



# Bullying Prevention Policy

## Definition

Bullying is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening.

Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records).

Bullying of any form or for any reason can have immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.

Unlike conflict - which is occasional and unpredictable - bullying is deliberate, repeated, negative behaviour that targets another person.

## **Why would someone Bully someone else?**

Picking on someone else makes the bully feel powerful. For the bully, it can mask feelings of inadequacy. Sometimes, the bully does it for attention. Someone might also bully someone else because they are jealous.

Bullies often pick on people who are different to them in some way:

- Appearance
- Race
- Religion
- Size or age
- Nationality

**It is important to remember that there is no good reason for someone to bully anyone else.**

## **What can a parent do if they feel their child is a victim of bullying?**

Stay calm and positive

It can be upsetting when your child is being bullied. Focus on identifying a solution with your child. A confident, positive and resilient appearance can stop bullying from continuing. It might be helpful to draw on your own networks to get support for yourself while you are helping your child. Tell your child that reporting the bullying is okay. Assure your child that it is not their fault.

Talk with the school

You do not need to ask your child's permission to talk to the school. Understandably, children who are being bullied are often fearful and worry that any action will worsen the problem. The solution is to make a parental decision to talk to the school.



A consistent and co-operative approach by both the home and school is important. You can always let your child know later what actions you have taken. Let the school take responsibility for helping students who are bullying to change their ways.

At Kosciusko St Primary School, we take bullying very seriously. Incidents of bullying should be reported to your child's teacher or a member of the Principal Team.

## Types of Bullying

There are three broad categories of bullying.

- **Direct physical bullying (Overt)** e.g. hitting, tripping, pushing or damaging property.
- **Direct verbal bullying** e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse, threatening behaviour causing distress.
- **Indirect bullying (Covert)** - This form of bullying is harder to recognise and often carried out behind the bullied student's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Indirect bullying includes:
  - 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
  - cyber-bullying, which involves the use of email, text messages or chat rooms to humiliate and distress
- **Bystander Behaviour** - A bystander encourages and gives approval to the bullying; they reinforce it through verbal and non-verbal cues such as smiling, laughing or making comments and signal it is acceptable. The events that serve to reinforce problem behaviour -increasing the likelihood that it will occur again is particularly relevant to us. If bullies obtain peer attention or tangible items when they behave inappropriately, they will be more likely to engage in those behaviours in the future. We must encourage them not to reinforce problem behaviours, thereby putting the behaviours on the road to extinction. In addition, students will be rewarded for responding appropriately to problem behaviours or intervening to help other students in need. Creating upstander behaviour, while decreasing bystander behaviour will be a key focus.

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 The school will provide a positive culture where bullying is not accepted, and in so doing, all will have the right of respect from others, the right to learn or to teach, and a right to feel safe and secure in their school environment.

### 2. Guidelines

- 2.1 A person is bullied when one or more other people expose them regularly and over time to negative or harmful actions. Bullies are people who deliberately set out to intimidate,

exclude, threaten and/or hurt others repeatedly. Bullying is a clear form of harassment.

- 2.1.1 To reinforce within the school community what bullying is, and the fact that it is unacceptable.
- 2.1.2 Everyone within the school community to be alert to signs and evidence of bullying and to have a responsibility to report it to staff whether as observer or victim.
- 2.1.3 To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up appropriately and that support is given to both victims and perpetrators.
- 2.1.4 To seek parental and peer-group support and co-operation at all times.
- 2.1.5 It is important to speak about bullying and it is emphasised by all staff both in the classroom and in the playground.
- 2.1.6 Any student can report bullying to their class teacher or to the duty staff member and can expect to be listened to.
- 2.1.7 Any serious incidents will be dealt with by the classroom teacher in conjunction with the Principal/Assistant Principal
- 2.1.8 Parents will be kept involved and informed in any issues that involve bullying or anti social behaviour where their child is either the victim or the perpetrator.
- 2.1.9 Students can expect that any reports about bullying will be kept confidential.
- 2.1.10 An annual bullying survey will be conducted where students may express concerns about bullying. This will usually be conducted after the Student Attitudes to School Survey results have been received.
- 2.1.11 Policy is to be read in conjunction with the Student Engagement Policy which includes references to School Wide Positive Behaviour Support.

