

ANTI-BULLYING & HARASSMENT POLICY (STUDENTS)

1. Purpose of this policy

- 1.1 Indie School rejects all forms of bullying or harassment. It is not acceptable for any student to experience bullying or harassment within the learning and social environment of the school.
- 1.2 In rejecting bullying and harassment, the school is committed to the development and the reinforcement of a culture of positive behaviour, respect and tolerance.
- 1.3 The anti-bullying and harassment policy sets out the principles and framework governing the school's behaviours and activities that support all members of the school community in enacting a zero tolerance of bullying and harassment. The policy, together with the policy implementation documents listed in this policy, should be read and understood by all those connected to the school.

2. Principles

- 2.1 The school rejects all forms of bullying and harassment and takes a zero tolerance stance in response to bullying and harassment wherever and whenever it occurs within the school community.
- 2.2 The school believes that, in order to reduce and eliminate bullying or harassing behaviour, it is essential to create a culture of positive behaviour, respect and tolerance.
- 2.3 Underpinning the school's zero tolerance stance in response to bullying and harassment is a belief that all students, no matter what their background, race, ethnicity, gender, physical and intellectual attributes, are to be valued and respected.
- 2.4 The school is committed to the importance of students both being and feeling safe within the school.
- 2.5 The school, in discharging its duty of care, understands that it has a responsibility to enable students to flourish in relation to their emotional, mental and physical health.

3. Aims of the policy

- 3.1 To set out the school's clear expectations in relation to positive student behaviour and in so doing to define what constitutes unacceptable bullying or harassing behaviour.
- 3.2 To support the school and its employees, parents and students themselves in creating a climate characterised by respectful and positive relationships.
- 3.3 To comply with the requirements of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.), to implement anti-bullying (including cyberbullying) and harassment strategies and procedures as part of the school's responsibility to provide a safe environment where the risk of harm is minimised and students feel physically and emotionally secure.

4. Legal and regulatory basis for compliance

- 4.1 Duty of Care
- 4.2 Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.)
- 4.3 Education and Training Reform Regulations (2007)
- 4.4 Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) Minimum Standards
- 4.5 Victorian Government Department of Education and Training's (Vic DET) guidance for government schools, equally applicable to non-government schools, on bullying, cyberbullying and the role of the school.
- 4.6 Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth.)
- 4.7 Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth.)
- 4.8 Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth.)
- 4.9 Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic.)
- 4.10 Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 (Vic.)

5. Key definitions

- 5.1 Schools have a **duty of care** to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students. In discharging this duty, principals, teachers and other school staff are held to a high standard of care in relation to students. The duty requires principals and teachers to take all reasonable steps to reduce the risk of harm to students, including the implementation of strategies to prevent bullying. The duty is non-delegable, meaning that it cannot be assigned to another party.
- 5.2 Schools should prioritise how they provide opportunities for students to grow in their social learning in order to develop **positive behaviour, respectful relationships and high levels of student engagement**. There are a wide range of programs and curriculum models that are available to schools which meet these objectives.
- 5.3 Indie School has appointed Welfare Officers who have specific responsibilities for overseeing the development and implementation of anti-bullying and harassment strategies and for monitoring their effectiveness (in conjunction with the Deputy Principal).
- 5.4 The Schools anti-bullying and harassment policy is regularly reviewed with the whole school community.
- 5.5 Indie School has adopted anti-bullying strategies to address any issues of bullying and harassment at whole-school level, in the classroom, outside the classroom, online and at individual student level. These strategies help reduce and manage bullying and unacceptable behaviour and enhance the capacity of the whole-school community to promote respectful relationships and provide safe environments.

- 5.6 How to recognise the signs of when bullying, including cyber bullying, might be taking place:
- a. **Bullying behaviour** takes different forms and is almost always deliberate, repeated and indicative of an imbalance of power. Bullying behaviour seeks to harm, humiliate, dominate, intimidate, embarrass, ostracise, or isolate. Some specific types of bullying behaviour include:
 - Verbal or written abuse
 - Violence or threats of violence
 - Sexual harassment and homophobia
 - Discrimination, including racial discrimination.
 - b. **Cyberbullying** is bullying using digital technologies, including mobile phones, email and social media tools.
 - c. Students involved in bullying do so by playing a number of different **roles**:
 - Engaging directly in bullying behaviour or assisting and actively joining in
 - Encouraging the bullying behaviour by giving, for example, silent approval, by smiling, by laughing or by making comments
 - Standing by silently and passively, doing nothing when knowing or seeing bullying behaviour.
- 5.7 Indie School endeavours to proactively identify and consider the needs of **vulnerable students** who may be more at risk of either engaging in bullying behaviour or being the victim of bullying behaviours. At risk students may include those with special educational needs and/or with a disability, racial and minority groups and those who are potentially the subject of homophobic bullying.
- 5.8 **Incident reporting procedures:** We have a clear, easy to use and confidential procedure whereby students, parents, staff and other members of the school community are able to report bullying concerns, including critical incidents on our website.
- 5.9 We publicise for parents and students (school website) across the whole-school access to **support services** such as the *Orange door*.

6. Scope

- 6.1 The application of the policy is relevant to the governing board, principal, to school staff, students and parents.

7. Roles and responsibilities

- 7.1 The governing board is responsible for reviewing the anti-bullying policy and its implementation.
- 7.2 The principal is responsible for ensuring the school has anti-bullying policies and procedures in compliance with the VRQA minimum standards.

- 7.3 The principal is responsible for:
- a. developing strategies that ensure the culture of the school is one in which positive behaviour and respectful relationships are given high priority
 - b. developing and implementing strategies and procedures that, as far as possible, reduces bullying to zero.
- 7.4 The principal is responsible for ensuring clear procedures are in place for the reporting and monitoring of bullying incidents and behaviour.
- 7.5 The principal is responsible for ensuring staff have access to regular training in the development of positive behaviour and in strategies for reducing bullying, particularly cyberbullying. The principal may also wish to provide regular training and support for parents in respect of bullying, particularly cyberbullying.
- 7.6 The Welfare team and Deputy Principal is responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of anti-bullying strategies and for monitoring their effectiveness.
- 7.7 All staff in the school are responsible for working together in collaboration with students and parents to ensure issues of behaviour and relationships are given high priority at all times.

8. Links to other policies

- 8.1 Staff Code of Conduct
- 8.2 Student Code of Conduct
- 8.3 Behaviour Management and Support Policy
- 8.4 Complaints Policy and Procedure
- 8.5 Child Safe Standards Policy