



# Bullying Prevention Policy

## Child Safe Standards 1



### Help for non-English speakers:

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the school on 03 53324544

## PURPOSE:

Black Hill Primary School is committed to providing a safe and respectful learning environment where bullying will not be tolerated. The purpose of this policy is to:

- ensure our School is a safe and supportive school where the risk from all types of harm is minimised, diversity is valued and all members of the school community can be confident that they will receive support in the face of any threats to their safety or wellbeing
- explain the definition of bullying so that there is shared understanding amongst all members of the Black Hill Primary School community
- make clear that no form of bullying at will be tolerated
- outline the strategies and programs in place at Black Hill primary School to build a positive school culture and prevent bullying behaviour
- ask that everyone in our school community be alert to signs and evidence of bullying behaviour, and understands the importance of reporting bullying behaviour to school staff
- ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are appropriately investigated and addressed
- ensure that support is provided to students who may be affected by bullying behaviour (including targets, bystanders, witnesses and students engaging in bullying behaviour)
- seek parental and peer group support in addressing and preventing bullying behaviour at Black Hill Primary School.

## GUIDELINES

- [DE guidelines](#)
- [Australian Student Wellbeing Framework](#)

## DEFINITION

In 2018 the Education Council of the Council of Australian Governments endorsed the following definition of bullying for use by all Australian schools:

*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.*

Bullying has three main features:

- It involves a misuse of power in a relationship
- It is ongoing and repeated, and
- It involves behaviours that can cause harm.

There are four main types of bullying behaviour:

- Physical – examples include hitting, pushing, shoving or intimidating or otherwise physically hurting another person, damaging or stealing their belongings. It includes threats of violence.
- Verbal/written – examples include name-calling or insulting someone about an attribute, quality or personal characteristic.
- Social (sometimes called relational or emotional bullying) – examples include deliberately excluding someone, spreading rumours, sharing information that will have a harmful effect on the other person and/or damaging a person's social reputation or social acceptance.
- Cyberbullying – any form of bullying behaviour that occurs online or via a mobile device. It can be verbal or written, and can include threats of violence as well as images, videos and/or audio.

Bullying can be a form of racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia or other type of social prejudice when the behaviour is targeted at an individual or group because of a personal characteristic, such as race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability.

For further information about bullying, refer to: [Bully Stoppers \(education.vic.gov.au\)](http://education.vic.gov.au) and the Department's [Bullying Prevention and Response](#) policy on the Policy and Advisory Library.

### **Other distressing and inappropriate behaviours**

Many distressing and inappropriate behaviours may not constitute bullying even though they are unpleasant. Students who are involved in or who witness any distressing and inappropriate behaviours should report their concerns to school staff and our school will follow our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy] and/or this Bullying Prevention Policy where the behaviour constitutes bullying.

**Mutual conflict** involves an argument or disagreement between people with no imbalance of power. In incidents of mutual conflict, generally, both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the issue. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.

**Social rejection or dislike** is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

**Single-episode acts** of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. However, single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not acceptable behaviours at our school and may have serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour.

**Harassment** is language or actions that are demeaning, offensive or intimidating to a person. It can take many forms, including sexual harassment and disability harassment.

**Discrimination** is behaviour that treats someone unfavourably because of a personal characteristic (for example, race, religious belief or activity, disability, sex or intersex status, gender identity or sexual orientation).

Discrimination, harassment, and any other inappropriate behaviour is not tolerated at our school and there may be serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour. This includes any form of racism, religious or disability discrimination, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, or any other behaviour that targets an individual or group.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Black Hill Primary School provides a safe and secure environment for everyone by actively encouraging:

- our school values of Integrity, Respect, Aspiration, Teamwork and Responsibility.
- positive and supportive relationships across the school.
- students to report all instances of bullying.
- School Wide Positive Behaviours by praising students at every opportunity.
- parents to contact their child's teacher, the Assistant Principal or Principal anytime they are worried or concerned about bullying issues.
- student involvement in leadership programs that emphasise the importance of supporting and nurturing strong positive relationships.

