GEMBROOK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Workplace Culture Policy

Rationale:

A positive, respectful and inclusive workplace culture which values the contribution and development of all staff is essential to high workplace morale and lower stress at work, this in turn reduces the Health and Safety risk for psychological injuries.

Definitions:

School culture or climate refers to the quality of the school working environment and reflects how staff feel about their workplace and the way they work with others to:

- Provide high quality teaching and learning
- Share ideas and collaborate
- Be involved in making decisions
- Recognise other's efforts and provide feedback
- Actively listen to each other
- Build trust and respect
- Ensure the roles, responsibilities and expectations of all staff are clear
- Learn from one another
- Feel supported by leadership teams.

Four major components that contribute to school climate have been identified and they underpin the Staff Opinion Survey used to measure school climate. These components are Empathy, Clarity, Engagement and Learning and they work together to build a positive school climate.

Empathy
- Supportive Leadership
- In a balanced school, the leadership team is supportive in their approach to staff. This means that they:

  - are approachable,
  - understand the problems staff face,
  - communicate well with staff, and
  - are supportive when things get tough.

- Supportive Leadership, although likely to be anchored by the leadership style of the Principal, refers to the entire school leadership team.

Clarity
- Role Clarity
- The leadership team makes sure that staff know what:

  - is expected of them,
  - their objectives are,
  - authority they have in the school, and
  - they are responsible for.

- Behaviourally, Role Clarity can be defined as having regular dialogue between managers and staff about the nature of their roles, expectations and responsibilities.

Engagement

- Professional Interaction
- Staff work well together as a team. This means that they:
  - feel they are accepted by other staff,
  - work co-operatively in teams,
  - communicate between groups in the schools (no silos), and
  - help out other staff members.

Goal Congruence

- Staff feel ownership. This means that they know and agree about the direction that the leadership team is taking the school.

- Participative Decision-Making

  Staff feel empowered. This means that they feel:
  - that they have a say in decisions made at the school, and
  - there are forums in the school where they can express their opinions.

- Appraisal and Recognition
  Staff feel that they receive feedback about their work. This means that staff feel they:
  - have the opportunity, and that there are processes in place, to receive feedback about their work, and
  - get positive, quality, constructive feedback and recognition for good work.

- Appraisal and Recognition is about feedback and dialogue that is directed towards development.

Education:

- Professional Growth
  Staff believe that professional development in their school is a positive thing. This means that they:
  - feel encouraged to pursue professional development,
  - are encouraged to develop new skills, and
  - feel other staff are interested in their career development and professional growth.

Workplace bullying is characterised by persistent and repeated negative behaviour directed at an employee that creates a risk to health and safety (WorkSafe Victoria). This does not include reasonable management decisions carried out in a reasonable way.

Examples of bullying:

- verbal abuse, yelling, screaming;
- abusive language or intimidation;
- excluding or isolating employees;
- assigning meaningless tasks or giving employees impossible assignments;
- continually criticising someone;
- sabotaging someone's work or their ability to do their job by withholding vital information and resources;
- belittling someone's opinions;
- unexplained job changes;
- failure to give credit where it is due or taking credit for someone else's work.

Examples of reasonable management decisions and actions:

- setting performance goals, standards and deadlines;
- allocating work to an employee;
- deciding not to select an employee for promotion;
- informing an employee about unsatisfactory work performance;
- informing an employee about inappropriate behaviour or providing constructive feedback;
- implementing organisational changes;
- performance management processes;

Aims:

- To ensure the workplace culture at Gembrook Primary School is inclusive, respectful and positive, and values the contribution and development of all staff.
- To ensure all employees are safe at Gembrook Primary School and that Gembrook Primary School satisfies its duty of care to all staff.
- To ensure all staff are informed about the management of health and safety issues related to the Workplace Culture at Gembrook Primary School or Workplace Bullying.

Implementation:

- Undertake a planned and collaborative approach to monitoring and improving the occupational and organisational health of Gembrook Primary School by identifying issues and planning a range of actions.
- Use staff surveys, internal/external reports, anecdotal feedback and the results of focus groups and discussions to inform the identification and action processes.
- Develop empathic school leadership with a proactive approach to the management of a range of issues;
- Have clear role descriptions and expectations
- Have clear goals and direction for the school
- Engage staff in collaborative, respectful and supportive relationships with their colleagues;
- Establish methods to express that individuals are valued and acknowledge their efforts;
- Provide opportunities for professional and career development
- Identify bullying risk factors and putting in place appropriate preventative measures through collaboration and consultation
- If there is a perceived risk to the health or safety of a staff member on the basis of the Workplace Culture or bullying actions of individuals at Gembrook Primary School the Occupational Health and Safety committee will

    - Identify any particular individuals at risk;
    - Correctly identify what is creating the hazard for those individuals;
    - Make decisions about developing and implementing procedures for resolving bullying complaints;
    - Make sure workplace procedures are in place to manage the risk;
    - Provide appropriate information, instruction and training for employees so they have the awareness, knowledge and skills to identify risk factors associated with the workplace culture or bullying, and the appropriate prevention measures to control these kinds of risks;
- If an incident of Bullying is reported: Use informal and formal methods of resolution:

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Informal methods:

- Aim to gain a commitment from the employee displaying the alleged bullying behaviour to cease the behaviour. This can sometimes be achieved by:
    - the complainant (after careful consideration) choosing to approach the person responsible for
    - the alleged inappropriate behaviour
    - a management representative counselling the employee displaying the alleged behaviour
- Discuss the option of involving an independent third party or mediator. Participation by all parties must be voluntary. (Contact the Employee Safety and Wellbeing Branch on 9637 2414)
- Conduct a workplace bullying awareness session for all employees, outlining responsibilities in relation to appropriate behaviour in the workplace
- Provide the option for employees to access independent counselling support if they require it from the Department's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) on 1300 361 008

Formal Methods:

- Only undertaken if informal methods do not resolve the situation
- Follow the procedures outlined in the DEECD Guidelines for Managing Complaints, Unsatisfactory Performance and Misconduct – Teaching Service
- Contact the Conduct and Ethics Branch on 03 9637 2594 or 9637 2595 or via email at conduct.ethics@edumail.vic.gov.au for further advice
- Record all incidents on EduSafe.
- Record the complaint, the findings and resolutions, including actions taken and keep on file.

This document should be read in conjunction with the Occupational Violence Policy in relation to managing incidents of occupational Violence and student behaviour.

This document should be read in conjunction with the DEECD Policy and Guidelines on handling Complaints effectively.

Evaluation:

Gembrook Primary School is inclusive, respectful and positive, and values the contribution and development of all staff.

Gembrook Primary School Staff are safe at work

Gembrook Primary School satisfies its duty of care to all staff.

Staff are aware of the behaviours that constitute bullying and the behaviours that constitute reasonable management decisions and expectations.

Staff are aware of the actions they can take if they perceive a risk to health or safety due to the Workplace Culture or action of individuals at Gembrook Primary School.

Review of the policy as part of the 3 year policy review cycle.

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References:

- http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/management/Pages/workplaceclimate.aspx
- http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/management/whatisschoolclimate.pdf
- http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/management/makesenseschclimatedata.pdf
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- http://www.vwa.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/42893/WS_Bullying_Guide_Web2.pdf
- http://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/Documents/Complaints_Misconduct_and_Unsatisfactory_Performance_TS.pdf
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007

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