The Cottage School Inc.

PROVIDING A SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Approved by Committee 11 December 2013

DEFINITION AND SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL RATIONALE

Definition of a Supportive School Environment

It is our aim to provide a supportive school environment for all members of our community. A supportive school environment can be defined as one that strives to provide for the personal and social needs and special characteristics of all our community members within the context of the school experience.

Supportive School Rationale

All people have the right to be treated fairly and kindly. We are all different but we are all valuable and we all deserve fair treatment. Students are encouraged to be kind, caring, thoughtful people through discussions and appropriate modelling by adults within the school community.

Parent involvement is an integral part of life at The Cottage School and family support is expected when students' attitudes to others are formed.

Treatment of others must include every relationship within the school community, i.e. parent-staff, parent-parent, staff-staff, staff-student, parent-student.

The Rights and Responsibilities of Students, Staff and Parents that are documented in this policy statement emphasise these relationships within the school community.

STUDENTS’ RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Rights

Students have the right to:

- feel supported and safe.
- be treated fairly and kindly.
- be listened to.
- be respected.
- receive help and assistance.
- a clean and safe environment.
- know their property is safe and free from interference.
- privacy.
- be able to talk to others about our problems.

Responsibilities

Therefore students have the responsibility to:

- help make a safe and supportive environment for all.
- be fair and kind to others.
- listen to others and respect the opinions of others.
- respect and care for others.
- co-operate with others.
- keep the school tidy and clean. Report any dangerous situations to teachers immediately.
- respect School and other’s property.
- think of other’s feelings.
- let others know about their own feelings or problems.
TEACHERS’ RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Rights

Teachers have the right to:

- teach and work without distraction.
- attend professional development days.
- be supported and treated fairly by the whole school community.
- be an individual within a team.
- have open communication with parents.
- have a safe working environment.

Responsibilities

Therefore teachers have the responsibility to:

- deliver quality educational programs guided by the National Curriculum according to The Cottage School philosophy.
- take personal responsibility for their own professional development needs and remain receptive to new ideas in educational philosophy and practices.
- be a co-operative member of staff, supporting school policy, respecting the rights of colleagues and providing meaningful feedback to the school community.
- be available to communicate to parents within defined guidelines.
- ensure students are safe and protected (enlisting specialist support agencies if needed).

PARENTS’ RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Rights

A parent at The Cottage School has the right to:

- be involved in decision making and policy development within the school.
- know their child is receiving a high standard of education which endeavours to meet his/her individual needs.
- be informed regularly and accurately about school activities and Committee decisions regarding the administration of the school.
- receive accurate and unbiased information of their child's/children's progress and behaviour at regular intervals or as a need arises.
- know their child is safe at school.
- know their child will be free of any form of harassment in the school environment.
- feel welcomed and accepted within the community.

Responsibilities

Therefore parents at The Cottage School have the responsibility to:

- be involved in all levels of the school community e.g. Committee Meetings, Fundraising Activities, Working Bees.
- support teachers in their role at school:
  o attend parent information evenings on philosophies, strategies and programs being used within the school;
  o endeavour to support these approaches and philosophies within the home
  o behave as appropriate role models for all students
  o inform teachers immediately should circumstances within the home possibly affect my child's performance at school;
o arrange an appointment with the appropriate teacher should they be concerned about any education approaches or programs being used within their child's classroom.

o allow teachers to work without distractions (e.g. socialise away from classrooms, allow teachers time for preparation before class begins, allow teachers to concentrate on teaching from 8.30am until 3.15pm etc)

o support the School’s unique curriculum delivery by ensuring their child participates in camps, environment days, bike days, shared lunch, cooked lunch etc

