

Anti Bullying Policy

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Anti Bullying Policy

1. Statement

The priority of the school and school community is to provide a safe and inclusive environment to prevent bullying. As reflected in the school's philosophy, teachers and all staff will encourage positive and respectful relationships between children and their peers.

Headland Montessori School does not tolerate bullying of any kind. Bullying is never OK! We aim to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child being bullied and take any allegation of bullying seriously. Although there may be underlying reasons causing a child to bully others, it is essential that the child being bullied receives adult attention and support in the first instance. It is important that the needs of the child who bullies does not overshadow the needs of the child being bullied.

2. Related Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the other school policies such as:

- Discipline and Behavior Management Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Relationships with Children Policy
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

3. Definitions

3.1 What is Bullying

Bullying is when a person or group of people with more power at that time deliberately upset or hurt another person, their property, reputation or social acceptance on several occasions.

The key components of bullying are that it is unprovoked, and that the physical or psychological intimidation occurs repeatedly over time and creates an ongoing pattern of harassment or abuse. The bully is often physically stronger than the victim, or is perceived as such, so it is difficult for the victim/target to defend him or herself, and there is an imbalance of power.

It is important to note that bullying can have a serious long-term effect on the health and

well-being of young people, and these effects can carry on into adulthood.

Bullying causes another person to feel embarrassed, offended, hurt, humiliated, injured, ridiculed, angry and/or afraid.

Direct Physical Bullying

Direct physical bullying includes punching, slapping, hitting, pushing, tripping, interfering with belongings, locking in a confined space, unwelcome touching.

Direct Verbal Bullying

Direct verbal bullying includes name calling, insults, unwelcome teasing, taunting, verbal abuse or sexist, racist or homophobic comments, threatening notes, letters, emails or phone calls.

Indirect Bullying

Indirect bullying includes telling lies about a person, spreading rumors, gossiping, playing nasty jokes, mimicking, encouraging others to socially exclude someone, damaging another's social acceptance, threatening or insulting graffiti.

Social Isolation

Excluding individual children or groups of children from play or social situations.

Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying involves the use of emails, chat rooms, SMS etc. to cause distress. It can be indirect bullying (see above) and can also involve the use of images, comments and threats.

NB: it is illegal to threaten harm to another via the Internet.

3.2 What is Not Bullying

Conflict

When students are in conflict and it is clear that there is a disagreement but there is no unequal power balance. This may require intervention from teachers but is not bullying.

One Off Episodes

If a student is pushed or verbally abused once it is not bullying. It is aggression and should

be dealt with as soon as possible.

Multi Target Nastiness

If one student is nasty to a range of students, this person needs to be attended to and may need discipline, but it is not bullying if it is not persistent.

4. Possible Signs of Bullying

In many cases, bullying occurs without adults being aware of it. Bullying can include physical violence (hitting, shoving), teasing or name-calling, social exclusion, or intimidation. It often occurs over a period of time.

Possible signs a child is being bullied might include:

- unexplained cuts, bruises, scratches
- destructive or self-harming behavior
- overly sensitive or defensive
- less approachable
- changes in behavior, such as becoming moody, teary, depressed
- bedwetting
- complaints of physical ailments such as headaches or stomach-aches
- having few friends, or a breakdown in a previous friendship
- does not want to attend school
- Putting in less effort and/or standard of schoolwork declining
- Giving up on hobbies or interests
- Secretive
- Missing personal belongings
- does not want to attend parties, visit other children.

Children may also disclose to a trusted adult that they are being bullied.

5. Effects of Bullying

Children who are bullied are more likely to be depressed, lonely, and anxious and have low self-esteem. They may frequently feel sick and avoid interactions with others.

6. Possible Preventative Strategies

- Bullying thrives where there is not enough supervision. The school will ensure students are actively supervised at all times and staff are vigilant of students who may need extra support during outdoor activities and/or play time.
- Our daily program is designed to meet the needs and interests of all students in attendance to prevent periods of boredom.
- Educators model appropriate behaviors towards other staff and students, including refraining from teasing, humiliating, or talking 'behind another's back'. This also includes educators using appropriate language when supporting students to recognize, manage and learn about their behavior and develop an understanding of how their behavior affects others.
- Students are encouraged to verbalize their emotions and to develop empathy and compassion.
- A whole school approach can be taken in educating all the students through teaching sessions and set programs.
- Courses are available through Government and private agencies. Teaching staff or parents may run the course, or the students could attend an external provider run course/program.

7. Talking about Bullying

Teachers play an important role in helping students understand and guide their own behavior as they learn about positive and healthy relationships with others.

Behaviors in the early years may be precursors to bullying rather than true bullying. This could include making faces, refusing to play together, telling lies or stories about another child, grabbing objects, pushing, pinching or shoving another child. Without intervention, these behaviors could turn into a pattern of bullying.

Teachers assist children recognize bullying behavior and assist children in developing strategies to develop positive relationships and prevent bullying. Skills to develop to assist in preventing bullying include:

- o empathy- understanding and responding to what others feel
- o problem solving- how to resolve problems constructively without using aggression
- o language- understanding what to say when the child is feeling targeted by another child- 'stop it!'

TEACHERS WILL:

- teach social skills through role-plays, stories, puppets and games.
- avoid using terminology such as 'bully' or 'victim' when describing behavior being displayed
- focus and guide children to practice more appropriate ways to interact with others positively and respectfully when talking about bullying
- maintain and respect the dignity and rights of children.

8. Responsibilities and Reporting Procedures

- Bullying should be reported to the teacher or Principal as soon as practical.
- If it has not been directly reported to the Principal, the teacher will then report to the Principal.
- If the Principal or teacher observes the bullying taking place, they will intervene and attend to the bullying in that situation.
- The process, for whoever is attending to the bullying, can do so by supporting and empowering the student who is the target of the bullying and listening to the student allegedly doing the bullying, and then taking action as is deemed appropriate by the Principal. The Principal will attend to the bullying in consultation with other teaching staff and this may include the removal of the student allegedly bullying until a solution can be sought. This removal will be from the other students, the situation and/or area within the school. Parents will be informed.
- If the bullying is ongoing, the Principal will consult with the parents of both parties to develop a strategy to resolve the situation. This will include meetings, and the documentation of the processes involved.
- If this does not resolve the bullying, the Principal will take it to the school board so that a broader strategy can be put in place.

9. What you can do to stop Bullying – Information for Students

If you know or see someone who is being bullied, find out how to stop bullying.

If you are being bullied, you should talk to someone you know well and trust; they will give you much needed support and will often have suggestions you hadn't considered for helping with

the situation.

If you feel safe and confident, you should approach the person who is bullying you and tell them that their behavior is unwanted, and you won't put up with it.

If you are being bullied while at School, it is a good idea to seek help from a friend and talk to the teacher. It is also important to let your parent/s know that you are being bullied.

Know your rights. You have a right to feel safe and to be treated fairly and respectfully. Bullying is a serious problem with serious mental and physical impacts. Bullying is Never OK.