Bullying & Harassment Policy

Purpose:	To provide staff, Parents/Guardians and students with definitions of bullying (including cyber-bullying) and harassment. To reinforce within the school community that no form or bullying or harassment is acceptable. To outline the school's response if bullying or harassment occurs.
Scope:	All Students, Staff, and Parents/Guardians
Implemented by:	Principal
Approved by:	Fitra Board
Effective Date:	May 2024
Review Date:	December 2026

Fitra Community School (Fitra) is committed to providing a safe and caring environment and culture which enables positive relationships to be formed amongst all students and staff which encourages self-esteem, cooperation, personal growth and a positive attitude to learning and teaching. Our Bullying & Harassment Policy exists alongside the School's Behaviour Management Policy. This policy is regularly discussed with children as are the rights and responsibilities of each child, and bullying (including cyber-bullying) and harassment – what they are, and what to do if they or someone they know experiences them.

What are bullying, cyber-bullying and harassment?

Bullying can be done in various ways including physically, verbally, socially and psychologically. It is behavior directed towards a less powerful person or group that is intended to cause harm, distress or fear.

A child is experiencing bullying when they experience any of the following behaviours in an ongoing way:

- Hitting, pushing, kicking, punching etc.
- Humiliation, put-downs, name calling

- Rumors, ignoring, exclusion
- Staring, dirty looks, notes, spreading rumours

Cyber-bullying consists of covert, psychological bullying, conveyed through an electronic medium such as mobile phone, blog or social media. It can be verbal (over the phone), or written (threats, racial, sexual or homophobic harassment).

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

When people are bullied or harassed some effects might be anger, embarrassment, fear and humiliation, loss of self-confidence and reduced function and potential.

How does cyber-bullying differ to traditional bullying?

1. **Availability** – It can occur anywhere and at any time. Misperception that there are no real-world consequences for online actions.
2. **Anonymity** – The impression of anonymity in the 'online world' leads young people to feel less accountable for their actions and provides a false bravado to would-be bullies.
3. **Geography** – Rather than being limited to the schoolyard, cyberbullying can operate wherever a young person uses the internet or a mobile phone, which occurs in most areas of a young person's life.
4. **Impact** – The internet provides the means for 'bullying' comments to be available to a wider audience. Through social networking sites, these comments can be viewed by potentially an unlimited number of people. The impact of and embarrassment caused by these statements is increased many times over.
5. **Intent** – A private message or joke that is forwarded on may become offensive or harassing even though that was not the intention of the original sender.
6. **Permanence** – Verbal comments are fleeting. Online content is tracked and stored and can potentially resurface at any time.
7. **Democracy** – Anyone can be a victim – students, teachers, parents.

Bullying – What should you do if it's happening to you?

If any of the above behaviours are happening to you or someone you know, you / they

should:

- Tell the person to STOP (or you can just ignore it) and walk away
- Tell a Teacher, the Principal your Parents or another person you trust about it as soon as possible;
- If you cannot talk to anyone you know about it, phone the Kids Help Line on: 1800 55 1800

Procedure Following a Report of Bullying

1. Student's Teacher or Principal (as appropriate in the circumstances) asks the student to describe what happened. This description along with any other accounts of the incident that are obtained will be recorded in the Compass school management system.

2. The other child(ren) will be asked to describe what happened.

3. The Teacher or Principal (as appropriate in the circumstances) will determine if what has occurred is bullying (including cyber-bullying), harassment or another type of behavior.

4. If it is not bullying, the behavior will be identified in accordance with the Behaviour Management Policy and the equivalent level response will be put into place.

5. If the behavior falls within the definition of bullying (or cyber-bullying) the offending student(s) will be instructed to stop the behavior and his/her Parents/Guardians will be notified.

6. The Teacher or Principal (as appropriate in the circumstances) may decide that a restorative practices meeting should occur between the students involved.

7. The Parents of the children involved will be informed of this process and the outcomes.

8. If the bullying behavior continues, a meeting will be held with the offending student, his/her Parents/Guardians and the Principal. An Individual Behaviour Plan will be developed at this meeting.

9. The behavior of all students involved will be monitored by all school staff.

10. The adherence to and/or effectiveness of the Individual Behaviour Plan will be monitored as stated in the Behaviour Management Policy..

11. Ongoing support will be offered to the child who has experienced the bullying behavior and group dynamics will be closely monitored by all staff.

12. Student programs will be organized to raise Student awareness about bullying (including cyber-bullying) and harassment, to provide a forum for discussion of matters and to aid development of attitudes and school culture. Some matters will be dealt with formally in the curriculum and in peer support programs, leadership programs, extra-curricular programs and occasional activities run by outside experts and workers.

Communication of the policy

The School will ensure that all members of the School community have a clear and shared understanding of acceptable behaviour, unacceptable behaviour and how to recognise the signs of when bullying, including cyber bullying, might be taking place. The school will also ensure that the focus when communicating is around the bullying behaviours and not assigning labels to the children as 'the bully'.

The Bullying & Harassment Policy will be available on the School's website.

All policies regarding Behaviour Management Policy and Bullying & Harassment will be included in the Compass school management system for Staff and Parent/Guardian access.

The School will inform new parents about the policy at the initial parent induction and make regular public statements to demonstrate its commitment to a zero tolerance culture with respect to all forms of bullying.

Related Documentation

Behaviour Management Pathway

Behaviour Management Plan

Bully Stoppers Flyers for Students

Related Policies

- Behaviour Management Policy
- Concerns and Complaints Policy
- Child Safety Policy
- Student Welfare Policy
- Duty of Care Policy