

## MODEL FARMS HIGH SCHOOL

### ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Every person at Model Farms High School has the right to feel happy and safe. They also, have the right to experience positive and respectful relationships between all members of the school community.

Bullying is a most unacceptable antisocial behaviour. At Model Farms there is a commitment to create a safe, and caring environment in which all students can achieve success both academically and socially.

In countering bullying, there is a strong school community approach where effective programs ensure the message that bullying is not accepted or tolerated is communicated to the school student population.

The School's Student Welfare & Discipline Policy especially reflects the community drive to create an environment which best fosters everyone's personal well being - essential for facilitating good learning in a happy and safe school.

#### **A Consistent Approach to Bullying at Model Farms High School.**

The strategies listed below develop awareness amongst students of the nature and consequences of bullying, how they can help to decrease it, and what to do if they are bullied.

- Anti-Bullying Workshops in Year 7 & 8;  
Training of Peer Mediators and School Welcomers in Years 7-11; Workshops and counselling for students who are often targeted by students who exhibit bullying behaviours;
- Workshops and counselling for students who frequently exhibit bullying behaviours;
- Workshops for parents/guardians helping them to "bully proof" their children;
- Workshops for parents/guardians helping them work with their child to stop bullying behaviour;
- Training staff to recognise and employ the most effective way to deal with bullying both in, and out, of the classroom;

Many behaviours can be considered as bullying. As bullying is based on threat or fear it can include shunning behaviour which involves intimidation, coercion, inappropriate physical contact, unequal use of power, name calling, any form of discrimination, demanding money, spreading rumours, taking sides against others. This can be through technological means (phone text/e-mail) through others directly or between two or more parties. In whatever way, it is totally unacceptable at Model Farms High School.

#### **What should we do if we are, or see others, being bullied?**

##### **For students:**

If you view bullying in progress.....

- Try to get the bully to stop by speaking calmly and assertively;
- Tell the person being bullied that something can be done;
- Tell someone like a friend; peer mediator; Year Adviser; teacher you are familiar with;
- Remember it is the responsibility of all school community members to ensure we all feel comfortable and happy at school;

Teachers, parents and other students attitudes and actions towards bullying incidents have a very productive and significant effect in tackling the problem.

- The following actions especially address the problem of bullying at our school.
- There is:
  - Encouragement of students to report
  - Documentation of all incidents via the bullying referral
  - Thorough investigation of each incident by the Deputy Principals and Welfare team via R.I.S.C Data
  - Protection of the victim from further bullying

- Counselling and monitoring for perpetrator(s)
- Counselling for victims
- Follow up actions to ensure the bullying has stopped
- Contact and liaison with parents of bully and victim via our Welfare team.

#### **If you are a student being bullied....**

- Remember 'Silence is the bully's friend' so you need to deal with the situation now, making sure you enlist the help of others, if it is too confronting to deal with yourself;
- If you feel able, confront the person bullying you and explain calmly and assertively that you don't like them treating you in such a way;
- Very soon, talk to someone who can help such as one of your teachers; a friend; your Year Adviser; a Peer Mediator; a Peer Support Leader; a Senior student; a Head Teacher; the School Counsellor; the Deputy Principal; the Principal; your parent or guardian;

#### **For Parents/Caregivers:**

- Encourage your children to discuss bullying as much as possible explaining that 'Silence is the bully's friend'. A thorough reading of this policy with your children is highly recommended.
- Encourage them to follow the procedures outlined above, if they report bullying.
- Listen to your child. Remain open minded. Ask questions gently. Reflect on what has been done so far. Help your child understand what will be done according to the school's anti-bullying policy. Discuss bullying with your child(ren) and establish that it is not an acceptable practice regardless of how trivial they think the problem may seem.
- As a parent, never try to sort out the bullies yourself. This rarely works and often makes matters worse. Working with, and through, the school is best.
- Once you have a clear picture of the situation and some ideas about how you and the child would prefer to handle the situation, contact the school (through your son/daughter's Year Adviser). The school's Deputies are keen to assist.
- Your assistance may be sought by the school to resolve the issue. In serious situations, such as physical assault, you will become automatically involved.
- It should be noted that instances of bullying are unfortunately, becoming increasingly common through technology - outside of regular school hours. These include bullying others through personal internet sites, internet chat rooms, SMS text messages, mobile phone calls, mobile phone photographs, home phone calls and the like. We encourage you as parents to supervise this interaction as best you can and involve the relevant telecommunication agencies or police if this need arises. The departments current Suspension and Expulsion Policy takes such issues most seriously.

#### **In conclusion**

Bullying exists at all levels in our society. We now know that the effects of bullying on learning and general adjustment at school can be devastating and far-reaching for the students involved. We trust that the whole school community can share the responsibility for combating bullying whenever, and wherever, it occurs.

#### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Data collected through R.I.S.C and the Quality of School Life Survey will be used to evaluate this policy, as will consultation with parents and the Student Welfare Team.

*School Council*