### **3. Implementation:**

Parents, teachers, students and the community will be aware of the school's position on bullying.

The school will adopt a four-phase approach to bullying.

#### **3.1 Primary Prevention:**

- 3.1.1 Professional development for staff relating to bullying, harassment and proven counter measures. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development program 'Bully Stoppers' will be investigated and elements of the program will be integrated into the current school practices. Bully Stoppers aims to strengthen prevention and empower everyone to make a stand and become a bully stopper, reducing incidents of bullying in all Victorian schools.
- 3.1.2 The school has adopted and will implement the 'Bully Prevention in Positive Behaviour Support' program which is part of the Universal B SWPBS training. This program will give students the tools to extinguish bullying through the blending of School-Wide Positive Behavior and Intervention Supports, explicit instruction, and a redefinition of the bullying construct. This program will also fit seamlessly with Respectful Relationships. Community awareness and input relating to bullying, its characteristics and the school's programs and response.
- 3.1.3 To provide programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.
- 3.1.4 The Attitudes to School Survey data will be utilised and appropriately followed up with further data collection or supports as needed.
- 3.1.5 The values of the School Wide Positive Behaviour Support Program will continue to be supported across the school.
- 3.1.6 Each classroom teacher to clarify at the start of each year the school policy on bullying.

- 3.1.7 The curriculum to include anti-bullying messages and strategies from the 'Bully Prevention in Positive Behaviour Support' program and other resources eg: 'Bullying No Way' website. This will be integrated with the Respectful Relationships program.
- 3.1.8 Student Leaders, Junior School Council, staff and students to promote the philosophy of 'No Put Downs'. And will also be involved in the implementation of anti bullying programs such as 'Bully Prevention in Positive Behaviour Support'.
- 3.1.9 Electives and structured activities may be available to students at recess and lunch breaks.

### **3.2 Early Intervention:**

- 3.2.1 Promote children and staff reporting bullying incidents involving themselves or others.
- 3.2.2 Classroom teachers and principal on a regular basis reminding students and staff to report incidents of bullying
- 3.2.3 Parents encouraged to contact school if they become aware of a problem. incidents of bullying.
- 3.2.4 Public recognition and reward for positive behaviour and resolution of problems.
- 3.2.5 Support Services such as Kids Help Line will be promoted within the school.

### **3.3 Intervention:**

- 3.3.1 Once identified each bully, victim and any witnesses will be spoken with, and all incidents or allegations of bullying will be fully investigated and documented (*Yard duty folders, Yard duty notes, record of 'Record of misbehaviour' forms kept in Assistant Principal's office.*) Parents will be contacted and consequences implemented consistent with the school's Student Engagement policy and Discipline procedures. A behaviour support plan may also be developed using the template from the "Bully Stoppers" program. (See appendix 1)
- 3.3.2 Students and staff identified by others as bullies will be informed of allegations.
- 3.3.3 Both bullies and victims will be offered counselling and support.
- 3.3.4 If staff bullying persists the principal will commence formal disciplinary action.

### **3.4 Post Violation:**

- 3.4.1 Consequences for students will be individually based and may involve:-
  - exclusion from class
  - exclusion from yard
  - school suspension
  - withdrawal of privileges
  - contained to a designated area of the yard
  - ongoing counselling from appropriate agency for both victim and bully
- 3.4.2 Reinforcement of positive behaviours.
- 3.4.3 Classroom Meetings.
- 3.4.4 Support Structures.
- 3.4.5 Ongoing monitoring of identified bullies.
- 3.4.6 Rewards for positive behaviour.
- 3.4.7 Consequences for staff will be individually based and may involve:-
  - counselling
  - a period of monitoring
  - a formal support group
  - disciplinary actions

