

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY & ANTI HARRASSMENT POLICY

RATIONALE

Providing a welcoming, supportive, emotionally and physically secure learning and working environment for every member of the school community is essential. We recognise and promote human rights and value diversity and life experiences of the school community. This policy covers staff, students, parents, caregivers, school council members, contractors and volunteers in all interactions. Findon Primary School acknowledges that in society some people are treated unfairly or unfavourably because of irrelevant personal characteristics such as their gender or race. This school supports the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic), which says that it is against the law to discriminate against anyone, including all community members, because of their actual or assumed status in relation to: Age, Physical features, Carer status, Political belief or activity, Disability/impairment, Breastfeeding, Gender identity, Pregnancy, Industrial activity, Race, Lawful sexual activity, Religious belief or activity, Marital status, Gender, Parental status, Sexual orientation, personal association with someone who has, or is assumed to have, one of these personal characteristics. 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 Findon Primary School provides.

AIMS

- To create an inclusive school culture that fosters acceptance and respect for diversity
- To deepen understanding and knowledge, promote student and staff wellbeing and help everyone achieve their full potential
- To enrich and celebrate the diversity of our whole school community
- To ensure that the school community is free from discrimination, harassment, bullying, vilification and victimisation

IMPLEMENTATION:

Definitions:

Discrimination

Discrimination may be direct or indirect – both are against the law. Direct discrimination means treating someone unfairly or less favourably because one of the personal characteristics listed above or because of their association with someone identified with one of those characteristics.

Harassment

Harassment is behaviour (through words or actions) based on personal characteristics that are 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), intimidating (threatening someone so they behave in a certain way).

Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is an unwelcome sexual advance, request for sex or any other sexual behaviour that would offend, seriously embarrass or humiliate another.

Racial and religious vilification

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.

Bullying

Bullying is behaviour that is intimidating, threatening or humiliating. It is behaviour that is 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.

- Discrimination, Harassment, Bullying, Vilification and Victimisation is unacceptable at Findon Primary School.
- Findon 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 Equal Opportunity issues and

complaints. The school will also be proactive in promoting inclusion through teaching and learning and parent/caregiver information sessions.

Findon Primary School will take action to promote human rights both in terms of school policy and practice and within its educational activities and culture. It also takes proactive steps to encourage and promote wider school discussion and student learning on the School Values.

Rights and Responsibilities

Every member of Findon 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 Findon Primary School is accountable for implementation of this policy and may appoint an Equal Opportunities coordinator to support the implementation of this policy.

Complaints Procedures

Findon 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 quickly as possible. Any member of the school community who raises an issue of discrimination, harassment, bullying or vilification 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. Complaints procedures exist to provide an avenue to address unacceptable behaviour. Only people directly involved in the issue or complaint will be informed. Each complaint will be investigated and appropriate action to resolve the issue will be taken. The Principal has responsibility for investigating complaints of discrimination, harassment, bullying, vilification and victimisation.

Consequences

If proven, the consequences of such behaviour may include counselling, the removal of privileges, a parental interview, suspension or expulsion or trespass order. Findon Primary School will arrange counselling and support, where appropriate or where requested, for any staff or student who has experienced bullying or harassment. Counselling may also be provided for a person who has bullied or harassed another. The Principal will monitor how the complaint was resolved and the wellbeing of those involved. Further action will be taken if the issue behaviour continues. Findon Primary School encourages all members of the school community to attempt to resolve complaints and concerns through the school if possible. It is also your right to seek help from outside the school.

Right to appeal/review

If you are unhappy with the decision about your complaint, you may seek a review of the decision in accordance with departmental procedures.

EVALUATION

This policy shall be reviewed as part of the ongoing policy and process review.

REFERENCES

Findon Primary School 's Equal Opportunity policy is one component of the DET broader policy framework for the promotion of safe and inclusive schools and protection of human rights. Other relevant documentation may include:

- DET Diversity and Inclusion
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/divequity/Pages/default.aspx>
- DET Occupational Health and Safety policies
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
http://www5.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/cohrara2006433/s25.html
- DET Human Resources
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/hr/pages/hr.aspx>
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
<https://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/the-law/equal-opportunity-act>