



<b>Policy Title</b>	<b>Anti-Bullying Policy/ Cyber Safety</b>		
<b>Ratified at S.Council</b>			
<b>Updated on</b>	Term 2 2022		
<b>Reviewed by</b>	Wellbeing Sub Committee	<b>Date</b>	7/05/2022

## PURPOSE

Bairnsdale West 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:

- explain the definition of bullying so that there is shared understanding amongst all members of the Bairnsdale West community
- make clear that no form of bullying at Bairnsdale West Primary School will be tolerated
- outline the strategies and programs in place at Bairnsdale West 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 Bairnsdale West Primary School.

When responding to bullying behaviour, Bairnsdale West Primary 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.

Bairnsdale West 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.

## SCOPE

This policy addresses how Bairnsdale West Primary School aims to prevent, address and respond to student bullying behaviour. Bairnsdale West Primary School recognises that there are many other types of inappropriate student behaviours that do not meet the definition of bullying which are also unacceptable at our school. These other inappropriate behaviours will be managed in accordance with our [Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy](#) and [Inclusion and Diversity policy](#).

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions. It also applies to bullying behaviour between students that occurs outside of school hours, where the behaviour impacts on student wellbeing and safety at school.

## POLICY

### Definitions

#### **Bullying**

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://BullyStoppers.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. Bairnsdale West Primary School will use its Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy to guide a response to single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression.

*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. Further information about discrimination and harassment, including definitions, is set out in our Inclusion and Diversity Policy.

## Bullying Prevention

Bairnsdale West Primary School has a number of programs and strategies in place to build a positive and inclusive school culture and relationships to promote wellbeing. We strive to foster a school culture that prevents bullying behaviour by modelling, encouraging and teaching behaviour that demonstrates acceptance, kindness and respect.

Bullying prevention at Bairnsdale West Primary School is proactive and is supported by research that indicates that a whole school, multifaceted approach is the most effective way to prevent and address bullying. At our school we have both primary prevention and early intervention strategies:

### Primary Prevention

- Provide strategies that foster caring relationships and a sense of belonging and wellbeing.
- Provide networks for all individuals involved in bullying issues.
- Encourage open and honest communication/strong links between the school, home and the community.
- Provide students with the opportunity to be involved in extra curricular activities.
- Develop leadership skills in all students.
- Develop positive social behaviours and problem-solving skills.
- Develop social skills to promote resilience, conflict resolution, assertiveness and problem solving.
- Each classroom teacher to clarify with students at the start of each year our school and classroom policy on bullying, including cyber bullying.
- Professional development for staff relating to all forms of bullying including cyber bullying, harassment and proven counter measures.
- Educate the school community about the seriousness of cyber bullying, its impact on those being bullied and how this behaviour is unacceptable
- Community awareness and input relating to bullying (including cyber-bullying), its characteristics and the school's programs and response.
- Provide programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.
- All students to be provided with individual and confidential computer and network log ins and passwords.
- The curriculum to include anti-bullying messages and strategies eg: 'The Friendly Schools' and 'No Blame Approach to Bullying' programs.
- Student Leaders, buddies, staff and students to promote the three School rules.
- A vigilant and accountable yard duty roster for teachers will be put in place.
- Electives and structured activities available to students at recess and lunch breaks

## Early Intervention

- Encourage people to ask for help when dealing with bullying incidents.
- Encourage and support the reporting of bullying incidents.
- Encourage children and staff to report bullying incidents involving themselves or others.
- Classroom teachers and Principal on a regular basis remind students and staff to report incidents of bullying.
- Regular monitoring of student traffic on school's computer networks to identify potential problems.
- Parents and others are encouraged to contact school if they become aware of a problem.
- Library – a designated safe and quiet place for children to access at lunchtimes.
- Public recognition and reward for positive behaviour and resolution of problems.

## Incident Response

### Reporting concerns to Bairnsdale West Primary School

Bullying is not tolerated at our school. We ensure bullying behaviour is identified and addressed with appropriate and proportionate consequences. All bullying complaints will be taken seriously and responded to sensitively..

Students who may be experiencing bullying behaviour, or students who have witnessed bullying behaviour, are encouraged to report their concerns to school staff or another trusted adult as soon as possible.

We encourage students to speak to their classroom teacher. However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff including any member of the Principal team.

### Investigations

When notified of alleged bullying behaviour, school staff are required to:

1. record the details of the allegations in student notes sections of their files and
2. inform their Team Leader or member of the Principal class team if required].

The classroom teacher with support is responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, the adults 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 with the adults in the course of 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](#).

## Responses to bullying behaviours

When the classroom teacher 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 Team Leaders and the Principal class team.

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, Bairnsdale west 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 adults may implement all, or some of the following responses to bullying behaviours:

- Both bullies and victims will be offered support.
- Removal of cyber-bullies from access to the school's network and technology for a period of time.
- If student bullying persists parents will be contacted, and further consequences implemented consistent with the school's Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy.
- Exclusion from situation.
- Discussion with people involved.
- Withdrawal of privileges.
- Ongoing counselling from appropriate agencies for both victim and bully.
- Participation in social skills program to assist in developing new skills.
- School suspension.
- Reinforcement of positive behaviours.
- Support structures.
- Ongoing monitoring of identified bullies.
- Rewards for positive behaviour.

Bairnsdale West Primary School understands the importance of monitoring and following up on the progress of students who have been involved in or affected by bullying behaviour. Where appropriate, school staff will also endeavour to provide parents and carers with updates on the management of bullying incidents.

The investigating adult is responsible for maintaining up to date records of the investigation of and responses to bullying behaviour.

## FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Parent Complaints policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy

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](#)

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](#)
  - [Report racism or religious discrimination in schools](#)
  - [Kids Helpline](#)
  - [ReachOut Australia](#)
  - [Lifeline](#)
  - [Bullying. No way!](#)
  - [Student Wellbeing Hub](#)
  - [eSafety Commissioner](#)
  - [Australian Student Wellbeing Framework](#)
- [insert other website or resources that may be useful for your school community]

## Evaluation:

- This policy is to be reviewed within a 3 year cycle.

## Communication:

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in relevant staff induction processes

- Regularly in staff meetings
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request