



The Cottage School Inc.

PROVIDING A SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Approved by Committee November 2019

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 modeling by adults within the school community.

Parental 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, parent-student, staff-staff, staff-student, student-student.

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

SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Introduction

The Supportive School Management Plan is not just a process of responding to behavioural problems after they have occurred; it involves the celebration of ourselves and others when positive moments are experienced or witnessed. The key to effective behaviour management is the quality of the relationships between all members of the school community and in particular between teachers and students. A comprehensive management plan requires as much attention to the recognition and development of good behavior, as it does to effective sanctions for unacceptable behaviour. For most problems that occur, we adopt a policy that relies not upon punishment but upon negotiation, conflict resolution, mediation and problem solving as essential skills that our students will learn and actively practice.

The Goals of a Supportive School 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 by all members of the community 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 modeled by each teacher.
 - Teaching methodologies that encourage co-operative learning are used to enhance positive interactions between students, cater for different ability levels and develop independence in learning.
 - Supportive School Management Plans act as a strong guide for teachers to follow, however, a degree of understanding in relation to each case should be taken into account as there is never a one size fits all approach when it comes to managing behavior.

THE USE OF THE SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT PLAN PYRAMID

The use of the Supportive School Pyramid for students, staff and parents, allows for an incremental and appropriate response towards the undesired behaviours enacted by any individual.

The pyramid is divided into three sections: Primary Prevention, Secondary Prevention and Tertiary Prevention. Each section makes recommendations for the types of approaches, which may be utilised in response to either the type of behaviour or the frequency of the behaviour.

Primary Prevention

The strategies listed within the Primary Prevention section are designed to be the least obtrusive approach to dealing with inappropriate behaviour and to creating an environment that encourages and educates for desired behaviour. The strategies are timely, easy to administer and have the least impact on the learning and well being of others. They are not to be seen as a constant way of operating with the same person over a prolonged period of time, especially if the strategies are not having the desired impact and outcomes. In these instances where success is not being achieved through the use of Primary Prevention strategies, or where the actions of the individual require a more serious consequence, it is recommended to move to the Secondary Prevention section of the pyramid.

Secondary Prevention

The strategies listed within the Secondary Prevention section are designed to be used with those individuals who have not responded to the strategies within the Primary Prevention, or whose actions are deemed to be of a nature that requires a more direct and personally designed approach. Secondary Prevention may involve reporting to a third party which could be the student's parent/guardian or in the case of staff and parents, the President/Vice President of Committee. Secondary Prevention strategies are designed as a short-term plan with a desired outcome clearly articulated. In the event that Secondary Prevention is unsuccessful, it is recommended to move to the Tertiary Prevention section of the pyramid.

Tertiary Prevention

The strategies listed within the Tertiary Prevention section should be seen as a last resort and where all other approaches to the problem have been exhausted. Actions listed within this section will require the involvement of the student, teacher, parent/guardian, School Leader and President/Vice President of Committee, depending on the individual against whom the action is being directed.

Procedures for Attendance & Enrolment Review

Attendance Review

Complete removal from the school community may be appropriate for students who, by their actions, constantly interfere with the welfare of, or hinder the learning of others. Other measures which may incur an attendance review include refusal to co-operate with consequence measures applied by teachers; breaking a behaviour contract; being in possession of alcohol, drugs or tobacco; bringing dangerous or illegal weapons to school; or engaging in escalated behaviour that endangers, humiliates, harasses or bullies others.

As a result of an attendance review, the student may be removed from the school community for a designated period of time, usually two days to a week depending on the severity of the issue, and a parent/guardian contacted immediately. The involvement of external agencies may also be appropriate. After the attendance review period, a post attendance review procedure will normally apply.

Post Attendance Review Procedure

Under most circumstances the student may only return to school after completion of an attendance review period if accompanied by a parent/guardian for a meeting with the School Leader. At this meeting, a post attendance review agreement will be negotiated with the student. This spells out the conditions upon which the student may return to school. Non-negotiable conditions may include being on a Behaviour Plan for at least a fortnight after returning, and regular meetings with an agreed teacher/School Leader to discuss progress during this period. Other non-negotiable conditions may include such things as agreeing to visit an external professional, taking prescribed medication, and refraining from the behaviour which led to the attendance review.

