Policy statement:

Students at Craigieburn Primary School are expected to operate within the guidelines as set out in the Student Welfare Policy and Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy. These documents adhere to DET guidelines, anti-discrimination legislation and mandatory reporting requirements. 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 Craigieburn Primary School is committed to providing a safe and caring environment and teaching. A clear bullying (including cyberbullying and harassment) prevention policy will inform the community that bullying and harassment in any of its forms will not be tolerated.

Child safe standard:

Victorian Government Schools are child safe environments. Our school actively promotes the safety and wellbeing of all students, and all school staff are committed to protecting students from abuse or harm in the school environment, in accordance with the legal obligations including child safety standards. Refer to our Child Safety and Code of Conduct Policies.

Aims:

- To provide clear definitions of what is and what is not bullying and harassment.
- To reinforce within the school community that no form of bullying or harassment is acceptable.
- To provide clear advice on the roles and responsibilities of the whole school community, including students, parents, caregivers and teachers for preventing and responding to bullying behaviour.
- To provide clear procedures for everyone to report incidents of bullying to the school.
- To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up.
- To support any person who has been affected by, engaged in or witnessed bullying behaviour. (Refer to the Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy)
- To seek the support and co-operation of the whole-school community at all times.
Definitions:

**Bullying** is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological aggressive behaviour by a person or group directed towards a less powerful person or group that is intended to cause harm, distress or fear.

**Cyberbullying** is wilful and repeated harm that takes place using electronic technology. Electronic technology includes devices and equipment such as mobile phones, computers, and tablets as well as communication tools including social media sites, text messages, chat, and websites.

Examples of cyberbullying include: mean text messages or emails, rumours sent by email or posted on social networking sites, and embarrassing pictures, videos, websites, or fake profiles.

Cyberbullying involves someone (or a group of people) repeatedly and intentionally using negative words and/or actions against you, which causes you distress and risks your wellbeing.

**Harassment** is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome which could reasonably be expected to cause offence, humiliation or intimidation to a person.

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.

Guidelines:

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

All new students and staff will be informed of the bullying and harassment policy and practices at the commencement of their time at the school.

All complaints of bullying/harassment will be heard in confidence and taken seriously.

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

Staff 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 the Bullying (including cyberbullying) and Harassment Prevention Procedures. (see Appendix A).

Program:

Constructive strategies to deal with harassment will include: education in coping strategies; assertiveness training; problem solving and social skills; counselling and behaviour modification. These strategies will be employed in preference to punitive sanctions and negative consequences.

The Bullying and Harassment Prevention Procedure of the school will be widely promoted to students, staff, parents/carers and the local community.

A summary of the policy will be included in the Student Enrolment Package while new staff will receive extensive documentation as part of the school’s induction process.

The school leadership team and the teachers will work together to ensure the safety of all school members in situations of bullying (including cyberbullying) and harassment, by thoroughly investigating all complaints while respecting the need for confidentiality, notifying parents/carers and planning interventions.

If a teacher feels a student is at serious and imminent risk from bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment then it is their professional duty to pass on the information to an appropriate person in order to ensure appropriate support for the student. It is important that teachers document fully their interaction with the student and to verify the actions taken.
Student programs will be organised to raise student awareness about bullying (including cyberbullying) and harassment, to provide a forum for discussion of matters and to aid development of attitudes. Some matters will be dealt with formally in the curriculum and in peer support programs, leadership programs, extra-curricular programs and occasional activities run by outside experts and workers. The curriculum will include anti-bullying messages and strategies in line with current DET materials e.g. Bully Stoppers: Make a Stand, ‘No Blame Approach to Bullying’ and the “Thumbs Up” program.

Professional development will be provided for staff relating to bullying (including cyberbullying) and harassment and proven strategies to address these issues in classrooms will be shared with all staff.

The school will provide specialist resources such as web links, books and professional learning sessions to assist staff in responding appropriately to bullying (including cyberbullying) and harassment issues.

