

BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY



Help for non-English speakers!

If you need help understanding this policy's information, please contact Berwick Chase Primary School at 9707 7799.

PURPOSE

Berwick Chase 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 Berwick Chase Primary School community.
- make clear that no form of bullying at Berwick Chase Primary will be tolerated.
- outline the strategies and programs in place at Berwick Chase 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 understand 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 at Berwick Chase Primary School.

When responding to bullying behaviour, Berwick Chase 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.

Berwick Chase 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, including the damage that may be caused by bullying.

SCOPE

This policy addresses how Berwick Chase Primary School aims to prevent, manage, and respond to student bullying behaviour. Berwick Chase Primary School recognises that many other inappropriate student behaviours do not meet the definition of bullying, which is also unacceptable at our school. These other inappropriate behaviours will be managed by our e.g. *Student Code of Conduct* and

Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy and Inclusion and Diversity policy, Digital Technologies Policy, and Child Safety 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, which impacts student well-being 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 a deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social, and 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 conflicts 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 has 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 hurt the other person and 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 include threats of violence, images, videos, and audio.

Bullying can be a form of racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, or another 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 in 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 involved in or witnessing unfortunate and inappropriate behaviours should report their concerns to school staff. Our school will follow our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy, Child Safety Policy, Complaints Policy, and this Bullying Prevention Policy where the behaviour constitutes bullying.

Mutual conflict involves an argument or disagreement between people with no power imbalance. In incidents of mutual competition, both parties are generally upset and usually 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 aversion by others.

Single episode acts of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. However, single episodes of meanness or physical attack are unacceptable behaviours at our school and may have severe consequences for students engaging in this behaviour. Berwick Chase 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 other inappropriate behaviour are not tolerated at our school, and there may be severe consequences for students engaging in this behaviour. This includes any form of racism, religious or disability discrimination, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, or other conduct 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

Berwick Chase Primary School has several programs and strategies to build a positive and inclusive school culture and relationships to promote well-being. We strive to foster a school culture that prevents bullying by modelling, encouraging, and teaching behaviour that demonstrates acceptance, kindness and respect.



Bullying prevention at Berwick Chase Primary School is proactive. It is supported by research that indicates that a whole school, a multifaceted approach is the most effective way to prevent and address bullying. At our school:

- We strive to build strong partnerships between the school, families, and the broader community, which means all members work together to ensure the safety of students.
- We participate in the Respectful Relationships initiative, which aims to embed a culture of respect and equality across our school.
- We celebrate the diverse backgrounds of members of our school community and teach multicultural education, including Aboriginal History, to promote mutual respect and social cohesion.
- We participate in the Safe Schools program to help foster a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for LGBTIQ+ students.
- Teachers are encouraged to incorporate classroom management strategies that discourage bullying and promote positive behaviour.
- A range of year-level incursions and programs are planned each year to raise awareness about bullying and its impacts.
- In the classroom, our social and emotional learning curriculum teaches students what constitutes bullying and how to respond to bullying behaviour assertively. This promotes resilience, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem-solving.
- We promote bystander behaviour to empower our students to positively and safely take appropriate action when they see or hear a peer being bullied.
- Students are encouraged to look out for each other and talk to teachers and older peers about bullying they have experienced or witnessed.

Please see our Student Wellbeing and Engagement policy for further information about our engagement and wellbeing initiatives.

[Incident Response](#)

Reporting concerns to Berwick Chase 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 have witnessed it are encouraged to report their concerns to school staff or another trusted adult as soon as possible.

Our ability to effectively reduce and eliminate bullying behaviour is greatly affected by students and parents, and carers reporting concerning behaviour as soon as possible so that the responses implemented by Berwick Chase Primary School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

We encourage students to speak to their teacher/Year Level Coordinator. However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted staff member, including other teachers, the wellbeing staff, and Koorie Welfare Officer.

Parents or carers who develop concerns that their child is involved in or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Berwick Chase Primary School should contact the school, specifically the leadership team, welfare officer or their child's classroom teacher.

Investigations

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

1. record the details of the allegations on Sentral with a flag for follow-up when issues are repeated or are a safety issue for the student concerned.
2. inform relevant staff involved, i.e. classroom teacher, the appropriate Year Level Coordinator, Student Wellbeing Team, Assistant Principal, and the Principal.

The Welfare Officer, Leadership Team, Safety Committee, and classroom teachers are responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, the above staff may:

- speak to 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 students and staff involved 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 promptly.

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 suspected bullying will inform staff on effectively implementing an appropriate response to that behaviour.

Severe 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 leadership team, welfare officer, etc., have sufficient information to understand the circumstances of the alleged bullying and the students involved, several strategies may be implemented to address the behaviour and support affected students in consultation with, i.e. Student Wellbeing Team, teachers, Assistant Principal, Principal, Department of Education and Training specialist staff etc.

Several factors will be considered when determining the most appropriate response to the behaviour. When deciding about how to respond to bullying behaviour, Berwick Chase Primary School staff will evaluate the following:

- 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 has displayed similar behaviour before
- whether the bullying took place in a group or one-to-one context
- whether the students engaging in bullying behaviour demonstrate insight or remorse for their behaviour
- the alleged motive of the behaviour.

The leadership team or welfare officer may implement all or some of the following responses to bullying behaviours:

- Offer well-being support to the students engaging in the bullying behaviour and affected students, including witnesses and friends of the target student.
- Facilitate a restorative practice meeting with all or some students involved. The objective of the therapeutic 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 voluntarily involved and are willing to engage in the mediation process.
- Implement a Method of Shared Concern process with all students involved in the bullying.
- Facilitate a Student Support Group meeting and/or Behaviour Support Plan for affected students.
- Prepare an Individual Management Plan restricting contact between the target and students engaging in bullying behaviour.
- Provide discussion and mentoring for different social and emotional learning competencies of the students involved, including.
- Monitor the students' behaviour 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 expulsion consistent with our Student Wellbeing and Engagement policy, the Ministerial Order on Suspensions and Expulsions and any other relevant Department policy.

Berwick Chase Primary School understands the importance of monitoring and following up on the progress of students who have been involved in or affected by bullying. School staff will also provide parents and carers with updates on managing bullying incidents.

The welfare officer is responsible for maintaining up-to-date records of the investigation and responses to bullying behaviour.

COMMUNICATION

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

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes.
- Included in our staff handbook/manual.
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required.
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions.
- Included as an annual in the school newsletter.
- Tell it from me a survey.
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

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 the Department of Education and Training policy relating to bullying, including:

- [Bullying Prevention and Response](#)
- [Cybersafe and Responsible Use of Digital Technologies](#)
- [Equal Opportunity and Human Rights - Students](#)
- [LGBTIQ Student Support Policy](#)

The following websites and resources provide helpful 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](#)

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed every two years or earlier 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.

Data to inform this review will be collected through:

- discussion and consultation with students and parents/carers
- regular student bullying surveys
- regular staff surveys
- assessment of other school-based data, including the number of reported incidents of bullying in each year group and the effectiveness of the responses implemented.
- Attitudes to School Survey
- Parent Opinion Survey

Proposed amendments to this policy will be discussed with consultation, i.e. student representative groups, parents' groups, and the school council]

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	May 2024
Consultation	School Council, Leadership Team
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	May 2026