



MUTUAL RESPECT POLICY

This policy sets out the expectations Preshil has of students and staff, together with the commitment the school expects them to make to the shared values of the Preshil community.

Preshil is committed to ensuring that the working and learning environment is fostering positive relationships free from unlawful discrimination, harassment and bullying. The school will provide a positive culture where bullying is not accepted, and in so doing, ensure that all individuals feel safe, respected and accepted as unique individuals with a contribution to make to the richness and diversity of the school community.

Everyone in the Preshil school community has a responsibility to personally refrain from harassing or bullying others, actively discourage harassment and bullying and support all parties involved in situations of potential conflict.

PURPOSE

Preshil intends that everyone feels safe, cared for and respected for who they are as precious individuals. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that staff, parents and children of Preshil will work together to create a safe, caring, respectful and productive learning community. This policy asserts that children have the right to express their needs, stand up for themselves, take responsibility for their actions and make their own decisions through the use of conflict resolution skills. These skills are taught in The Nursery School, through to Year 12. Preshil's emphasis on social and emotional learning benefits all children. It involves learning to recognise and manage emotions, promote caring and concern for others, make responsible decisions, establish and maintain positive relationships, and handle challenging situations effectively. Children who have social and emotional competencies and skills find it easier to manage themselves, relate to others, resolve conflict, and feel positive about themselves and the world around them. Parents are also encouraged to use the same skills.

GOALS

Through the Mutual Respect Policy the school aims to:

- educate our School community that bullying is never acceptable;
- provide guidelines for teachers to deal with bullying should it occur;
- establish procedures which promote the elimination of bullying and unmanaged anger;
- promote a climate of mutual respect and caring amongst children and adults in our school;

- provide an effective procedure for resolving complaints in a sensitive, fair and timely manner;
- involve children in prevention strategies, through class meetings and whole school forums; and
- provide the opportunity to use restorative justice approaches to resolve bullying issues in the short, medium and long term. In addition to the children affected, this may involve peer mediators as well as staff.

Staff will respond to any acts of harassment or bullying immediately and positively.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

For example:

“Bullying is when someone picks on someone else because they are different – their race, height, weight, or looks....(it’s about) prejudice and discrimination and when someone gets hurt physically or mentally, or when someone is not respected.” (A Year 8 girl)

Bullying is repeated behaviour, which is hurtful and deliberately causes distress or harm to another person, their reputation or property, and risks their health and safety, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

At the basis of this anti-social behaviour is a desire to retain control and power over others and a desire to intimidate and dominate. Bullying may be subtle or overt. It may be obvious or difficult to identify.

There are many forms of harassment and bullying. For example:

Physical:	hitting, kicking, punching, taking or damaging belongings and, in extreme cases, involves serious injuries.
Verbal:	name-calling, insulting, threats, repeated teasing, sexist (including homophobic) remarks.
Emotional:	this includes spreading rumours to damage another person’s reputation and exclusion that is aimed to hurt or humiliate.
Racist:	racial taunts, graffiti, gestures.
Psychological:	a maintained silence can be used to undermine or ostracise.
Sexual harassment:	includes sexually oriented jokes, drawing or writing about someone’s body, using rude names or commenting about someone’s moral values and asking unacceptable questions about someone’s private life.
Cyberbullying:	This includes all use of email, text messages or other electronic communications or video recordings or chat rooms designed to harass, cause discomfort, spread rumours, expose or invade private or confidential material and/or intimidate. Appropriate behaviour adheres to the Preshil “Acceptable Use Policy”.

Bullying is not:

- Mutual arguments and disagreements.
- Single episodes of social rejection or dislike.
- Single episode acts of nastiness or spite.
- Random acts of aggression or intimidation.

TWO PROCEDURES

1. Prevention

Classroom practice:

- Proactive building of community values
- Anti Bullying programs
- Restorative Justice programs
- Issues raised in student forums and meetings

Staff development programs:

- Restorative Justice program
- Staff Code of Practice

2. Reporting and seeking remedy

STUDENTS

What can I do if I feel that I am being bullied or harassed?

- Be aware that every person at Preshil has a right to a safe, caring environment.
- An incident of harassment/bullying can be reported by anyone – students, staff, parents/carers, the wider community, or any member of the school community.
- Tell the person that their behaviour offends you. For example: “I don’t like it when you do that, please stop”, or something similar.
- Where possible deal with issues that arise yourself and with support from a teacher, counsellor or parent.
- If the unwanted behaviours continue the following procedure will be followed:

Procedure for Students

- Report the unwanted behaviour to a trusted teacher or counsellor.
- The incident will be investigated by a student coordinator or the Head of Campus.
- All the parties involved including bystanders (where possible) will be interviewed and findings documented by the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, a student coordinator or the Head of Campus.
- Counselling will be offered to both parties if appropriate.
- Support will be offered and a restorative justice approach will be utilised to address the harm caused and ensure a respectful agreement is made between all parties.
- All reported incidences will be recorded and filed.
- A course of action will be determined in joint consultation with the child’s parents, teachers and Head of Campus.
- It is expected that the implementation of the policy would normally be successful in resolving the issues. If this is not the case, other measures may be considered and external agencies may be utilised.
- If no further improvement in behaviour is secured and it is clear that a student is not willing to accept the stated values of the school, or the behaviour of the child in itself is such that all other sanctions are inappropriate, consideration will be given by the Head of Campus and Principal to the exclusion of that child, either on a fixed period or permanent basis.

REVIEW

This policy will be subject to ongoing review.