After successfully negotiating the probation period, the student can come off the Behaviour Plan and resume classes as normal.

Enrolment Review

A review of a student's enrolment at the school may be appropriate in cases where an attendance review process has been applied on more than two occasions. It may also be appropriate for students who, by their actions, refuse to co-operate with discipline measures applied by teachers; break a Behaviour Plan; use alcohol, drugs or tobacco; use a dangerous or illegal weapon; or cause wilful damage to school property. Police involvement may also be appropriate.

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 when needed.
- Experience a clean and safe environment.
- Know their property is safe and free from interference.
- Experience privacy.
- Be able to talk to others about problems.
- Be able to learn without distraction from others.

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 and report any dangerous situations to teachers immediately.
- Respect School and others' property.
- Think of others' feelings.
- Let others know about their own feelings or problems.
- Allow teachers to do their work without interruption.
- Allow other students to learn without being distracted.

PLAYGROUND BEHAVIOUR

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

Playground Rules

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

Recognition for Appropriate Playground Behaviour

- Appropriate feedback and positive body language.
- Other students' 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 an 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 if a continuing problem persists.
- Utilisation of the Supportive School Student Pyramid where appropriate (see page 6).

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 collaboratively discussed between teachers and students and displayed in the classroom.
- 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 respectfully 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:

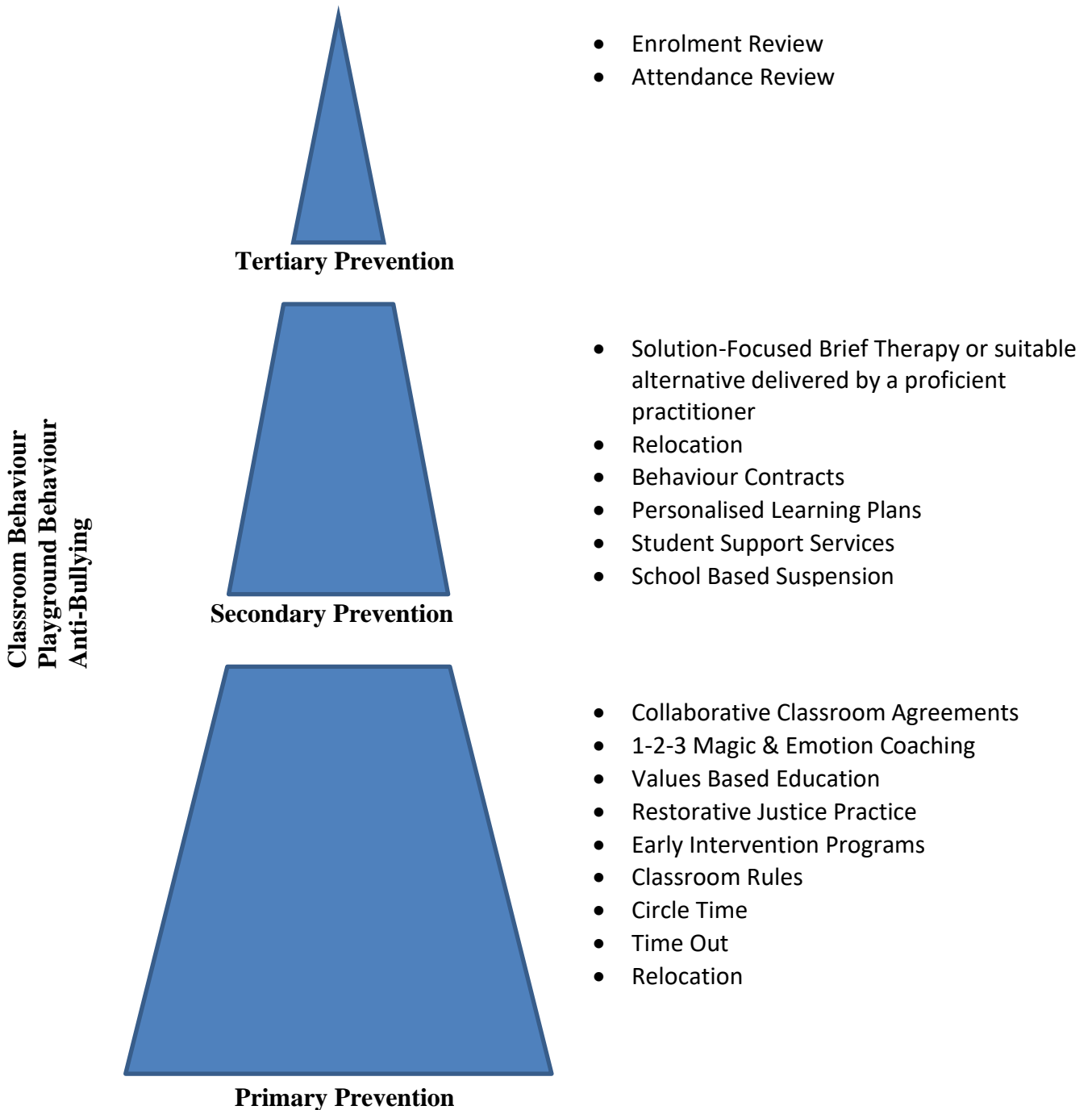
- Verbal/written feedback by teacher.
- Classroom recognition by peers.
- Positive parent-teacher communication.
- Recognition at Gatherings.

