

Bullying and Harassment Policy

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Approved By	School Council
Approval Authority (Signature & Date)	
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References	DEECD School Policy Advisory Guide

POLICY STATEMENT

Skene Street Specialist School is committed to providing a safe and respectful teaching and learning environment where bullying and harassment are not tolerated. Skene Street Specialist School believes that all students have the right to learn in a school environment in which they feel safe and secure.

This Bullying and Harassment Policy should be read in conjunction with the *Skene Street Specialist School – Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy*.

AIMS

- To explain what bullying and harassment are, and the fact that they are unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
- To ask that everyone in the school community are alert to signs and evidence of bullying and have a responsibility to report it to staff whether as an observer or victim.
- To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up appropriately and that support is given to both victims and perpetrators.
- To seek parental and peer-group support and co-operation at all times.

DEFINITIONS

Bullying is when a person, or a group of people, repeatedly upset or hurt another person or damage their property, reputation or social acceptance. Bullying may be direct physical, direct verbal, indirect or cyberbullying. Bullying is not a one-off disagreement between two or more people or a situation of mutual dislike.

Bullying can be:

1. **Direct physical bullying** – e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.
2. **Direct verbal bullying** – e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.
3. **Indirect bullying** – e.g. spreading rumours, playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate, mimicking, encouraging others to socially exclude a person, damaging a person's social reputation or social acceptance, or cyberbullying.

Cyber-bullying is direct or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technology. For example via a mobile phone, chat rooms, social media. It could involve setting up a defamatory personal website or deliberately excluding someone from social networking spaces. It can be verbal or written.

Harassment is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome and which is reasonably likely to humiliate, offend, intimidate or distress a person. For example, teasing a student because of their speech impairment.

GUIDELINES

Skene Street Specialist School will not tolerate bullying (including cyberbullying) or harassment. A school-wide approach will be taken to deal with bullying and harassment in a consistent and systematic way, with a focus on student safety and wellbeing.

Disciplinary measures will apply to students in breach of the behaviour expectations established by the school and communicated through this Bullying and Harassment Policy

All complaints of bullying or harassment will be taken seriously and treated sensitively. This policy will be clearly communicated to students, parents and staff on the school's website and through newsletters from time to time, in the student diary.

- Our school will organise curriculum programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, tolerance, conflict resolution and problem solving.
- Sporadic student programs will be organised to raise student awareness about bullying and harassment, to provide a forum for discussion and to aid development of attitudes. Some matters will be dealt with formally in the curriculum and in peer support programs, leadership programs, extra-curricular programs, classroom discussions and occasional activities run by outside experts. The curriculum will include anti-bullying messages and strategies in line with DET materials e.g. *Bully Stoppers*, *Respectful Relationships*.

- Staff professional development programs will occur periodically to keep staff informed of current issues/strategies for dealing with bullying and/or harassment issues.

If students believe they are being bullied they may contact their classroom staff, the School Chaplain or a staff member that they would prefer to discuss the matter with.

This policy will be reviewed periodically by Skene Street Specialist School to ensure it reflects current practices and refers to up-to-date policy.

STUDENT SUPPORT

If any staff member feels a student is at risk from bullying and harassing behaviours they should discuss their concerns with the Principal, School Chaplain or classroom teachers in order to ensure appropriate support for the student. It is important that staff document fully any actions taken in response to student bullying and/or harassment (see Appendix B).

Some strategies that might be used by the school to assist the student may include:

- Resilience education
- Mentoring and social skills
- Counselling
- Assertiveness training

LINKS

Links which are connected with this policy are:

- DET's [Student Engagement Guidance](#)
- The school's Acceptable ICT Use Agreement (re: cyber-bullying)
- DET's [Bully Stoppers: Make a Stand, Lend a Hand](#)
- DET's [Vulnerable Students](#)
- [Bully Free World: Special Needs Anti-bullying Toolkit](#)
- [Racism. No way!](#) anti-racism education for Australian schools

Anti-Bullying & Anti-Harassment Procedures

How will a student's bullying complaint be dealt with?

Bullying complaints will be taken seriously and treated sensitively. School procedures for responding to a student who bullies or harasses others are set out below.

Note: If at any time bullying or harassment persists or is sufficiently serious, the principal may contact parents/carers and commence formal disciplinary action in accordance with the School's Student Engagement Policy/Student Code of Conduct and DET's Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance.

Level 1

If the bullying or harassment incident is minor or a first time occurrence, teachers may elect to use one or more of the following:

- stopping the bullying/re-statement of rules and consequences/reminder of Bullying and Harassment Policy
- restorative questioning
- think time detention
- private conference
- shared control discussion

If the student does not take control over his/her behaviour the Principal should be notified.

Level 2

If the bullying or harassment continues, or in instances of severe bullying or harassment, the Principal in consultation with class teacher and professional agencies (if appropriate) may:

- provide counselling support to the victim
- meet with the perpetrator to develop [a Behaviour Support Plan/other type of behaviour modification strategy document] and meet with parents of the student to discuss strategies
- provide discussion/mentoring of different social and emotional learning competencies including structured learning activities
- conduct a restorative conference separately with the perpetrator and "target"