Bullying and Harassment Policy

Rationale
Toorak Primary School (TPS) aims to provide a safe and caring environment where all members of the school community feel valued, are provided with opportunities to contribute to the school and have every opportunity to meet their personal and educational potential. Everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity. Bullying and harassment in any of its forms will not be tolerated.

Purpose
- To reinforce within the school community that no form of bullying or harassment is acceptable.
- To alert everyone within the school community to signs of bullying or harassment.
- To ensure that if a member of the school community sees another person being harassed or bullied they report it to staff.
- To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying or harassment are dealt with firmly and fairly.
- To prevent bullying, harassment, exclusion and other negative behaviour.
- To seek parental and peer-group support and co-operation at all times.

Definitions
**Bullying** is repeated oppression, physical or psychological, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group.

Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, deliberately upset or hurt another person or damage 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 due to age, size, status or other reasons.

- **Direct physical bullying** includes – hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching and pushing or damaging property.
- **Direct verbal bullying** includes – name calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, homophobic or racist remarks, or verbal abuse.
- **Indirect bullying** includes – lying and spreading rumours, planning nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate, mimicking, encouraging others to socially exclude someone, damaging someone’s social reputation or social acceptance.

**Cyber-bullying** consists of covert, psychological bullying, conveyed through the electronic mediums such as cell-phones, web-logs and web-sites, on-line chat rooms, ‘MUD’ rooms (multi-user domains where individuals take on different characters) and Xangas (on-line personal profiles where some adolescents create lists of people they do not like). It is verbal (over the telephone or mobile phone), or written (flaming, threats, racial, sexual or homophobic harassment) using the various mediums available.

**Harassment** is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome or offensive to a person.

Guidelines
1. **Awareness**
   - The Bullying and Harassment Policy of the school will be widely promoted to students, staff, parents/carers and the local community.
   - All new students and staff will be informed of the policy and school expectations of behavior at the commencement of their time at the school. A summary of the policy will be included in the Student Enrolment Package while new staff will receive extensive documentation as part of the school’s induction process.
2. TPS will promote curriculum programs to strengthen bullying prevention and reduce bullying incidents. The curriculum will include anti-bullying messages and strategies in line with current DET materials e.g. Being Cool Online, Bully Stoppers and Building Respectful Communities Practice Guide.

3. **TPS Approach**
   - TPS will deal with bullying (including cyber-bullying) and harassment in a consistent and systematic way.
   - All complaints of bullying or harassment will be heard in confidence and taken seriously.
   - The school leadership team and the teachers will work together to ensure the safety of all school members by thoroughly investigating all complaints while respecting the need for confidentiality. Parents and/or carers will be notified in cases of student involvement and appropriate intervention will occur.
   - If a teacher believes a student is at serious and imminent risk from bullying (including cyber-bullying) and harassment then it is their professional duty to pass on the information to an appropriate person in order to ensure appropriate support for the student. It is important that teachers document fully their interaction with the student and to verify the actions taken.
   - Constructive strategies to deal with bullying and harassment will include: education in coping strategies; assertiveness training; problem solving and social skills; counselling and behaviour modification. These strategies will be employed in preference to punitive sanctions and negative consequences.
   - There will be disciplinary consequences, covering a range of strategies, for those in breach of the Bullying and Harassment Policy. Such consequences will comply with the Student Engagement Policy and will be in accordance with Department of Education and Training (DET) guidelines.

4. **Staff Training**
   - Staff programs will occur periodically to keep staff informed of current issues/strategies for dealing with these issues.
   - Professional development will be provided for staff relating to bullying (including cyber-bullying) and harassment and proven strategies to address these issues in classrooms will be shared with all staff.
   - The school will provide specialist resources such as books, videos, kits and off site in-service activities to assist staff in responding appropriately to bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment issues.

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**Resources & Attachments**

Links which are connected with this policy are:

- DET's [Effective Schools are Engaging Schools: Student Engagement Policy Guidelines](#)
- DET's [Safe Schools are Effective School’s](#)
- DET's [Student Engagement Policy Guidelines](#)
- DET's [Respectful Schools](#)
- DET's [Responding to Student Sexual Assault](#)

**Related Policies**

- Student Engagement Policy

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**Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the policy review cycle.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in June 2016.