Disciplinary consequences for bullying (including cyberbullying) and harassment will comply with the school’s Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy. The principal or their nominee will provide disciplinary consequences including suspension in accordance with Department of Education and Training (DET) guidelines.

**Links and appendices (including processes related to this policy):**

Links which are connected with this policy are:

DET’s [Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance 2014: Student Engagement Policy](#)

The school’s Acceptable Use Agreement (re cyber-bullying).

DET’s [Bully Stoppers](#)

[esSmart](#) – Alannah and Madeline Foundation.

Appendices which are connected with this policy are:

Appendix A: Anti-Bullying (including cyberbullying) and Anti-Harassment Procedures.

**Evaluation:**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s cyclic process or more often if necessary due to changes in legislation or regulations.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in **Aug 2016** and will be reviewed annually.
Appendix A

Anti-Bullying (including cyberbullying) and Anti-Harassment Procedures

What are Bullying, Cyberbullying and Harassment?

Bullying

Types of Bullying

There are three broad categories of bullying:

1. Direct physical bullying – e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.
2. Direct verbal bullying – e.g. name calling, 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 persons 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.
- Cyber-bullying, which involves the use of electronic means 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.

Social Rejection or Dislike

Unless the social rejection is directed towards someone specific and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others, it is not bullying.

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.
Why do we have a Policy on Bullying and Harassment?

To provide a safe and friendly school environment for students and staff and to encourage care, courtesy and respect for others. All persons have a legal right to protection from harassment under the Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act and the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act.

What are the potential consequences of Bullying and Harassment?

- Poor health - anxiety, depression.
- Lower self-esteem.
- Reduced study performance.
- Missed classes, social withdrawal.
- Reduced career prospects.

Am I bullying or harassing someone?

If you are not sure about your behaviour you can:

- Check it out by asking if it is offensive or inappropriate.
- Stop it.
- Apologise.
- Take it seriously if someone says they are feeling uncomfortable.
- Talk it over with an adviser or somebody who has an understanding of the issues.

What are some of the feelings targets of bullying or harassment may experience?

“*I will ignore it and it will go away.*”

At times, when a person is ignored they often lose interest in continuing the bullying. If this doesn't work or it is getting worse - tell someone and ask for their help.

“*I don't want to cause trouble.*”

Most causes of harassment are sorted out quite simply. By speaking up, action can be taken to address the problem.

“*Am I to blame?*”

Targets of harassment or bullying sometimes feel that it is their fault. Targets are made to feel guilty by the perpetrator and often blame themselves. It is your right to have a safe environment free from harassment or bullying.

“*Am I imagining things?*”

Often our hunches are correct. Rather than put up with nagging doubts, talk to someone about your feelings.

Bullying or harassment can often make people feel:

- Embarrassed or ashamed.
- Offended or humiliated.
- Intimidated or frightened.
- Uncomfortable.
What should you do if you see another person being bullied or harassed?

- If you feel safe when you see the bullying happening, you could encourage the target to walk away and support them to find a teacher to help stop the bullying.
- However, if it is your friend who is harassing another person, let them know that their behaviour is unacceptable.
- Bystanders who do nothing to stop bullying may be contributing to the problem by providing an audience for the bully.

**Bullying can involve:**

- Grabbing, aggressive staring, hitting, pinching, kicking, pushing and shoving.
- Publicly excluding a person from your group.
- Knocking a person's books or belongings out of their hands or off their desk.
- Teasing a person because of their looks.

