ANTI BULLYING POLICY and PROCEDURES

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ANTI BULLYING POLICY

Policy Objective

The aim of this policy is to ensure that Esslemont College is a supportive and safe environment where every member of the community has the right to feel safe and protected. They also have the right to experience positive and respectful relationships between all members of the school community. Adults in this community need to be especially aware of their behaviour, as they are the role models for our children. By empowering members of our community, we hope to achieve a safe learning environment that respects and values individual differences. Therefore, the purpose of this policy is to:

- Promote a positive culture where bullying is unacceptable
- Ensure the right of respect from others, the right to learn or teach, and the right to feel safe and secure in the school community

Policy Statement

Esslemont College does not accept bullying. By providing guidelines on how bullying can be dealt with, and through education and support to members of the school community, matters of inappropriate behaviours that constitute bullying will be minimized.

Underpinning the core values at Esslemont College are the central themes: the oneness of God and religion, the oneness of humanity and freedom from prejudice, and the integration of worship and service. Children at Esslemont College will be supported and cared for in a nurturing and caring environment where children can develop confidence and spiritual qualities through a holistic approach and learn how to contribute to the advancement of humanity through a sense of social and environmental responsibility.

Our aim is to promote acceptance and positive behaviour at Esslemont College by:

- promoting positive behaviours and respect for individual differences.
- providing on-going and age-appropriate education focussed on self-esteem, assertiveness, resilience and peer-support.
- reinforcing within the school community that no form of bullying is acceptable.
- encouraging the school community to be alert to signs and evidence of bullying and to have a responsibility to report it to staff whether as an observer or victim.
- ensuring that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up and that support is given to the victim, perpetrator and all other individuals involved.
- always seeking parental and peer group support and cooperation.
- negative behaviour not deemed to be bullying will be addressed under the School's Discipline Policy.

Scope:

This policy applies to all members of the Esslemont College community: students, staff, parents/carers, and its school Board members. School staff in particular have a responsibility to support students at the school in cases of bullying behaviours.

What is bullying?

A clear definition for bullying is required so that everyone in our school has a common starting point. This will facilitate consistent and clear expectations. Good practices can only be built on a clear and common understanding of the nature and effect of bullying. It is widely accepted that negative and **repeated** behaviours toward a person or a group that are **intended** to 'hurt' or put them at risk is bullying.

A definition:

"Bullying behaviours are about an imbalance of power where there is deliberate intent to cause harm or distress. These behaviours can be verbal, social, psychological, or physical. They impact on the lives of the person/people being bullied, those doing the bullying and those looking on."

Peer Support Foundation (1998)

The terms 'bully' and 'target' are short-hand terms that we use because most people understand through the use of these terms the dynamic that we are addressing. We do not seek to negatively label individuals who are involved in bullying. We acknowledge that individuals that bully others are

not bullies in every situation. We similarly acknowledge that targets of bullies are not targets in every situation.

Esslemont College provides support given to students to make considered choices around their behaviour and the values that provide a framework for how they choose to live. To achieve this the school:

- *empowers students to be responsible for their own actions through a process of study, reflection, planning and action.*

- *promotes virtues and good moral choices to permeate all aspects of the school's safe learning environment ethos.*

- *has a discipline policy that is founded in justice and reflects the virtues and the capacity to make good moral choices.*

- *provides opportunities for members of the school community to cultivate empathy—the capacity to understand and share the feelings of others.*

Simultaneously we recognize that bullying may still occur. We also know that bullying:

- devalues, isolates, and frightens the targets of bullying

- affects an individual's ability to achieve

- has long term effects on those engaging in bullying behaviour, those who are the subject of bullying behaviours and the on-lookers or bystanders

We believe that teachers, students, parents, caregivers, and members of the wider school community have a responsibility to work together to address bullying with a structured approach.

Types of Bullying

There are six main types of bullying:

- Direct physical bullying – could include hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging the property of others.

- Direct verbal bullying – could include name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.

- Indirect bullying – harder to recognise and often carried out behind the bullied student's back. It is designed to harm someone's reputation and/or cause humiliation. Indirect bullying could include:

  - 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 – could include being cruel, tormenting, humiliating or a harassment to others by sending or posting harmful material or engaging in other forms of social aggression using technology such as, but not limited to, the internet, social networking sites, blogs, emails, interactive and digital technologies, mobile phones, and instant messaging. Cyber bullying includes but is not limited to:

  - Flaming: online fights using electronic messages with angry or vulgar messages.

  - Harassment: Repeatedly sending nasty, mean, and insulting messages.

  - Denigration: Posting or sending gossip /photos / video or rumour about a person to damage his/her reputation or social relationships.

  - Outing: Sharing someone's secrets or embarrassing information or images / video online.

  - Exclusion: Intentionally and cruelly excluding someone from an online group.

  - Cyber Stalking: Repeated, intense harassment and denigration that includes threats or creates significant fear.