Black Hill Primary School:

- Involves parents and families in finding solutions to bullying issues when brought to our attention
- Check in with students as needed and act on reports of bullying behaviours.

## Responding to bullying and unacceptable behaviour

When responding to bullying behaviour, our school aims to:

- be proportionate, consistent and responsive
- find a constructive solution for everyone
- stop the bullying from happening again
- restore the relationships between the students involved.

Black Hill Primary School acknowledges that school staff owe a duty of care to students to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm, which can include harm that may be caused by bullying behaviour.

1. implement [restorative practices](#). Students are held accountable for their behaviour and support is provided for the students or groups affected by the wrongdoing.
2. notify parents of all children involved. The classroom teacher, the Assistant Principal or Principal will notify parents of concerns and involve them in finding solutions.
3. organise meetings with parents and student (and if needed, student services).
4. develop and implement an individual behaviour management plan.
5. provide intensive school based support for behaviour modification through the Victorian Curriculum, Personal and Social capabilities and the Department Of Education, Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships resources.
6. refer to support services for individual interventions as required in consultation with parents for all students involved.
7. implement suspension in extreme circumstances and ongoing instances of bullying behaviour after interventions have been implemented with no change.

## All staff at Black Hill Primary School will be responsive to all reports of bullying by:

- a. Listening actively to any student or parent reports and responding as per the school policy implementation
- b. Liaising with the school wellbeing coordinator (AP) and Wellbeing School Improvement Team for support
- c. Recording all reported instances of bullying and monitor and evaluate strategies on Compass
- d. Referring to and teach the school expected behaviours

- e. Implementing the actions for inappropriate behaviour in the classroom and yard (guided by the Behaviour Flow Chart).

Teachers will plan and implement the school identified preventative strategies within the school curriculum.

### **Preventative strategies implemented at Black Hill Primary School include:**

- [Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships curriculum](#)
- [Victorian Curriculum, Personal and Social capabilities](#)
- [School Wide Positive Behaviour](#)
- [Behaviour Flow Chart and Behaviour Expectations Matrix.](#)
- [Real Schools Restorative Practices](#)
- [Peaceful Kids Program](#)

### **Black Hill Primary School Recording and Reporting**

To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, leadership may:

- speak to the those involved in the allegations, including the target/s, the students allegedly engaging in bullying behaviour/s and any witnesses to the incidents
- speak to the parent/carer(s) of the students involved
- speak to the teachers of the students involved
- take detailed notes of all discussions for future reference
- obtain written statements from all or any of the above.

All communications in investigating an allegation of bullying will be managed sensitively. Investigations will be completed as quickly as possible to allow for the behaviours to be addressed in a timely manner.

The objective of completing a thorough investigation into the circumstances of alleged bullying behaviour is to determine the nature of the conduct and the students involved. A thorough understanding of the alleged bullying will inform staff about how to most effectively implement an appropriate response to that behaviour.

Serious bullying, including serious cyberbullying, is a criminal offence and may be referred to Victoria Police. For more information, see: [Brodie's Law.](#)

Records of bullying incidents will be kept by the school on Compass (school intranet) on the student's home page and enables the school to:

- manage individual cases effectively;
- monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of strategies.
- recognise the anti-bullying work of the school.
- demonstrate defensible decision making in the event of complaints being made.
- engage and inform parents and other services as necessary.

Records are confidential and are stored on Compass for access by school staff only and shared with parents and approved agencies in accordance with the Privacy Act as required. (lawfully authorised persons)

#### **Parent reporting:**

Parents are frequently the ones to report bullying incidents to the school. Staff at Black Hill Primary School will demonstrate sensitivity to the emotional needs of parents when they make contact with the school and will:

- act promptly,
- take the concern seriously and
- report back on progress on the issue to parents.

#### **Student reporting:**

Student reports will be treated promptly and seriously, and action taken by the school should not make their situation worse.

