Inverloch / Kongwak approach to prevention and management of incidents of Bullying.

At Inverloch / Kongwak Primary School we aim to prevent incidents of bullying through a school culture that is based on positive relationships, a spirit of co-operation and that promotes pro-social behaviours and respectful communication in a safe, effective learning environment. We recognize that children are less inclined to bully others, and more likely to stop their bullying behaviour when they experience pressure from people who most matter in their lives and whose opinions they respect. This includes other students, parents and teachers.

Incidents of bullying and harassment are considered a violation of people and relationships and a breach of a person's rights to be safe, respected and happy.

All members of our school community: children, teachers, other workers and parents have the right to be free of bullying and (if bullied) to be provided with help and support.

All members of the school community: have the responsibility to abstain personally from bullying others; to actively discourage bullying when it occurs; and to give support to those who are bullied. All members of the school community are encouraged to intervene to stop bullying: to let the person know that their behaviour is to stop, &/or to walk away from the scene of the bullying and to get help from an adult. Bystanders who observe bullying behaviour and do not take action to stop it or at least walk away, are condoning the unacceptable behaviour.

What is bullying?

Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, upset or create a risk to another person's health and safety - either psychologically or physically - or their property, reputation or social acceptance <u>on more than one occasion</u>.

Types of bullying

There are three broad categories of bullying.

- Direct physical bullying e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing others or damaging their property.
- Direct verbal bullying e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.
- Indirect bullying - This form of bullying is harder to recognise and often carried out behind the bullied student's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Indirect bullying includes:
  - lying and spreading rumours
  - playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
  - mimicking

- excluding someone or encouraging others to socially exclude someone

- damaging someone's social reputation and social acceptance

- cyber-bullying, which involves the use of email, text and/or phone messages or chat rooms to humiliate and distress.

What bullying is not

Many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management. There are three socially unpleasant situations that are often confused with bullying:

Mutual conflict - In mutual conflict situations, there is an argument or disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the problem. However, unresolved mutual conflict sometimes develops into a bullying situation with one person becoming targeted repeatedly for 'retaliation' in a one-sided way.

Choosing not to play with someone or not to like someone – Is not bullying unless behaviour involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress.

Single-episode acts of nastiness or meanness, or random acts of aggression or intimidation - Single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If a student is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied.

Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different students is not the same as bullying. However, single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not to be ignored or condoned.

<u>Strategies for preventing and managing bullying at Inverloch / Kongwak Primary School</u>

Incidents of bullying will be generally be addressed using the 4-step approach as outlined in our school's Relationships, Rights and Responsibilities Policy.

Teachers and other staff will be vigilant to bullying behaviour and will take action to stop it.

Students are encouraged to report incidents of bullying to teachers and to persist in their reporting if incidents continue and/or they are, or someone else is, feeling unsafe.

<u>Parents are encouraged to:-</u>
- **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).

Sensible advice includes: (NB: You could assist your child by practising these strategies with them.)
- using the 5-finger plan
- using an assertive voice and saying 'leave me alone' and calmly walking away
- avoiding situations and behaviours that might expose them to further bullying
- being around other children and making new friends.
- reporting the bullying to a teacher.

- **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 solutions have been tried so far?
• The names of any teachers who are aware of the problem.
- **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.
• At the meeting stay calm and be prepared to work with us in trying to fix this problem.
- **Most likely, we will need time to investigate and to talk to teachers and, perhaps, other students.**
- **Step 5:** Make a time for a follow-up conversation, either by phone or in person.

Source (adapted from):
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)
- ➢ Reassure any person who has been bullied
- ➢ Take appropriate action to support the person who has been bullied
- ➢ Assess the severity and seriousness of the bullying and take appropriate action (discuss with the Principal / Assistant Principal)

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.

The severity and seriousness of the bullying will be assessed and appropriate action taken.

This may include any of the strategies identified in the 4-step approach as outlined in our school's Relationships, Rights and Responsibilities Policy, and especially:-

- - monitoring of the student/s identified in the surveys
- - interviewing the student/s affected
- - interviewing the student identified as bullying other/s
- - counselling (for those affected and/or those doing the bullying)
- - assertiveness training
- - bystander intervention training
- - buddy program
- - discussions with parents (of any or all parties)

- formal apology
- group conference
- withdrawal of privileges (eg computer and/or internet access)
- referral to school support personnel and/or allied health professionals (eg Psychologist, Social Worker)
- use of common non-punitive approaches to dealing with bullying, eg Restorative Conference, The Method of Shared Concern, No-Blame Approach
- 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

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)