Bullying, Harassment, and Non-Violence Policy 2011

Students attend school to participate in quality education that will help them become self-directed, lifelong learners. There is an expectation that students will be safe at school, free from fear of bullying, harassment and intimidation. Harassment, violence and bullying will NOT be tolerated at any level at Erina High School. No one has the right to bully, harass or intimidate. Students, teachers, parents, caregivers and members of the community have a shared responsibility to create a safe and happy environment, free from all forms of bullying. If a bullying incident is reported all students will receive appropriate support.

Harassment and bullying can be defined as intentional, repeated behaviour by an individual or group of individuals that causes distress, hurt or undue pressure.

It can include:

- Physical - any deliberate act or exertion of force which causes injury
- Verbal - use of words, threats or intimidation
- Social and Psychological - intimidation or deliberate acts with the intention of causing emotional upset
- Cyber bullying - electronic bullying using mobile phones or social networking

It is asked that students, teachers, parents, caregivers and members of the wider school community:

- Promote positive relationships, respectful and accepting of diversity within the school community;
- Support the anti-bullying plan through words and actions;
- Actively work together to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur.

Who to report Bullying/Harassment to:

- The class teacher when in the classroom - Year Advisors
- The teacher on duty in the playground - Head Teachers
- A teacher you feel comfortable with - Deputy Principals
- A confidential report in the bully box - Principal - Student Wellbeing Coordinator

What will happen?

When a student notifies, staff will confirm the harassment has occurred and then act.

1. The victim and the harasser will be interviewed separately. Both parties will be offered support and students concerned will be counselled regarding acceptable behaviour. The seriousness of the offence will determine further action.
2. A mediation session may be held the student wellbeing coordinator or student peer mediators, with both parties present. Resolution will be sought and documented on the conflict resolution form.
3. Confirmed incidents will be recorded on the RISC database.
4. Parents of students who continue to offend will be notified and the student will be subject to the discipline procedures outlined in the school discipline policy.
5. The Principal will determine the response to any act of violence in accordance with DET policies. Such behaviours must be reported.

What strategies do we have in place at school for dealing with Bullying/Harassment?

- Peer Mediation - Behaviour modification programs (strength/shine)
- School Welfare Teams - Counsellor Intervention
- Anti-bullying survey - Parental interview/support
- Conflict resolution follow up - Integrated curriculum programs e.g. PD/Health/PE
- Discipline Procedures - Teacher Professional Learning
THE IMPACT OF BULLYING

Bullying can have serious consequences for students who are repeatedly bullied and for those who persist in bullying others. Those witnessing acts of bullying at school can also be affected.

Children experiencing repeated bullying can suffer these effects:
- Loss of self-esteem
- Increasing isolation
- Depression
- Absenteeism
- A contemplation of revenge and feeling justified in attacking others
- Families may be affected—distraught, hostile, and desperate to find a solution.

Those who bully others unless helped to change may:
- Persist in abusing their power over others in their adolescent and adult years and become a danger to others in the workplace and in their homes.
- Are deprived of the satisfaction and happiness that comes from cooperating with others on an equal basis.

Observers of bullying may feel:
- Threatened and insecure when they observe bullying occurring
- Their freedom is limited as they must be on their guard from being attacked themselves.
- Saddened or upset by what they see going on around them.
- Guilty for not acting
- Tempted to participate

WHAT CAN STUDENTS DO?

SKILLS TO PREVENT STUDENTS FROM BEING BULLIED:
- Acting assertively when necessary
- Reacting nonchalantly (showing you are not upset and angry) when it is appropriate to do so.
- Making friends who will give support.
- Cooperating effectively with others
- Tell an adult about it.

SKILLS TO AVOID BULLYING OTHERS:
Children bully for many reasons, sometimes because they lack the following skills:
- Being able to handle feelings of anger when they arise
- Thinking before they act
- Getting what they need from others by using cooperative means rather than by resorting to force or threats.
SKILLS TO HELP OTHERS
If you see someone being bullied, keep safe and choose your response to match the situation:

- Make it clear to your friends that you won’t be involved in bullying behaviour.
- Never stand by and watch or encourage bullying behaviour.
- Do not harass, tease or spread gossip about others.
- Respect everyone and value the differences between people.
- Support the student who is being bullied either by speaking up or supporting the victim to ask for help.

Research has demonstrated that bystanders play a significant role in bullying:

- Bystanders are present most of the time (85%), where adults are rarely present.
- Most young people feel uncomfortable but very few know what to do to stop it happening.
- Bullying behaviour is reinforced where people watch but do nothing.
- When bystanders do intervene, the bullying is more likely to stop quickly most of the time.

WHAT CAN TEACHERS DO?

- Arrive punctually to class and playground duty
- Provide a safe and supportive school environment that encourages positive relationships between students, their peers and teachers.
- Establish expectations of student and teacher behaviour at the beginning of the year.
- Clarify the school policy on bullying at the start of the year.
- Develop an assertive class discipline policy with clear rules and consequences that are consistently applied and reinforced.
- Take action—don’t ignore bullying—record incidents on RISC and forward reports to the Student Wellbeing Co-ordinator.

WHAT CAN PARENTS DO?

- Disbelief is natural. Stay calm and accept that all of us have the capacity to be involved on either the giving or receiving end of bullying.
- Listen calmly; note specifically what your child is saying.
- Let the school know what is happening.
- If the victim, let your child know that it is not their fault.
- Try not to model bullying behaviour at home.
- Find out the facts from the school. Do not ring other parents as this causes unnecessary concern and often anger.
REPORTING BULLYING

All incidences of harassment or bullying can be reported via the bully box, on the pro-forma sheet provided. The Student Well Being coordinator checks for reports each day. Reports are allocated to appropriate staff or peer mediators who deal with the issues. Alternatively students should report bullying incidences to their classroom teacher, another teacher they feel comfortable with or their parents. Options may include: peer mediation, conflict resolution agreement, Anti-discrimination counselling, counsellor interview or consequences as considered appropriate.

MANAGEMENT OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

- Students (bully & victim) interviewed by well being coordinator and given the opportunity to speak about behaviour.
- Bullying incident recorded on RISC database
- Students counselled by well being coordinator or using peer mediators.
- If further incidents occur a parental interview will be conducted.
- Continued bullying or severe bullying may result in further consequences such as behaviour monitoring, playground detentions, withdrawal of privileges/exclusion from playground areas or suspension.

MONITORING & EVALUATING THE ANTI-BULLYING PLAN

- Teacher Professional Development
- Anti-bullying survey to gather and analyse all relevant information on the nature and extent of bullying, harassment and victimisation.
- Anti-bullying plan reviewed in consultation with P&C, staff and students.
- Present and fine tune, revise, alter policy to whole school staff meeting.
- Revise policy again in 2010 in terms of its effectiveness and implementation.
- Questionnaires to evaluate the program for its continued relevance and effect.
- A consistent and positive response from all teachers towards bullying behaviour.
- The teaching of peer support skills to enable all students in a bystander role to discourage bullying.
- Resilience skills taught that would be needed if students were bullied.
- High visibility of playground supervisors during lunch and recess breaks.
RESOURCES

- NSW Dept of Education & Training: “Anti-bullying plan for schools”
- Anti-bullying plans and policies from other schools in NSW, Australia.
- www.bullyingnoway.com.au
- Bullying Among Young Children: A guide for parents- Ken Rigby
- Bullying Among Young Children: A guide for teachers & carers- Ken Rigby
- Bullying in schools and what to do about it- Ken Rigby & colleagues, University of South Australia.