• read all newsletters.
• make sure all information requested by the school (e.g. forms, questionnaires, etc.) are returned promptly.
• make time available to attend parent interviews.
• arrange an appointment with the appropriate teacher immediately should they have any concerns regarding their child's progress, welfare or behaviour at school.
• ensure they pick up and deliver their child at appropriate times and in safe areas.
• ensure their child has the appropriate clothing and equipment for the day's activities.
• enforce basic safety issues with their child, e.g. road safety, stranger danger, etc.
• inform the teachers immediately if they have any safety concerns for their child, e.g. bullying, health issues, fears, etc.
• approach staff, children and other parents in a friendly and open manner.
• treat staff, children and other parents with respect and dignity
• respect time demands on teachers – arrange appointments for discussions.
• remain aware of "new" parents within the school community and their need to be informed and invited to school activities.
• uphold and comply with school policies and procedures
• pay fees on time.
• be involved in all fundraising activities with the school, e.g. fair, manure digs, working bees, etc.
• make a commitment to family jobs and complete required task to an acceptable standard.
• always behave in ways that promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of students, fellow parents/carers, employees and others in the school environment in accordance with relevant Work Health and Safety legislation
• ensure respect and careful use of school resources, including work time of employees

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT PLAN

Introduction

Behaviour management is not just a process of responding to behaviour problems after they have occurred. The key to effective behaviour management is the quality of the relationships between teachers and students. A comprehensive behaviour management plan requires as much attention to the recognition and development of good behaviour as it does to effective sanctions for unacceptable behaviour.

The Goals of Behaviour Management Plan

1. To protect the rights of members of the school community.
2. To build a friendly, safe and supportive school environment.
3. To achieve a fair, positive and uniform discipline approach for all students by staff.
4. To emphasise the uniqueness and importance of every individual within the school community.
5. To provide a rationale of expected behaviour in the school.

• It is anticipated that a positive approach to discipline will ensure the majority of students accept responsibility for their behaviour and develop self discipline.
• Social Skills teaching is regarded as inclusive in The Cottage School curriculum and student awareness of desirable behaviours is constantly reinforced and modelled by each teacher.
• Teaching methodologies which encourage co-operative learning are used to enhance positive interactions between students, cater for different ability levels and develop independence in learning.
PLAYGROUND BEHAVIOUR

Based on the lists of Rights and Responsibilities previously documented, some rules are required for the welfare of the whole school community. These rules have been devised collaboratively by students and teachers.

Playground Rules

- Play safely, sensibly and fairly in designated areas.
- Be tidy and keep playground clean.
- Use equipment properly.
- Wear sunhats in playground during Terms 1 and 4.
- Go to the duty teacher if there is a problem that cannot be worked out.
- Use appropriate language to our peers, parents and visitors to the school.

Rewards for Appropriate Playground Behaviour

- Verbal praise and positive body language.
- Other student's attention will be drawn to examples of appropriate behaviour.

Consequences for Not Following Playground Rules

The consequences for inappropriate playground behaviour will vary according to the specific nature and circumstances of the problem and the perceived intention of the child. The following is a range of consequences which may involve the student:

- Talking over the problem with the playground duty teacher.
- Apologising for thoughtless behaviour, when appropriate.
- Exclusion from area or activity.
- Restriction of privileges.
- Time out in a specified area in the playground.
- Parents notified in the case of a serious behavioural problem or a continuing problem persists.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOUR

- Together students and teachers discuss and identify appropriate class behaviours that will contribute to a safe, harmonious and productive teaching and learning classroom environment.
- A set of basic rules to achieve the above will be discussed and displayed.
- A system of acknowledging appropriate behaviours and working habits will be discussed.

