PREVENTION OF BULLYING (including cyber-bullying)

and HARASSMENT POLICY

Purpose

RedGum – The Waldorf School of Central Victoria (RedGum), is committed to providing a safe, caring and respectful culture which enables positive relationships to be formed amongst all students and staff; and which encourages self-esteem, cooperation, personal growth and a positive attitude to learning and teaching. A clear policy on bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment will inform the community that bullying and harassment in any of its forms will not be tolerated.

Every student and staff member at RedGum should feel welcome, supported and emotionally and physically secure at school. The wellbeing of all students and staff is a priority. Individuals cannot achieve their potential if they are being treated unfairly, discriminated against, vilified, harassed or victimised.

RedGum is bound by the *Equal Opportunity Act 1995 (Vic)*, and *Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014 (Vic)* which says that it is against the law to discriminate against anyone, including students and staff members, because of their actual or assumed:

- age
- breastfeeding
- carer status
- disability/impairment
- gender identity
- industrial activity
- lawful sexual activity
- marital status
- parental status
- physical features
- political belief or activity
- pregnancy
- race
- religious belief or activity
- sex
- sexual orientation
- personal association with someone who has, or is assumed to have, one of these personal characteristics

- or any other factor

No member of the school community will be treated less favourably because they possess any of these personal characteristics nor will such characteristics affect access to benefits and services RedGum provides.

On behalf of the whole school community, the Board of Directors and the Principal support this policy and the principles and practice of equal opportunity, inclusion and respect for diversity that it articulates.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies including:

- *Positive* Behaviour Development (Discipline) Policy,
- Complaints Policy,
- Restrictive Intervention and Expulsion Policy

Aims

To reinforce within the school community that no form of bullying is acceptable.

- That everyone within the school community is alerted to signs and evidence of bullying and has a responsibility to report it to staff whether as observer or victim.
- To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up and that support is given to all parties.
- To seek parental and peer-group support and co-operation at all times.

Definition

Bullying is repeated oppression, physical or psychological, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group.

Bullying is a pattern of behaviour by one person or a group of people towards another that is designed to hurt, injure, embarrass, upset, or discomfort that person. It can include:

- Physical aggression;
- The use of put-down comments or insults;
- Name-calling;
- Damage to the person's property;
- Deliberate exclusion from activities;
- The setting-up of humiliating experiences.

Bullying behaviour has these key features:

- It is deliberate;
- It causes distress;

- It is repeated;
- It is unreasonable and unjustifiable;
- It is directed at a specific person or group;
- There is an imbalance of power between the bully and the target of the bullying.

There are four broad categories of bullying:

1. **Direct physical bullying** – e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.
2. **Direct psychological/psychosocial bullying** – e.g. name calling, teasing, intimidation, threatening to cause someone harm, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.
3. **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;
    - encouraging others to socially exclude someone;
    - damaging someone's social reputation and social acceptance.
4. **Cyber bullying** consists of covert, psychological bullying, conveyed through electronic mediums such as mobile phones, websites, on-line chat rooms, 'MUD' rooms (multi-user domains where individuals take on different characters). It is verbal (over the telephone or mobile phone), or written (flaming, threats, racial, sexual or homophobic harassment) using the various mediums available.

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

Conflict - When children experience conflict, it happens occasionally and typically all those involved: have close to equal 'power' (real or perceived balance of age, strength, size, popularity); become upset and feel some remorse; want to solve the problem/resolve the disagreement; take responsibility for their actions and restore the relationship. Note that conflict is different to bullying and is managed according to the Positive Behaviour Development (Discipline) Policy.

Restorative Justice Approach

The staff at RedGum are working together to implement a set of formal and formal process using the philosophy and practices of Restorative Justice. We believe this approach fosters a safe environment for all students and staff. These processes build relationships and a sense of community with shared values to prevent conflict and wrongdoing, and to respond to wrongdoing with the intention to repair harm done to relationships, people and property over

and above the need for blaming and dispensing punishment. A restorative focus allows everyone affected to accept responsibility for their actions and can assist in moving forward with a positive attitude. We believe this approach fosters a safe environment for all students and staff and respects each individual as a developing human being.

Aspects of this approach include:

- Facilitating dialogue between all those affected by the wrongdoing
- Providing opportunity for all those affected to share their story, their feelings and their needs
- Involving everyone affected in finding mutually acceptable ways forward
- Encouraging those responsible for the harm to become accountable for their actions and responsible for putting right the wrong and repairing harm caused by any behaviour that has had an impact on others.

Policy

Our school will actively promote a positive and welcoming personal environment for all members of the school community. When people are bullied or harassed some effects might be anger, embarrassment, fear and humiliation, loss of self-confidence and reduced function and potential. Bullying and harassment will be addressed, individual differences will be respected, and students and staff will be enabled and supported in their pursuit of learning and teaching.

Any member of the school community who raises an issue of discrimination, harassment, bullying or vilification in good faith will not be victimised or otherwise unfairly treated or disadvantaged. All complaints of bullying or harassment will be taken seriously, investigated and acted upon as quickly as possible.

A school-wide approach will be taken to deal with bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment in a consistent and systematic way.

All new students and staff will be informed of the Prevention of Bullying and Harassment Policy and procedures at the commencement of their time at the school.

Our school will organise preventative curriculum programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.

Staff professional learning programs will occur periodically to keep staff informed of current issues/strategies for dealing with these issues.

There will be disciplinary consequences, covering a range of strategies, for those in breach of this policy.

Document Control

Document ID	RedGum Prevention of Bullying and Harassment Policy
Owner/Approver:	Principal
Author:	
Effective Date:	October 2022
Revision Due Date:	April 2023

Version History

Version	Effective Date	Description of changes from previous version	Authors
1.0	October 2022	Existing	
1.1	October 2022	Updated to new policy format. Procedure separated from policy, Procedure simplified and made clearer	N Johnson
2.0	21/10/2022	Ratified by the Board	N Johnson
2.1	26/02/2025	Reformatted. Document Control and Version History added.	H Ashwell
2.2	1/12/2025	New name and logo	H Ashwell
2.3	13/1/26	Separated policy from procedure	N Johnson