At Black Hill Primary School, students can report instances of bullying to their teacher, education support or administration staff and expect the staff member to take the concern seriously and act promptly.

## Responses to bullying behaviours

When the school has sufficient information to understand the circumstances of the alleged bullying and the students involved, a number of strategies may be implemented to address the behaviour and support affected students in consultation with the Student Wellbeing Team, teachers, ESS, Assistant Principal, Principal, Department of Education specialist staff etc.].

There are a number of factors that will be considered when determining the most appropriate response to the behaviour. When making a decision about how to respond to bullying behaviour, Black Hill Primary School will consider:

- the age, maturity and individual circumstances of the students involved
- the severity and frequency of the bullying, and the impact it has had on the target student
- whether the student/s engaging in bullying behaviour have displayed similar behaviour before
- whether the bullying took place in a group or one-to-one context
- whether the students engaging in bullying behaviour demonstrates insight or remorse for their behaviour
- the alleged motive of the behaviour.

The school may implement all, or some of the following responses to bullying behaviours:

- Offer wellbeing support, including referral to the Student Wellbeing Leaders, DE Student Services and /or external providers to:
  - the target student or students
  - the students engaging in the bullying behaviour
  - affected students, including witnesses and/or friends of the target student.
- Facilitate a restorative practice meeting with all or some of the students involved. The objective of restorative practice is to repair relationships that have been damaged by bringing about a sense of remorse and restorative action on the part of the person who has bullied someone and forgiveness by the person who has been bullied.
- Facilitate a mediation between some or all of the students involved to help to encourage students to take responsibility for their behaviour and explore underlying reasons for conflict or grievance. Mediation is only suitable if all students are involved voluntarily and demonstrate a willingness to engage in the mediation process.
- Facilitate a process using restorative circle time protocols, involving the target student(s), the students engaging in bullying behaviour and a group of students who are likely to be supportive of the target(s).
- Facilitate a Student Support Group meeting and/or Behaviour Support Plan for affected students.
- Prepare a Safety Plan or Individual Management Plan restricting contact between target and students engaging in bullying behaviour.
- Provide discussion and/or mentoring for different social and emotional learning competencies of the students involved, i.e. connect affected students with an older Student Mentor, Peaceful Kids program, lunch clubs.
- Monitor the behaviour of the students involved for an appropriate time and take follow up action if necessary.
- Implement cohort, year group, or whole school targeted strategies to reinforce positive behaviours
- Implement proportionate disciplinary consequences for the students engaging in bullying behaviour, which may include removal of privileges, detention, suspension and/or expulsion consistent with our Student Wellbeing and Engagement policy, the Ministerial Order on Suspensions and Expulsions and any other relevant Department policy.

## RESOURCES

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies and Statement of Values and School Philosophy

- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Parent Complaints policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy

The following websites and resources provide useful information on prevention and responding to bullying, as well as supporting students who have been the target of bullying behaviours:

- Bully Stoppers
- Bully Stoppers-Survey tools
- Safe Schools
- Real Schools
- Respectful Relationships
- Bullying, No Way!
- STEPS decision making tool
- School Wide Positive Behaviour Support
- Report racism or religious discrimination in schools
- Kids Helpline
- ReachOut Australia
- Lifeline
- Student Wellbeing Hub
- eSafety Commissioner
- Australian Student Wellbeing Framework

Our school also follows Department of Education and Training policy relating to bullying including:

- Bullying Prevention and Response
- Cybersafety and Responsible Use of Digital Technologies
- Equal Opportunity and Human Rights - Students
- LGBTIQ Student Support Policy

**EVALUATION:**

This policy will be reviewed **every 2 years**, or earlier as required following an incident or analysis of new research or school data relating to bullying, to ensure that the policy remains up to date, practical and effective.

<b>Created date</b>	<b>August 2017</b>
<b>Consultation</b>	Staff, Parents, Black Hill Primary School Council Sub-Committee
<b>Endorsed by</b>	Black Hill Primary School Council and school principal
<b>Endorsed on</b>	June 2023
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