WOODSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL

ANTI BULLYING POLICY

1. WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is any individual or group action or words that use strength or power to repeatedly coerce, threaten, persecute or oppress others.

For students the following definition may be preferable:
Bullying is repeated intimidation of a person, using actions or words.

2. TYPES OF BULLYING

There are a number of forms of bullying including:

- **Direct physical bullying**
  - o Examples: hitting, tripping, pushing, etc, or damaging property.

- **Direct verbal bullying**
  - o Examples: Name calling, insults, prejudiced remarks and verbal abuse.

- **Indirect bullying**.
  - o This is more difficult to identify and is often designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. This includes, but is not limited to: 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. Written notes and graffiti are also examples.

- **Cyber bullying**
  - o This involves the use of email, text messages or chat rooms to humiliate and distress.

3. POSSIBLE SIGNS OF BULLYING OBSERVED AT SCHOOL OR AT HOME

Bullying is often hidden from adults and will continue if adults or peers do not take action. Some signs that parents, teachers or peers may observe when a child may be being bullied include:

- An unwillingness or refusal to go to school;
- Feeling ill in the mornings;
- A decline in quality of school work;
- Becoming withdrawn and lacking confidence;
- Crying at night, having nightmares;
- Asking for money or starting to steal (to pay the bully);
- Refusing to talk about what's wrong;
- Having unexplained bruises, cuts, scratches;
- Beginning to bully other children or siblings;
- Becoming aggressive and unreasonable.

4. WHAT BULLYING IS NOT

There are many negative behaviours which, although being distressing to those involved, are not classified as bullying. These instances often may require teacher intervention and management. The following situations 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. Mutual conflict may evolve into a bullying situation at some point if it is not resolved. For example, when one person becomes 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, this does not constitute being bullied. This does not, however, lessen the seriousness of the incident or the subsequent consequences.

Harassment, discrimination and violence are all inappropriate and unacceptable behaviours, but may not be forms of bullying.

5. INITIATIVES TO MINIMISE BULLYING WITHIN THE SCHOOL

There is a strong acknowledgement within the School that bullying is not accepted as normal school banter or behaviour. It has been well documented that the experience of being bullied can contribute to outcomes such as low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, psychosomatic symptoms and school refusal. This can lead to negative educational and social outcomes. There is evidence that a whole-school approach to bullying education and intervention is the most effective way to counter bullying when implemented consistently.

This Policy incorporates the following school policies and practices to counter bullying:

- Education
  - o Students, parents and staff are made aware of what constitutes bullying and what are the possible signs that may indicate that some one is being bullied. It is also appreciated that counselling may be needed for the perpetrators as well as the victims.
    The school makes use of the expertise and knowledge of people from services outside of the school to help students recognise and counter-act bullying.

- School Culture and Ethos
  - o In valuing being strong and caring students are helped to understand and enact their responsibilities to themselves and others.

- Child Protection Programme
  - o This programme aims to help children understand their rights to be safe and to identify what strategies they can use to help themselves to be safe.

- Student Wellbeing Survey
  - o The school regularly surveys the students to check on their wellbeing. This survey also is a way of identifying incidences of bullying and is a chance for the classroom teacher to act on possible cases of bullying. This is a data collection process as well as a medium to initiate counselling.

- Student Behaviour Management Policy
  - o This policy outlines what the school identifies as acceptable and unacceptable behaviour from students. Bullying is an unacceptable behaviour. The policy points consequences for acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and includes restorative practices to be used.

- School Counsellor
  - o The School Counsellor has an overview of the needs, behaviours and wellbeing of the students as far as can be gauged from observations, reports

and surveys. Where needed, the counsellor will work with individual or groups of students as well as working with staff to provide support for all students of the school.

6. Further Information
The Department of Education and Child Development has published a pamphlet: "Bullying and Harassment at School". This pamphlet is available from the school and provides advice for parents and care-givers. There are further sources of information provided in this pamphlet.