Process for dealing with Bullying and Harassment
(Anti-Bullying Policy Draft)

Rationale:

Sunshine Heights Primary School is committed to providing a positive culture where bullying is not accepted, and in so doing, all will have the right of respect from others, the right to learn, and a right to feel safe and secure in their school environment.

Broad Guidelines:

- To reinforce within the school community what bullying is, and the fact that it is unacceptable.
- Everyone within the school community to be alert to signs and evidence of bullying and to have a responsibility to report it to staff whether as observer or victim.
- To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up appropriately and that support is given to both victims and perpetrators.
- To seek parental and peer-group support and co-operation at all times

Definitions:

Harassment is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome or offensive to a person.

Bullying is repeated oppression, physical or psychological, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group.

Cyber bullying is a form of bullying which is carried out through an internet service such as email, chat room, discussion group, online social networking, instant messaging or web pages. It can also include bullying through mobile phone technologies such as SMS. It may involve text or images (photos, drawings).

Examples of cyber bullying behaviour are:

- teasing and being made fun of
- spreading of rumours online
- sending unwanted messages
- defamation.

Cyber bullying can happen to anyone and the bully can act anonymously if they want. People can also be bullied online by groups of people such as class groups or collective members of an online community.

It is important for the school to provide a safe and friendly 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.
The effects of harassment or bullying include:

- poor health – anxiety, depression
- lower self esteem
- reduced study performance
- missed classes, social withdrawal
- reduced career prospects.

If you witness another person being harassed or bullied this should be referred to a teacher or staff member. This will then be reported to an appropriate person. However, if your friend is harassing another person, it is alright to 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.

Harassment is usually directed at a person because of their gender, race, creed 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.

**Bullying can involve such things as:**

- grabbing, aggressive staring, hitting, pinching, kicking, pushing and shoving
- publicly excluding a person from your group
- taking or breaking a person’s property
- knocking a person’s books or belongings out of their hands or off their desk
- teasing a person because of their looks.
Cyber-bullying

Being involved in online spaces – either at home or at school - requires students to behave responsibly. This includes:

- the language you use and the things you say
- how you treat others
- respecting people's property (e.g. copyright)
- visiting appropriate places.

Behaving safely online means:

- protecting your own privacy and personal information (we used to call it 'stranger danger')
- selecting appropriate spaces to work and contribute
- protecting the privacy of others (this can be sharing personal information or images)
- being proactive in letting someone know if there is something 'not quite right'. At home this would be a parent or carer, at school a teacher.

Policy ratified by School Council on:
Policy to be reviewed in 2014
**Step One:**

Educate the students and parents:

At the beginning of each term, the teacher is to inform all students about bullying and harassment (as above). Parents are to be informed via newsletter.

Teachers are to inform all students that if they are being harassed or bullied that they should:

- Tell the person that they don’t like what they are doing and that they want them to stop
- Discuss the matter with a student leader or a teacher that they feel comfortable with.

It is important that the students are aware that their concerns will be taken seriously.

**Step Two:**

Assistant Principal is to be informed when an allegation of bullying has been made by a teacher, parent, and/or a student.

**Step Three:**

Assistant Principal is to investigate the allegations of bullying.

This will involve:

1. Meeting with parents and student that have reported the allegations of bullying. Discussion to identify:
   - What has happened?
   - Where has this happened?
   - What is the student’s relationship with the alleged bully?

2. Meeting with the alleged bully. Discussion to identify:
   - What has happened between them and the alleged victim?
   - Where has this happened?
   - What is their relationship with the student?

3. Meeting with the teacher of the alleged victim and bully. Discussion to identify:
   - Has the alleged victim informed them of any bullying
   - Has the alleged bully been accused of bullying other students
   - Who does the students play with in the yard/during class time
   - Where does the students usually play/work
Step Four:

Monitoring:

1. Assistant Principal to conduct a yard observation of the alleged victim during the first three days of the alleged report being made. Observations to be documented:
   a. Who were you playing with?
   b. Where were you playing?
   c. Did anything happen?

2. Assistant Principal to provide classroom teacher of alleged victim with a monitoring form. The teacher will be required to monitor the student for the next ten days. This will involve asking the student the following questions at the end of recess and lunch:
   - Who were you playing with?
   - Where were you playing?
   - Did anything happen?

   Classroom teacher to inform Assistant Principal ASAP of any incident that occurs involving the alleged bully – Step Five.

3. If there is no report of an incident involving the alleged bully and the alleged victim then the Assistant Principal will contact the parents of the alleged victim to inform them of the outcome of the ten day monitoring period. They will also inform the parents that they will continue to monitor the student formally weekly.

4. Monitoring documentation to be filed in the Assistant Principal’s office.

Step Five:

If an incident occurs involving the alleged bully and the victim during the ten day monitoring period then the following process will be followed:

1. Assistant Principal to investigate the incident

2. Assistant Principal to inform the alleged bully’s teacher, alleged victim’s teacher, Principal and Leading Teacher of the incident and investigation details. Meeting to determine follow up plan of action.

3. Assistant Principal to contact the parents of the alleged victim and to inform them of the incident and investigation follow up.

4. If it is determined that a student is being bullied by another student/s then the following process will be followed – Step Six.
Step Six:

1. Assistant Principal to contact parents of victim to organise a meeting with Principal, Assistant Principal, Leading Teacher and Classroom Teacher. Assistant Principal to provide an overview of the allegations. Parents of the victim will be informed of the process that the school will follow to ensure that their child feels safe and happy at SHPS.

2. Assistant Principal to contact parents of bully to organise a meeting with Principal, Assistant Principal, Leading Teacher and Classroom Teacher. Assistant Principal to provide an overview of the allegations and process that have determined that their child has been bullying another student/s. Parents of the bully will be informed of the process that the school will follow to ensure that the child that is being bullied feels safe and happy at SHPS. Parents of the bully and the victim are informed that the bully may be:
   - Excluded from class.
   - Excluded from yard.
   - Suspended from school.
   - Withdrawal of privileges.

Step Seven:

Conference to be conducted to determine how the school can ensure that the victim feels safe and happy at school at all times and that the bully respects the rights and needs of others.

Conference to include:

- Victim
- Victim’s parents
- Bully
- Bully’s parents
- Classroom teacher of Victim and Bully
- Assistant Principal
- Leading Teacher
- Principal – will facilitate the conference.

By the end of the conference a plan of action will be developed that has been agreed to by all parties on what needs to happen to ensure that the victim feels safe and happy at school at all times, and that the bully respects the rights and needs of others. A copy of the plan of action to be provided to all attendees. Plan of action to be monitored by the Assistant Principal. Plan of action to be reviewed weekly. Parents of victim to be contacted weekly by the Assistant Principal for 10 weeks to ensure their child are happy and safe at school.

Step Eight:

Victim and bully to be referred to the school’s psychologist.