

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT

### Basic Belief

In keeping with the school's responsibilities under the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 1995 and the belief that our school should provide a safe and supportive learning environment, Wodonga Primary School aims to:

- promote the right of every student to a school environment that is free from sexual harassment.
- promote the right of all staff to a workplace that is free from sexual harassment.
- provide appropriate procedures to deal with complaints of sexual harassment.

### Guidelines

1. Sexual harassment creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment which undermines self-esteem and educational opportunities.

Sexual harassment can be:

- an unwelcome sexual advance;
  - an unwelcome request for sexual favours; or
  - any other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature;
  - a situation in which a reasonable person, having regard to all circumstances, would have anticipated that the other person would be offended, humiliated or intimidated by their actions.
  - physical, verbal or written; it can include words, statements or graphics which are transmitted by telephone, fax, video or e-mail.
2. It is against the law for any person to sexually harass any other person.
  3. While there will be an emphasis on solving disputes at the local level, the complainant maintains the right to seek advice from, or lodge a complaint with, any of the following:
    - Workplace contact person
    - Principal
    - Regional Director (when the complaint involves the conduct of the Principal)
    - Department of Education and Early Childhood Commissioner of Equal Opportunity and/or Victoria Police (when the alleged sexual harassment constitutes criminal action).

### Procedures

4. The Principal will ensure all staff and school councillors have access to relevant information about sexual harassment, have the opportunity to attend professional development programs and attend briefings on sexual harassment when appropriate. The School Council, the Principal and Staff all have responsibilities and roles when issues of sexual harassment are brought to their attention.
5. All reported incidents of sexual harassment of a student by a member of staff or volunteer, should be referred immediately to the Principal.
6. Reported incidents of sexual harassment of a member of staff or volunteer by a student should be directed to the Principal / Regional Director.
7. The Principal will endeavor to ensure that any harassing behaviour ceases immediately.

*Updated by Education Sub-Committee ( November 2007))*

*Review Date: November 2010*

*This Policy pertains to all programs run/organized by Wodonga Primary School, including Out of School Hours Care, unless a more specific policy applies whereby both policies should be read in conjunction.*

## Wodonga Primary School No. 37 - Policy

8. All complaints of sexual harassment will be regarded as serious and will be accorded complete confidentiality.
9. The complainant will be informed of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development policies and procedures and will be provided with personal support where appropriate.
10. All complaints and processes will be dealt with in a timely manner.
11. The school will provide a sexual harassment senior male and female contact person who will have access to appropriate training. The role and responsibility of the workplace contact person is limited to the provision of information and support to the complainant and does not extend to investigation, conciliation or other intervention.
12. When a complaint is brought to the Principal, he/she will decide if the allegation can be handled at the local level or if advice should be sought from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development officer. Where possible, the complaint will be dealt with at the local level in an impartial and unbiased manner, with a view to resolving the dispute in a low-key and conciliatory way.

**Updated by** Education Sub-Committee ( November 2007))

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