- Psychological Bullying - This is when someone, or a group of people, repeatedly or intentionally uses words or actions which cause psychological harm. Intimidating someone, manipulating people, stalking a person are all examples of psychological bullying.
- Sexual Bullying (more common in upper primary and secondary years of schooling) - This might include unwanted sexual inferences, touching or brushing against others, writing/drawing/commenting about someone's body sexually, sexual name calling etc.

Clarification of Bullying

Other forms of hurtful behaviour are often mistaken for bullying. Upsetting and harmful things happen but **not all of them are bullying**. These may include:

- mutual arguments or disagreements are upsetting but usually everyone involved wants to solve the problem and there is no power imbalance. This is not bullying.

- unless a person deliberately and repeatedly tries to cause someone distress, excludes them or encourages others to dislike them; not liking someone is not bullying.

- single acts of meanness, spite, conflict, rejection, exclusion, physical harm, and emotional aggression hurt people and can cause great distress. However, these things are not examples of bullying unless someone is repeatedly and deliberately doing it to the other person.

Esslemont College Anti-Bullying strategies and procedures

The role of adults at school is to support, nurture and direct students towards socially accepted behaviours. Children and young adults make mistakes, and they will also test boundaries. As they learn about relationships and explore their own powers and their impact on others, they may display behaviours that fall within the bullying definition. It is the responsibility of the school to take the appropriate steps to modify those behaviours in a positive manner with due regard for the circumstances, age, and developmental stage of the student. This means that not every instance of reported bullying will result in punitive consequences. As such the School will:

- place emphasis on preventative and early intervention wellbeing programs that focus on the areas of social skills and peer support, and promote resilience, life skills and protective factors.

- have a curriculum that includes open discussion on anti-bullying strategies.

- ensure its Discipline Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy are publicly available on the school website and stored on the school server so they are available for staff viewing at any time.

- embed approaches that encourage children to report incidents and to assist them in adopting strategies to deal with bullying.

Teacher Obligations

- Listen to and respond to all complaints of bullying

- Arrive at class on time and supervise children in and out of the building

- Assist students who report negative behaviours that may not be bullying, with options to address the current situation

- Openly discuss and provide strategies to students to deal with others who are upsetting or hurting them in an age-appropriate manner

- Conduct 'circle time' and other classroom activities to address bullying behaviours

- Consistently reinforce the school's core values

- Encourage and model tolerance and acceptance

- Be observant of signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying

- In cases of bullying, counsel the bully about their behaviour and its impact

- Counsel the target providing guidance and strategies to deal with bullying behaviours targeted towards them (perceived or otherwise)

- Take steps to help victims and remove sources of distress

- Provide mediation with both the bully and the target

- Make efforts to remove opportunities for bullying through proactive playground duty

- Record children's unacceptable behaviour

- Confer with parents if necessary

- Report incidents of behaviour to the appropriate senior staff member, and then the Principal.

Student Obligations

- Refuse to be involved in bullying situations
- Report incidents to the appropriate teacher either as an observer or a victim
- Behave in a way that reflects their understanding of the Discipline Policy and Procedures

Parent Obligations

- Take an active interest in their child's school life to be aware of any problems
- Encourage their child to report and deal with the problem themselves
- Encourage their child to be verbally assertive rather than retaliate with action
- Communicate to the School if they suspect their child is being bullied

(Parents/carers are strongly advised to bring matters to school staff and not to approach other children or their parents)

Contact Numbers for Support Services Available to the School Community

Crisis Support:

- Emergency: 000 (Mobile 112)
- Lifeline: 131 114
- Kids Help Line: 1800 55 1800
- Beyond Blue: 1300 224 636
- Salvo Care Line (Salvation Army): 1300 36 36 22

For advice, personal support and referral to social services:

- Salvation Army Youth Line: 1300 363 622
- Poisons Information Help Line: 1300 302 980
- Domestic Violence Line: 1800 656 463
- Rape Crisis Centre: 1800 424 017

Police Contacts:

- Police School Liaison Officer: 02 9680 5399
- Relevant LAC: *Local Police Contacts: Senior Constable Ethan West Phone: 02 9680 5399*
- The LAC works at the Police Station Castle Hills.
- Local Police: 02 9680 5399

Family Helplines

- Family Relationship Advice Line: 1800 050 321
- Parent Line: 1300 1300 52
- Child Abuse Prevention Service: 1800 688 009
- Health Direct Australia (after hours GP help line): 1800 022 222

Support Services

- Cybersmart: 1800 880 176
- Legal Aid Youth hotline: 1800 101 810

Counselling

- Family Relationship Advice Line (Anglicare): 1800 050 321
- Centacare: 9390 5366
- Credit Help Line: 1800 007 007
- Family Information Service: 1800 049 956

- Gay, Lesbian & Transgender: 1800 184 527
- Interrelate: 1300 736 966
- Lifeline: 13 11 14

Related Documents
- Discipline Policy