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 the classroom in another supervised area.
- Consultation with parents.
- Establishing a behaviour contract with the student.
- Exclusion from school.
- Utilisation of the Supportive School Student Pyramid where appropriate (see page 6).

Framework for the Cottage School Supportive School Environment Policy STUDENTS



Relationships	Strong relationships between student and teacher are essential for learning
Respect	We want students to protect the rights of all school community members
Equity	Students must ensure that every learner is given an opportunity to succeed in an environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive
Excellence	High expectations of student behaviour ensure a strong commitment to excellence
Learning	Students are responsible for taking advantage of the creative, innovative and supportive learning opportunities that are provided to them

STAFF MEMBERS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Rights

Staff have the right to:

- Teach and work without distraction.
- Attend professional development.
- 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.
- Remove themselves from communications about school during their non-working hours.

Responsibilities

Therefore staff have the responsibility to:

- Deliver quality educational programs guided by the Australian 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 by 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).
- Adhere to the Code of Conduct (Policy 5-01).

Recognition for Appropriate Conduct

It is as important to recognise appropriate conduct and behaviour in adults as models, as it is to recognise student behaviour with their peers. This is achieved by:

- Verbal feedback by work colleague/School Leader.
- Recognition during staff meetings.
- Highlighting positive conduct with the school community through appropriate channels.
- Recognition at Gatherings.