### **3.5 Responsibilities**

- 3.5.1 Parent/Caregiver Responsibilities

- Watch for early warning signs in your child, including a reluctance to go to school, unexplained illnesses or injury, missing possessions, moodiness.
- Take an active interest in your child's school and social life.
- If you suspect bullying of your child at school, record any details and contact the class teacher or school immediately.
- Encourage your child to report persistent school bullying to those in the best position to provide immediate help, i.e. the teaching staff and administration.
- Assure your child that seeking help is okay and an assertive response to the situation.
- Do not encourage your child to hit back or verbally abuse the bully.
- Be prepared to assist the school in modifying your child's behaviour if he or she is identified as a bully. Do not accept personal blame for their actions; instead, support the school in its endeavours to assist your child.
- If a parent wishes to lodge a complaint the Parent Complaints – Government schools website should be consulted. <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/complainschool.aspx>

### 3.5.2 Staff Responsibilities

#### Identification of Bullying

- Watch for early warning signs of bullying in students (e.g. apparent behaviour change, physical injuries, emotional distress)
- Record all incidences of bullying, including action taken.
- Offer the victim immediate support and help but avoid 'bullying' the bully. We refer to 'Bullying Behaviour' rather than the child as behaviour can change with supports.
- Discuss bullying in class sessions when the need arises (e.g. after incidents).
- Assist the bully – intervention
- Monitor all areas of the school during breaks and in between lessons.
- Maintain close supervision in class, when lined up etc

#### **Evaluation:**

This policy will be reviewed with whole staff, student, parent and community input. Research\* indicates that it is essential Bullying Prevention Policies are reviewed regularly and revised to ensure that the schools' bullying prevention practices remain effective. It is important that schools:

- monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Bullying Prevention Policy and make adjustments when needed
- review the Policy annually in line with the school's Annual Implementation Plan
- report the effectiveness of the Policy and the schools' bullying prevention strategy to the school community annually (a great way to do this is to use the [Data Capture Tool](#))

The Assistant Principal and Principal will monitor bullying incidents and prevention activities relative to the policy with an expectation that regular reports are given to the Leadership Team and Staff on how things are tracking. If incidents are high or other aspects of the policy do not seem to be implemented, then the Policy will require an interim review before the 12-month period is up.

The school community will convey the view that the Policy is not written and then left to sit on a shelf until the next review - the Policy needs to be regularly revisited and change with the schools as it moves forward.

\* Sheryl A. Hemphill et al, Longitudinal Predictors of Cyber and Traditional Bullying Perpetration in Australian Secondary School Students (published 2012)

## Data Capture Tool

If the Attitudes to School Survey reveals issues that need to be addressed one of the tools that will be useful is the Data Collection Tool

The data capture tool will help school principals, leaders and teachers gain an insight into the experiences and opinions of their school community in regards to safety and wellbeing, including bullying in the school environment. This tool contains content tailored for leadership and school staff, students and parents. It consists of two key elements:

### 1. Survey

The survey includes a series of questions that provide respondents with an opportunity to offer their personal views on the current school environment; the level to which it is safe and supportive; any bullying that is occurring; the school's capacity to prevent, manage and respond to issues and incidents; as well as recommendations that may help to improve the current school environment and bullying prevention policies. This tool may be used as a follow up analysis when the Attitudes to School Survey data has been received and reviewed. Term 4 data collection will allow the school to evaluate the effectiveness of changes implemented as a result of the Attitudes to School Survey results.

### 2. Results

The school will review, analyse and share the results, in conjunction with other relevant school data (e.g. Attitudes to School Survey). The schools will reflect upon the current state of play including community perspectives on bullying; the school's perceived ability to effectively prevent, manage and respond when issues/incidents arise; and identify any further work that could be done to improve the current school environment and bullying prevention policies.

### 3. Discussion and reporting

The discussion stimulated through analysis of the survey results could be used as the basis of a written report to inform whole-school strategic plans, policies and other mechanisms that can address bullying and the overall safety and wellbeing of students in the school environment.

