



Inverloch / Kongwak prevention and management of Bullying addendum to POLICY.



The IKPS approach to preventing and managing bullying at Inverloch / Kongwak Primary School

At Inverloch-Kongwak Primary School we use a preventative and restorative approach to managing inappropriate and unacceptable behaviours, including bullying. Our shared values of Getting Along, Confidence, Persistence, Organisation and Resilience are taught and reinforced through our Social Emotional Learning curriculum providing a sound foundation for our positive school community.

Our intent in managing inappropriate and unacceptable behaviours including bullying is to maintain or repair relationships and to educate. Consequences may be applied when necessary in conjunction with a restorative approach. Direct punitive action (ie punishment) is used when necessary for serious incidents in accordance with DEECD guidelines on Suspension and Expulsion (March, 2014).

Incidents of bullying will generally be addressed using the strategies and approaches outlined in this document and also in our school's *Relationships, Rights and Responsibilities Guidelines*.

All school staff will be vigilant to bullying behaviour and will take action to stop it.

Students are strongly encouraged to report incidents of bullying to school staff, in particular their own classroom teacher, as soon as possible following an incident and to persist in their reporting if incidents continue. Persistence is one of the "Riding the Waves to Success" positive habits of mind and at our school it is represented by the Green surfboard.

Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are encouraged to become familiar with the IKPS Prevention and Management of Bullying Policy (June, 2014) and to understand what bullying is and is not. The following websites are recommended for parents/carers to assist with understanding bullying and strategies for helping your child/ren whether your child is being bullied, has been a bystander to bullying or has been accused of bullying behaviour.

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/parents.aspx>

<http://www.parentingideas.com.au/Parents/Bullying>

<https://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/primary/mental-health-information/mental-health-basics/children-bullying>

Helping your child/ren to develop assertiveness skills

Teach children to use assertive communication skills. Show them how to confidently and respectfully communicate their thoughts, feelings and needs to others in an assertive way, for example: "Stop it. I really don't like it when you do that". Learning to be more assertive can help those who are bullied to stand up for themselves and others. Learning the skills of assertiveness can also help those who bully find ways to communicate their wants, needs and opinions without resorting to aggression or passive-aggressive strategies. Assertiveness skills include confident body language and using a firm voice. Those children who are bullied, those who are bystanders and those who do the bullying, would all benefit from learning effective social and emotional skills. Modelling the use of assertive communication skills for your child/ren is a very effective way to teach them how and when to use these skills.

When a child reports an incident to you as parents/carers the following process and strategies are recommended.

Parents are strongly encouraged to:-

Step 1: Listen carefully to your child and show concern and support.

Step 2: Give sensible advice & assist your child to develop positive, helpful strategies. (Don't encourage your child to fight-back; this is not helpful and will most likely increase the bullying or result in your child 'getting into trouble').

Sensible advice and assistance includes:-

- • Using the 5-finger plan (NB: If an incident is serious or you have tried the 5-finger plan with this person before and the behaviour is continuing go immediately to a teacher and report the incident to him/her. Be sure to tell the teacher that you have tried to stop this yourself but it hasn't stopped and you need their help now.)
 1. Ignore the behaviour.
 2. Ask politely "Please stop that. I don't like it."
 3. Tell firmly using assertive body language and voice "STOP IT. I don't like it. I will tell a teacher."
 4. Walk away **and**
 5. Tell a teacher as soon as possible (eg a Yard Duty Teacher). It is advisable to also report incidents of bullying to your classroom teacher.
- Using assertive ('cool') body language and saying in a firm voice 'Stop it. I don't like it. If you continue I will tell (an adult)' and calmly, confidently walking away.
- Avoiding situations and behaviours that might expose them to further bullying. Check out if there is anything that your child might be doing or saying that is bringing them unwanted attention from a bully. See <http://www.parentingideas.com.au/Parents/Bullying/What-types-of-children-are-bullied->
- Being around other children and making new friends.

- Reporting the bullying to a teacher (this should include reporting it to their own Classroom Teacher). Talk with your child/ren about the difference between 'dobbing' (also known as being a 'dibber-dobber') and reporting. Child/ren 'dob' and become 'dibber-dobbers' when they want to get someone else into trouble or to avoid themselves getting into trouble (ie getting in first). On the other hand, Reporting or Telling is to get help for someone, including themselves.

Step 3: Ask your child the following questions to understand if there is a repeated pattern:

- What, where and when did the incident happen?
- Who was involved on each occasion?
- Did anybody else see it and, if so, who?
- What strategies / solutions have been tried so far?
- The names of any teachers who are aware of the problem.
- NB: It is important to ask your child/ren if s/he did anything to the other child either directly before the incident or at an earlier time. Also check if your child retaliated in any way. It is better to know now all of this now than to find out later.