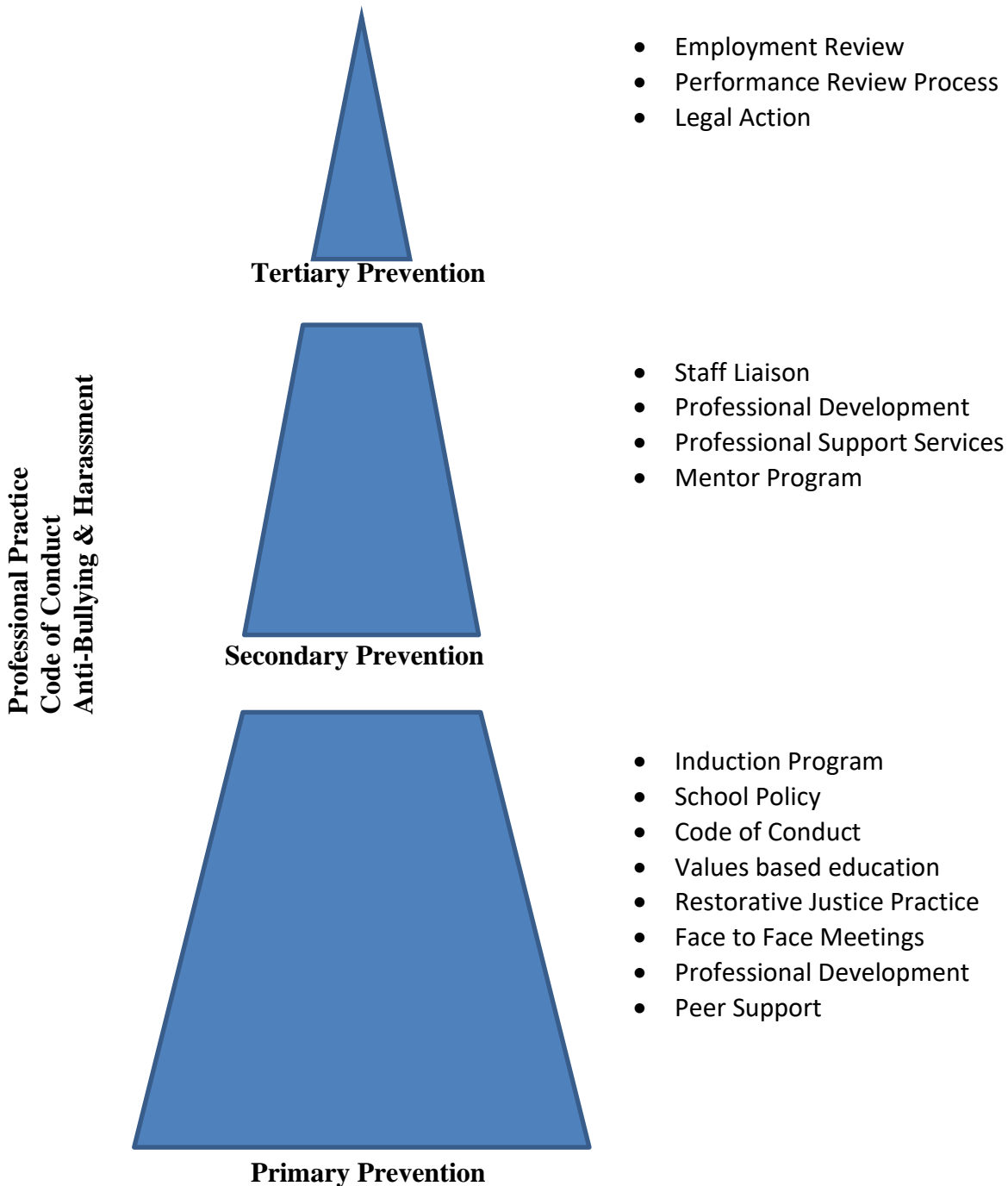
Consequences of Inappropriate Code of Conduct

Staff members should model the desired elements of behavior and social interaction within the Supportive School Environment. Teachers in particular have a responsibility to work within the agreed whole school approach and to plan for learning about positive, respectful behaviours. All staff have a responsibility to be knowledgeable of the Code of Conduct and to adhere to the directions within the policy.

Employees should be aware that the School might apply sanctions if the Code of Conduct is breached. Depending on the nature of the breach, various sanctions such as the following may be applied:

- Appropriate warnings.
- Counselling.
- Actions as prescribed under the various award provisions.
- Demotion.
- Suspension.
- Dismissal.
- Laying of criminal charges or civil action.
- Utilisation of the Supportive School Staff Pyramid where appropriate (see page 8).