Who can complete the survey?

The school leadership team can decide who will complete the survey. Options include, but are not limited to:

- a working group of 6-8 members (e.g. staff members, parents, students) the leadership team
- all staff members, students and parents (e.g. each person completes a hardcopy of the survey and a team coordinate and key the responses into the tool).

Date of last review:

June 2022

References:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/default.aspx>

DET Bully Stoppers Program

[www.bullyingnoway.com.au](http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au)

## Appendix 1

### Behaviour Support Plan guidelines

Why make a Behaviour Support Plan?

A Behaviour Support Plan (BSP) is a school-based document designed to assist individual students who have experienced harm, are at risk of harm, or have caused harm to others.

Targeted plans can be developed for students who have been diagnosed with severe behavior disorders; students who have bullied others; students who have been bullied; students who require additional assistance because they display difficult, challenging or disruptive behaviours; as well as students who can benefit from additional wellbeing support.

A BSP can help ensure that students and staff feel safe, valued and connected to their school community. An effective BSP contributes to building respectful relationships, resilience, and well-adjusted students who are able to learn effectively.

Who benefits from a BSP?

Students and schools can benefit from an effective BSP in the following ways:

- clearly stating expectations and planned support for a student in writing, demonstrates the commitment of the school to the student's wellbeing needs
- behaviour change in the student occurs more readily when the focus is on support, building the skills needed for pro social behaviour and increasing the student's wellbeing
- problem behaviours are gradually reduced as triggers and cues preceding the unwanted behaviours are identified and addressed
- previously unknown causes or triggers of problem behaviour may be identified while gathering information and writing the plan, issues can then be effectively addressed
- specialised guidance indicating how to respond to a student's challenging behaviour, helps to provide boundaries, consistency and consequences for the student, reducing the need for punishment and in turn reducing stress for teachers
- a sense of harmony and safety to a classroom and school may be restored.

### Who is responsible for BSPs?

One person at the school, or sub-school, should be responsible for making, monitoring and reviewing all BSPs. For example:

- Primary schools and special schools: the assistant principal
- Secondary schools: the student welfare coordinator, year level co-coordinator or assistant principal.

This BSP Coordinator initiates and coordinates the steps below. This person will also typically lead any Student Support Group (SSG) meetings held under the BSP.

Guidelines for writing an effective BSP

The most effective BSPs are developed when these eight steps are followed:

1. Gather relevant information about the student.
2. Convene a meeting of relevant school staff and the student's parents.
3. Convene a meeting of relevant school staff to draft the BSP.
4. Refine the BSP.
5. Sign the BSP.
6. Provide a copy to staff.

7. Review the BSP.
8. Conclude the BSP.

#### Templates

[Guidelines for Writing a BSP \(PDF - 925KB\)](#)

[What is a Behaviour Support Plan? \(PDF - 345KB\)](#)

[BSP Student Questionnaire \(PDF - 587KB\)](#)

[Behaviour Support Plan Template \(PDF - 196KB\)](#)

[Behaviour Support Plan Template - Printable \(PDF - 221KB\)](#)

#### **Caution**

The effectiveness of a BSP relies on identifying the underlying causes of the student's problem behaviours. School staff should consult their student services support officer, the student's parents or guardians, psychologist or other appropriate specialist, or professional involved with the student. The failure to identify the underlying issue or issues can lead to problem behaviours continuing, escalating or being replaced by other problem behaviours.

It also needs to be understood that a student's behaviour will often deteriorate before it improves when a BSP is introduced. Rewards and reinforcements used to promote pro social behavior must be immediate and at a high frequency in the early stages of a BSP for maximum success, especially with younger students.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Assembly Pledge.**

I'm proud that I live in this country

I respect the Australian Flag, the Aboriginal Flag and the Torres Strait Islander Flag.

I will follow the rules of the school and co-operate with the people around me.

We Kossie kids pledge to protect and stand up for each other to stop bullying in our school.