is not bullying.

There are also some behaviours, which although they might be unpleasant or distressing, are not bullying:

- Mutual conflict - which involves a disagreement, but not an imbalance of power. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.
- Single-episode acts of nastiness or physical aggression, or aggression directed towards many different people;
- Social rejection or dislike, unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.
- Action taken by managers to direct and control the way work is carried out, and manage an employee's performance, workload or other duties, if the action is taken in a reasonable and lawful way.
- Principals /managers carrying out their required responsibilities in relation to the investigation of complaints or the management of unsatisfactory performance.

Approval date:	Approved by:	Next Review:	Page:
Nov 2014	School Council	Nov 2017	2

- Physical violence or the threat of violence, directed to a person or object. This is defined by Worksafe as Occupational Violence.
- Is not defined by Worksafe as physical violence or threats of physical violence. This is defined by Worksafe as Occupational Violence.

The impact of bullying

A wide range of injuries and illnesses can be caused by workplace bullying including psychological injuries such as anxiety, depression, social phobia, insomnia, stress conditions and even suicide.

Actions

- The Principal will ensure that all staff and community members are aware of their responsibility to prevent bullying and to report any instance of alleged bullying.
- All staff will work collectively to foster a work environment that is free from bullying.
- Preventative measures will be embedded within the community by WPS endorsing a clear standard of behaviour through a *Statement of Values*.
- The staff and community members will be proactive by familiarising themselves with the Statement of Values.
- All reports of workplace bullying will be treated seriously and prompt intervention taken to investigate and resolve the issue.
- All investigations will follow the principles of natural justice.
- The person who reported the incident will not be victimised as a result.
- Victimisation, reprisal or inciting others to take action will not be tolerated and will be followed by appropriate action –
- The person conducting the investigation/resolution process must not have been involved in the alleged incident.
- The Principal will regularly exercise his or her responsibility to review the school's process, risk factors and harm minimisation strategies.
- Staff will be involved in discussion and problem solving around the issues of risk assessment, process review and refinement and harm minimisation.
- All staff members, students and community members will exercise their responsibility to comply with this policy and to treat other staff, students and community members with dignity and respect.
- The Principal will monitor and review the effectiveness of these control measures as needed.

Approval date:	Approved by:	Next Review:	Page:
Nov 2014	School Council	Nov 2017	3

Process for reporting an incident

- Reports of bullying can be made in the first instance either verbally or in writing to the Principal or the Regional Director. However, to formalise a verbal report, a written report is required to follow.
- If a bullying incident occurs, the person(s) affected should immediately report the incident to the Principal / Edusafe. If the incident involves the Principal, the report should be made to the Regional Director.
- If a staff or community member observes a bullying incident, they should immediately report the incident to the Principal or Regional Director / Edusafe.

Process for responding to reports

- If the behaviour involves violence, it will be reported to the Police
- The behaviour will be clearly identified to determine the appropriate response. Instances of violence, discrimination or sexual harassment will be dealt with according to the relevant policy.
- Interim measures will be taken to minimise the risk to health and safety. This may include reassigning tasks, separating the parties, restricting access to WPS or granting leave, providing staff with or access to training and support appropriate to their responsibilities, as decided by the Principal.
- All reports will be investigated according to established departmental complaints resolution procedures.
- If there is no response from the Principal or Regional Director, the complainant should seek advice through formal channels (for contact details see end of policy).
- Once a report is lodged, those directly involved will be informed of the complaint. Those directly involved are entitled to have neutral support people present during the resolution process, including at interviews, mediation or meetings. The support person is not involved in the negotiations or conversations but may take notes and cannot speak on behalf of those directly involved.
- All parties must maintain strict confidentiality through the process.
- All parties should be advised of the process, how long it will take and what they can expect will happen.
- A record will be kept of all proceedings and outcomes.

Approval date:	Approved by:	Next Review:	Page:
Nov 2014	School Council	Nov 2017	4

Consequences for breaching this Policy

- If a case is found against a staff member, all records will be securely filed (in a sealed envelope marked 'Authorised access only') in the person's official file. The Principal will implement recommendations arising from an investigation / resolution process.

Appropriate measures may include disciplinary or dismissal action in line with departmental unsatisfactory performance procedures.

Other appropriate actions may include;

- a commitment for the behaviour not to be repeated,
- counselling or professional development offered to support the community or staff member,
- a written or verbal apology could be asked for.

- If a case is found against a community member, all records will be securely filed (in a sealed envelope marked 'Authorised access only'). WPS will implement measures as appropriate.

Appropriate measures may include exclusion or restrictions to the WPS premises, from unsupervised engagement with the party / parties involved, from volunteering or being ineligible to hold office.

The Principal has the right to exclude community members from volunteering or preventing the person from entering the premises using the DEECD School Policy and Advisory Guide – Trespass (Powers of Principals - Implementation).

- Any costs arising from security or supervision requirements are the sole responsibility of the community member involved.

Supporting Information and advice can be obtained from the following:

- Department of Education and Early Childhood Development resources:
 - Bully Stoppers www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers
 - www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edusafe/
 - DEECD Draft Workplace Bullying Policy Worksafe Victoria – *Your Guide to Workplace Bullying – prevention and response*
 - Northern Metropolitan Region – 9488 9488
 - Employee Health Branch Counselling and Mediation - 9637 2395
 - DEECD School Policy and Advisory Guide – Trespass (<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/governance/pages/tr espassers.aspx>)
 - OH & S Advisory Service 1300 074 715
 - Conduct and Ethics Unit - (03) 9637-2595
 - Diversity and Equity Unit - 1800 641 943

Approval date:	Approved by:	Next Review:	Page:
Nov 2014	School Council	Nov 2017	5

- Additional resources:
- Conduct and Ethics Unit - 9637 2594 or the Diversity and Equity Unit - 9637 2454
- Merit Protection Boards – (03) 9032 1701
- Victorian Equal Opportunity Commission – 1300 891 848
- www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au
- Fair Work Commission – 1300 799 675
- Lifeline 13 11 14 / Beyond Blue – 1300 224 636
- Addressing parents' concerns and complaints effectively – policy and guides

Supporting & Related Documents

- Statement of Values
- Sample warning letter
- Student Enrolment Pack
- Volunteer Policy
- Volunteer Induction Kit
- Student Well Being Policy

Evaluation:

- Staff Opinion
- Parent Opinion Survey
- Student Attitude to Schools Year 5/6
- EduSafe
- Junior School Council
- Union bodies

¹ <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/bullying.aspx>

Approval date:	Approved by:	Next Review:	Page:
Nov 2014	School Council	Nov 2017	6