Framework for the Cottage School Supportive School Environment Policy STAFF



Relationships	Strong relationships between teacher and student are essential for learning
Respect	We want teachers to protect the rights of all school community members
Equity	Every learner is given an opportunity to succeed in an environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive
Excellence	High expectations of staff behaviour ensure a strong commitment to excellence
Learning	By educating students through creative, innovative and supportive learning, we provide meaningful opportunities to create aware, engaged, curious and compassionate people

PARENTS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Rights

A parent at The Cottage School has the right to:

- Be involved in making policy development at a Committee level.
- Expect 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.
- Expect their child is safe at school while acknowledging that risks are a part of every-day life.
- Expect their child will not be the subject of bullying or 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 by:
 - Attending parent information evenings on philosophies, strategies and programs being used within the school
 - Endeavouring to support these approaches and philosophies within the home.
 - Behaving as appropriate role models for all students.
 - Informing teachers immediately should circumstances within the home possibly affect one's child's performance at school.
 - Arranging an appointment with the appropriate teacher should they be concerned about any education approaches or programs being used within their child's classroom.
 - Allowing 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.).
 - Supporting the school's unique curriculum delivery by ensuring their child participates in camps, environment days, bike days, shared lunch, cooked lunch etc.
 - Using the school's Communication Thread Framework.
- Read all newsletters.
- Ensure that all information requested by the school (e.g. forms, questionnaires, etc.) is returned promptly.
- Attend parent-teacher 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 teachers immediately of 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 and arrange appointments for discussions.
- Remain aware of "new" parents within the school community, keeping them informed and inviting them 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, etc.
- Commit to family jobs and working bees, and complete the 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.

Recognition of Appropriate Parent Behaviour

Our parents are the first and most important examples of appropriate behavior for their own and others' children. Their way of interacting with other parents and staff members is pivotal to how relationships are formed and maintained. The reliable manner in which parents carry out their agreed commitments to the school is also an essential ingredient of appropriate parent behaviour. It is therefore important that parents who exhibit exemplary behavior are recognized. This is achieved by:

- Verbal feedback from parents, staff and Committee.
- Recognition with the school community via appropriate communication channels.
- Written acknowledgement e.g. email, blackboard.
- Acknowledgement by the Committee.

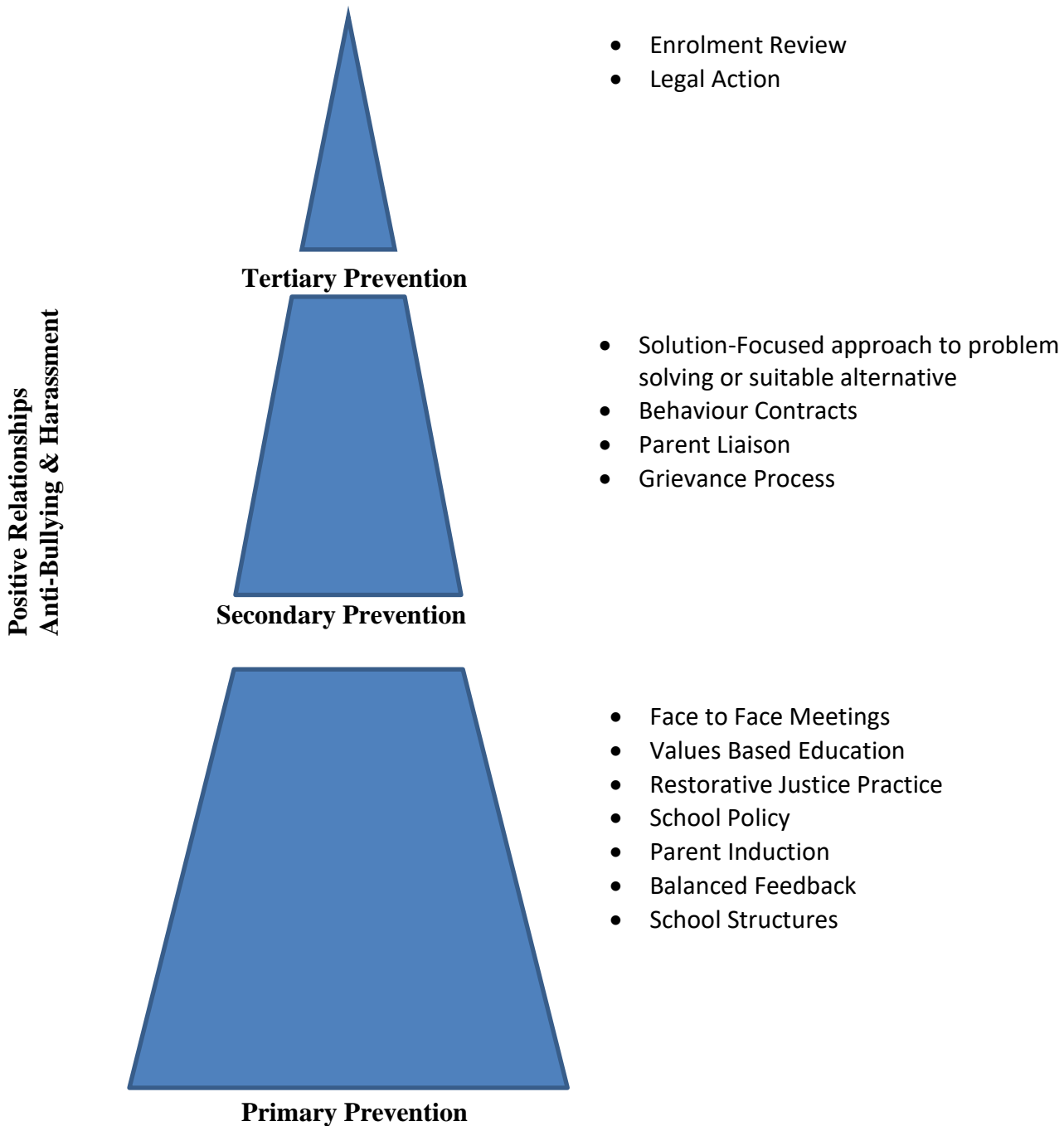
Consequences of Inappropriate Parent Behaviour