Step 4: Work with our school to solve the problem. We take our responsibilities in relation to bullying behaviour very seriously and we have more success when parents work with us to solve the bullying problem.

- Remember, if you were not aware that your child was being bullied, then your child's teachers probably don't know about it either.
- You are encouraged to:
 - Make an appointment with your child's teacher to discuss your concerns. You can do this by speaking to the office staff in person or by telephone. Please give the office staff enough details that the teacher will understand the nature of your concern.
 - At the meeting stay calm and be prepared to work with us in trying to fix this problem. Your focus should be on your child's needs. Demanding punishment for the other child and/or telling the teacher how you expect this to be handled is not helpful.
- **Most likely, your child's teacher will need time to investigate and to talk to your child, teachers and, perhaps, other students.**

Step 5: Make a time for a follow-up conversation with your child's classroom teacher, either by phone or in person.

Step 6: If you are still concerned after discussing the incident with your child's teacher and having had a follow-up conversation with him/her, please contact the school office to make an appointment with the Principal or Assistant Principal.

Source includes:-

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/bullying/parentfactsheets.htm>

Staff members who become aware of incidents of bullying will:-

- Listen to the person reporting the bullying (take notes where appropriate) and
- Reassure and support any person who has been bullied and
- Assess the severity and seriousness of the bullying and
 - Check with the child's classroom teacher (Is the teacher aware? Any history?)
 - Check with the teacher of the child accused of bullying behaviours (Any history?)
 - If it is established that an incident of bullying has occurred,
 - Complete an "Incident Report" form and
 - Discuss the incident and possible responses with the Principal / Assistant Principal and
 - Take the most appropriate action which, depending on the situation, may include interviewing the child/ren involved, contacting parents, counselling students about their behaviour and its affects on others, a restorative chat or other strategies such as one of the 'six approaches' listed below.

Each year the school will conduct a survey/s of students that asks questions about whether or not they have been experiencing incidents of bullying. Students who are identified as being involved in incidents of bullying will be considered for follow-up. Consideration may include the number and range of incidents the student has been involved in, the number and range of students that have been affected, the severity of the incidents and any previous history.

Understanding the incident/s of reported bullying, bullying behaviours and the affect on those involved

- Monitoring of the student/s identified in the surveys
- Interviewing the student/s affected
- Interviewing the student identified as bullying other/s

The IKPS approach in cases of bullying in our school

The severity and seriousness of the bullying will be assessed and appropriate action taken generally utilizing one of "the six major approaches that may be applied in cases of bullying, as assessed by Prof Ken Rigby (Rigby 2010) and in line with our school's Relationships, Rights and Responsibilities guidelines. Each of the six major approaches may be considered appropriate *in some situations and* "care must be taken in matching the chosen method of intervention with the nature of the case of bullying being addressed"

http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/files/links/Bullying_in_Schools_Six_Me.pdf .

1. **Strengthening the victim.** The person being targeted is instructed or trained so as to cope more effectively with bullying behaviour; for example, through assertiveness training or the use of 'fogging'.

2. **Restorative practices.** For example, a restorative chat is facilitated with those involved or a meeting is arranged with the children involved at which the person/s engaged in bullying are instructed to listen to how the person who has been bullied feels about the treatment they have been receiving. The persons responsible for the bullying are required to reflect upon what has been happening and to act restoratively (eg by making an acceptable apology to those offended and repairing any harm). Another commonly used restorative practice is a group conference such as a 'No Blame' conference. See *Restorative Practices and Bullying - Rethinking Behaviour Management* by Thorsborne and Vinegrad.
3. **Mediation.** Individuals involved in bully/victim problems are invited to meet with a trained mediator (adult or student/s such as Peer Mediators) to explore ways of resolving the situation in a way that is acceptable to all parties.
4. **The support group method.** The targeted person is interviewed and an account of the distress that has been experienced is communicated to those identified as the bullies. This is done at a meeting of the bullies attended also by selected students who are supportive of the target person. All present at the meeting are required to say how they will help to resolve the problem. The outcome is then monitored.
5. **The method of shared concern.** The practitioner meets individually with the person/s suspected of the bullying and shares a concern over what has been happening to the target person. Each of the suspected perpetrators is asked to suggest ways in which they can help, and to agree to act accordingly. After discussing the situation with the target person, the practitioner convenes a meeting of all the suspected bullies to formulate an agreed plan to resolve the problem. At a final meeting, a solution is negotiated between the suspected bullies and the target person who has now been invited to join them. See *The method of shared concern: A positive approach to school bullying* (2011, Camberwell, ACER) by Prof. Ken Rigby.
6. **The traditional disciplinary approach.** Punishment, sanctions or 'consequences' are applied to a person identified as having engaged in bullying someone. This might include withdrawal of privileges (eg computer and/or internet access, participation in excursions, class activities, etc), detention, suspension (in-school or out of school) and, in very serious cases, expulsion.