Classroom Rules

Some general rules agreed upon by all groups are:

- Be co-operative.
- Share school equipment.
- Be tolerant of others.
- Respect the property of others.
- Consider the rights and feelings of others.
- Speak nicely to each other.
- Keep classroom neat and tidy.
- Allow others to learn.
- Follow instructions to the best of their ability.
Recognition of Good Behaviour

It is important that students are recognised for displaying the behaviours we encourage. This is achieved by:

- verbal/written praise by teacher;
- classroom recognition by peers;
- positive parent-teacher communication;
- recognition at Gatherings

Consequences of Inappropriate Classroom Behaviour

Teachers and students work collaboratively to establish a possible range of logical consequences that will apply if a rule is not observed by a student, and in the occurrence that a rule is consistently broken. Any of the following consequences deemed appropriate may be used:

- Reminder by teachers of appropriate behaviour.
- Time out within the classroom.
- Restriction of privileges.
- Time out outside classroom in another supervised area.
- Consultation with parents.
- Establishing behaviour contract with student.
- Exclusion from school.

STUDENT ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

At The Cottage School we expect and encourage the members of the school community to be sensitive to the needs of others and to demonstrate caring, considerate behaviour.

Should any bullying behaviour emerge within our school community, we believe that it should be dealt with immediately to ensure a safe, secure and positive environment for our students.

Bullying Defined

Bullying is defined by Dr Ken Rigby in the following way:

“Bullying is a systematic and repeated abuse of power. In general bullying may be defined as:
- dominating or hurting someone
- unfair action by the perpetrator(s) and an imbalance of power
- a lack of adequate defence by the target and feelings of oppression and humiliation.”

Bullying can take many forms. The National Centre Against Bullying identifies five kinds of bullying:

1. **Physical bullying**
   This is when a person (or group of people) uses physical actions to bully, such as hitting, poking, tripping or pushing. Repeatedly and intentionally damaging or removing someone's belongings is also physical bullying.

2. **Verbal bullying**
   Repeated or systematic name calling, insults, teasing, put-downs, homophobic or racist remarks and verbal abuse.

3. **Covert bullying**
   Such as lying about someone, spreading rumours, playing a nasty joke that make the person feel humiliated or powerless, mimicking or deliberately excluding someone.

4. **Psychological bullying**
   For example, threatening, manipulating or stalking someone.
5. Cyber bullying
Using technology, such as email, mobile phones, chat rooms, social networking sites to bully verbally, socially or psychologically.

In a report commissioned by the Victorian Department of Education and Training (Bernard & Milne, 2008) the main forms of cyber bullying are identified as:

- Flaming: online fights using electronic messages with angry or vulgar messages
- Harassment: repeatedly sending nasty, mean or insulting messages
- Denigration: Posting or sending gossip or rumours about a person to damage his/her reputation or friendships
- Outing: sharing someone’s secrets or embarrassing information or images online
- Exclusion: Intentionally and cruelly excluding someone from an online group
- Cyber stalking: repeated, intense harassment and denigration that includes threats or creates significant fear.

What behaviours are not bullying

The National Centre Against Bullying acknowledges that while the following behaviours are often upsetting to those involved, they do not constitute bullying:

- mutual arguments and disagreements (where there is no power imbalance)
- not liking someone or a single act of social rejection
- one-off acts of meanness or spite
- isolated incidents of aggression, intimidation or violence.

While these behaviours would not be considered bullying (because they do not involve deliberate and repeated harm and a power imbalance) they need to be addressed in the same way as other inappropriate student behaviours.

Reporting Bullying

Students:
- Report the incident(s) to their Teacher
- Report the incident(s) to another Teacher or Teacher’s Aides

Parents:
- Encourage and support their child to report bullying
- Contact their child’s Class Teacher and discuss their concerns

School Employees:
- Relay all reports and/or observations of bullying to the student’s Class Teacher

Consequences of Bullying

Consequences will vary depending on the severity of the incident(s). A combination of restorative and punitive consequences will apply and may include:

Restorative:
- Discussion with the offender followed by an apology to the victim
- Contact with parent
- Mediated meeting between offender and victim with the aim of restoring relationships
- Referral to counselling services
- Individual behaviour contracts
- Self monitoring and reporting to Class Teacher

Punitive:
- Withdrawal of privileges eg Environment Day, Camp
- Period of time out during breaks
- Community service to the school such as sweeping pathways etc during breaks