



Equal Opportunity and Anti-Harassment Policy

Purpose

Berwick Chase Primary School aims to create an inclusive school culture that fosters acceptance and respect for diversity. In doing so, we seek to deepen understanding and knowledge, promote student and staff wellbeing, and help everyone achieve their full potential. This school is enriched by, and celebrates, the diversity of our whole school community. Discrimination, harassment, vilification, bullying and victimisation will not be tolerated at Berwick Chase Primary School under any circumstances.

This school supports the Charter of Human Rights and the Equal Opportunity Act 1995 (Vic), which states that it is against the law to discriminate against anyone, including students and school staff, because of their actual or assumed:

- age
- breastfeeding
- carer status
- disability/impairment/illness
- 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.



Implementation

Berwick Chase Primary School will take action to prevent discrimination, harassment, vilification, bullying and victimisation and to promote a safe and inclusive school. The school will:

- Take immediate and appropriate action to address and resolve EO issues and complaints.
- Take action to promote human rights both in terms of school policy and practice and within its educational activities and culture.
- Human rights based approach means taking steps to assess the school's decisions and actions within the framework of the Charter and also taking proactive steps to encourage and promote wider school discussion and student learning on the key Charter themes of Freedom, Respect, Equality and Dignity.

Rights and Responsibilities

Under this policy, every member of the Berwick Chase Primary School has the right to learn and work in a safe and inclusive environment free of discrimination, harassment, bullying, vilification and victimisation. Along with this right comes the responsibility to respect and promote human rights and responsibilities by behaving according to this policy.

- The Principal of Berwick Chase Primary School is accountable for implementation of this policy.
- The Principal of Berwick Chase Primary School may appoint an EO and Anti-Harassment Co-ordinator to support implementation of this policy.

Complaints procedures

Berwick Chase Primary School encourages all members of the school community to attempt to resolve complaints and concerns through the school. All complaints will be treated confidentially, fairly and consistently, and resolved as speedily as possible. 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 victimisation will be taken seriously, investigated and acted upon as quickly as possible.

Every student and staff member at Berwick Chase Primary School should feel welcome, supported, emotionally and physically secure at school. The wellbeing of all students and staff is a priority. We understand that an individual cannot achieve their potential if someone is treating them unfairly, discriminating against them, vilifying, harassing or victimising them.

Complaints procedures exist to provide an avenue to address unacceptable behaviour. Complaints procedures are designed to explain what to do if it is believed an individual has been discriminated against, harassed, sexually harassed, bullied, vilified or victimised.

Staff: Please refer to the Department's Guidelines for Managing Complaints, Unsatisfactory Performance and Misconduct.

Parents: Please refer to DEECD's [Parent Complaints](#) guidelines.

Students: Report it to a trusted adult, such as a teacher, the year level co-ordinator, the Principal or the Assistant Principal.

If an individual is unhappy with the decision about their complaint, they may seek a review of the decision in accordance with departmental procedures.

Definitions

Discrimination: Discrimination may be direct or indirect; both are against the law.

Direct discrimination means treating someone unfairly or less favourably because of one of the personal characteristics listed above or because of their association with someone identified with one of those characteristics (e.g. refusing to enrol a student because he has Hepatitis C, refusing to allow a Muslim student to wear the hijab as part of her school uniform, or failing to hire a suitably qualified teacher because of his or her sexual orientation.)

Indirect discrimination happens when a rule, policy or requirement unnecessarily or unreasonably disadvantages a person or group of people because of a protected personal characteristic they share (e.g. Imposing a requirement that all students take



notes from the whiteboard without assistance may unreasonably disadvantage a student with a vision impairment).

Harassment: Harassment is behaviour (through words or actions) based on personal characteristics that is unwanted, unasked for, unreturned and likely to make school an unfriendly or uncomfortable place by; humiliating (putting someone down), seriously embarrassing, offending (hurting someone's feelings), or intimidating (threatening someone so they behave in a certain way) (e.g. name calling, stereotyping jokes and offensive comments).

Sexual harassment: an unwelcome sexual advance; request for sex or any other sexual behaviour that a reasonable person would know or expect would offend, humiliate, seriously embarrass or humiliate another (e.g. unwanted touching, unwelcome sexual innuendo or jokes, displaying sexually explicit material (posters, emails, internet sites).

Vilification is behaviour (through words or actions) that incites hatred, serious contempt or ridicule of another person or group of people because of their race or religious belief (e.g. public threats of harm, encouraging others to hate someone because of their religion, racist statements made in a public meeting, racist graffiti).

Bullying: unreasonable behaviour that is intimidating, threatening or humiliating and repeated over time or occurring as part of a pattern of behaviour. Bullying can be physical, verbal or indirect, and creates an unfriendly, threatening or offensive environment (e.g. taking or damaging other people's property, excluding or isolating someone, subjecting someone to homophobic abuse, deliberately withholding information so as to affect their work performance, threatening not to renew an employment contract).

Victimisation: treating someone unfairly or otherwise disadvantaging them because they have made an EO complaint or might do so in the future.

Evaluation

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's **four-year review cycle**.

This Policy was ratified at School Council on Monday April 29th 2013.