**Cyberbullying can involve:**

- **Flaming** – online fights using electronic messages with angry or vulgar messages.
- **Impersonation** – hacking into someone's account and posing as that person with the intention to get that person in trouble or damage that person's reputation or friendships.
- **Sexting** - Sending nude, sexual or indecent photos (or 'selfies') using a computer, mobile phone or other mobile device.
- **Harassment** – repeatedly sending nasty, mean and insulting messages.
- **Defamation** – posting or sending gossip or rumours about a person to damage his/her reputation or friendships.
- **Outing** – sharing someone's secrets or embarrassing information or images online.
- **Exclusion** – intentionally and cruelly excluding someone from an online group.
- **Trolling** – intentionally posting provocative messages about sensitive subjects to create conflict, upset people, and bait them into “flaming” or fighting.
- **Cyber-stalking** – repeated, intense harassment and denigration that includes threats or creates significant fear.

**Harassment is usually directed at a person because of their gender, race or abilities** – it can be subtle or explicit

*Subtle (the most common) they include:*

- Offensive staring and leering.
- Unwanted comments about physical appearance and sexual preference.
- Racist or smutty comments or jokes.
- Questions about another’s sexual activity.
- Persistent comments about a person’s private life or family.
- Physical contact e.g. purposely brushing up against another’s body.
- Offensive name calling.
• **Explicit (obvious)** they include:
  - Grabbing, aggressive hitting, pinching and shoving, etc.
  - Unwelcome patting, touching, embracing.
  - Repeated requests for dates, especially after refusal.
  - Offensive gestures, jokes, comments, letters, phone calls or e-mail.
  - Sexually and/or racially provocative remarks.
  - Displays of sexually graphic material – pornography.
  - Requests for sexual favours.
  - Extreme forms of sexual harassment will lead to criminal prosecution.

**What do you do if you are being bullied or harassed?**

• Tell the person you don’t like what they are doing and you want them to stop.
• Talk to someone you trust straight away – like a teacher, friend or parent.
• The school will take your concerns seriously - all complaints will be treated confidentially.

**How will your complaint be dealt with?**

Your concerns will be taken seriously. All complaints will be treated confidentially.

School procedures for responding to a student who bullies or harasses others are set out below.

**Level 1**

If the bullying or harassment incident is minor or first time occurrence, teachers may elect to use one or more anti-bullying practices:

• Stopping the bullying and revision of rules and consequences.
• Restorative questioning.
• Private conference.
• Shared control discussion.
• If the student does not take control over his/her behaviour, a chronicle entry should be created on the school management system (Compass). This should be completed and submitted to the Student Welfare Officer or Principal/Assistant Principal.
Level 2

If the bullying or harassment continues, or in instances of severe bullying or harassing, a referral should be made to the Student Welfare Officer.

Here, the Student Welfare Officer (or another who has responsibility for student welfare) may:

- Discuss the issue during student welfare meeting (attended by Principal, School Chaplain and Student Welfare Officer).
- Meet with the student to develop a behaviour contract.
- Facilitate a restorative conference with both the victim and the bully.
- Provide mentoring of different social and emotional learning competencies.
- Monitoring the wellbeing and behaviour of the victim and the bully.

Level 3

For ‘at risk’ students (many risk factors, few protective factors) whose bullying or harassing behaviour is severe and for other non-at risk students whose bullying or harassing and other aggressive behaviour is resistant to change, an individual ‘strength building’ plan should be developed by the Student Welfare Officer in consultation with student, parents/carers and teachers. Individual strength-building plans and associated interventions help connect the student to positive people, programs and actions in the community, school and home as well as develop the student’s inner social and emotional strengths (skills, values).

Level 4

Students whose severe bullying or harassing behaviour resists school efforts and represents a significant threat to the safety and wellbeing should be referred to outside agencies for evaluation. Staff responsible for student welfare will need to be familiar with those community agencies and organisations that can offer more intensive services to the student and student’s family.

Note: The school may choose, if bullying or harassment persists or the initial incident is of such magnitude, that parents/carers will be contacted and consequences implemented consistent with the school’s Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy. Furthermore, the principal may commence formal disciplinary action in line with Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance 2014’ (DET) at any stage in the process depending on contextual information relating to the severity of the bullying (including cyberbullying) and harassment.