Other strategies that may be used instead of or in conjunction with any of the six major approaches to incidents of bullying include:-

- Education (for those affected and/or those doing the bullying) – for example: Understanding bullying (what it is/is not) and how bullying affects others and what can be done to make sure it doesn't happen again.
- Assertiveness and social skills training (for any or all of those involved).
- Discussions with parents of any or all parties, this may be in person or over the phone.
- Counselling about behaviours and expectations (for any or all of those involved)
- Referral, in consultation with parents/carers, to school support personnel and/or allied health professionals (eg Psychologist, Social Worker)
- Any or all of the strategies suggested by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, see <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/bullying/schoolstrategy.htm#7>
- A formal apology, often in the form of a hand-written and signed letter.

References:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/bullying/default.htm>

<http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au/ideasbox/things-work/info-manage-2-1.shtml> (for information on the 'No Blame Approach', 'Method of Shared Concern', etc)

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/pages/complainschool.aspx>

The DEECD process for parents/carers regarding raising a concern or making a complaint

If you wish to raise a concern or make a complaint the Department of Education and Early Childhood has a policy and process that you are strongly recommended to follow:-

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/pages/complainschool.aspx>

1. Clarify the issue (what is your concern?)

Before you approach our school or your child's teacher:

- Be clear about the topic or issue you want to discuss
- Focus on the things that are genuinely affecting your child at this time
- Always remain calm and remember you may not have all the facts relating to the circumstances of the topic or issue you wish to discuss
- Think about what would be an acceptable outcome for you and your child
- Be informed; check the DEECD policies or guidelines, where relevant
- Please do not email teachers, other school staff or the school if you have a concern or complaint. Concerns or complaints are best handled in person or in writing but not in an email or as an attachment in an email.
- For further helpful hints, see <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/complaininfo.aspx>

2. Contact our school to arrange a time to speak with or meet with your child's teacher

There are a number of ways you can raise any concerns you have about your child and their education. You can:

- Write a note to your child's teacher outlining your concerns (Please do not email teachers or other school staff if you have a concern or complaint.)
- Ring the school office on 56741253 and make an appointment to speak on the phone or in person with your child's class teacher and ensure that you inform the office staff about the nature of the issue you wish to discuss (give just enough details so that the teacher will understand the reason for your call)
- Please arrange any meeting times or phone calls through the school office (this is more convenient for both you and your child's teacher and does not interrupt teachers during the time they need to be with their students or when they are preparing for class/es).

NB: The class teacher, together with any others who may be involved, need to be given a reasonable amount of time to take the steps required to resolve or address your concerns. Remember, it may not always be possible to resolve an issue to your complete satisfaction or as swiftly as you would like.

3. Contact the Principal or Assistant Principal

Most concerns are resolved by following the first two steps above. However, if the issue remains unresolved after you have first approached your child's teacher you can then ask to see the Assistant Principal or Principal.

To do this, you will need to request an appointment through the school office. You can do this in person or by telephone. Please give the office staff enough information so that the Principal or Assistant Principal understands the reason for your requested appointment. Please note that:

- The Principal may ask the Assistant Principal or another staff member to speak with you on their behalf
- If a teacher is going to be present at the meeting it is more likely to occur outside of classroom hours.
- Please do not email the Principal or Assistant Principal if you have a concern or complaint. Concerns or complaints are best raised in person or in writing but not in an email or as an attachment to an email.

NB: If your concern is related to issues of school policy, these should be raised more formally (in writing but not in an email or as an attachment to an email) with the Principal or School Council President.

4. Contact the regional office

If you still feel that your complaint has not been addressed satisfactorily after speaking to the teacher and the principal, you can then contact the regional office of DEECD for South-Eastern Victoria.

**** In addition**, please familiarise yourself with the “Inverloch-Kongwak Statement of Values”, consistent with the Victorian Government’s **Creating Respectful and Safe School Communities guidelines** which outlines the expectations for how all members of our school community should behave. Unreasonable behaviour will not be tolerated.