Parents/guardians are integral and critical to the success of the Supportive School Environment Plan. The responsibilities of parents are extensive, important, and impact on the wellbeing of all members of the school community. Those parents/guardians who fail to comply with their responsibilities, or who involve themselves in inappropriate behavior, are putting at risk the effective implementation of the Supportive School Environment Policy.

Committee may apply sanctions if their responsibilities within the Supportive School Environment Policy are breached. Depending on the nature of the breach, sanctions such as the following may be applied:

- Restorative Justice.
- Actions as prescribed under the various policies governing parental responsibilities.
- Appropriate reminders/warnings.
- Counselling.
- Removal from the Committee or other decision making groups.
- Enrolment review.
- Laying of criminal charges or civil action.
- Utilisation of the Supportive School Parent Pyramid where appropriate (see page 11).

Framework for the Cottage School Supportive School Environment Policy PARENTS



Relationships Strong relationships between parent, teacher, and School Leader are essential for collaboration and are enhanced through a no-blame approach when raising concerns

Respect We want parents to protect the rights and wellbeing of all school community members

Equity Parents must ensure that every staff member is given an opportunity to carry out their duties in an environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive

Excellence High expectations of parent behaviour ensure a strong commitment to excellence

Learning Parents are responsible for supporting their child's learning by taking an active role in questioning their children about learning and supporting practice at home

ANTI-HARASSMENT & BULLYING POLICY

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

Should any harassment or 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 community members.

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, or social networking sites to verbally, socially or psychologically bully someone.

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.

Which 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.
- A series of unwanted behaviours towards an individual that are not consistent with a pattern of targeting.
- 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, Teacher Assistant or School Leader.

Parents:

- Encourage and support their child to report bullying.
- Contact their child's Class Teacher and discuss their concerns.
- Report bullying by other parents or teacher to the School Leader.

School Employees:

- Relay all reports and/or observations of bullying of students to the student's Class Teacher.
- Report bullying by parents to the School Leader.

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 the offender and the 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 e.g. Environment Day, Camp.
- Period of time out during breaks.
- Community service to the school such as sweeping pathways etc. during breaks.
- Utilisation of the relevant Supportive School Pyramid where appropriate.