St Kilda Park Primary School

Bullying Prevention Policy

Purpose

St. Kilda Park Primary 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 St. Kilda Park Primary community
- make clear that no form of bullying at St. Kilda Park Primary will be tolerated
- outline the strategies and programs in place at St. Kilda Park Primary 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 accept responsibility to report 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 and students engaging in bullying behaviour)
- seek parental and peer group support in addressing and preventing bullying behaviour at St. Kilda Park Primary.

When responding to bullying behaviour, St. Kilda Park Primary aims to:

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

St. Kilda Park Primary 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.

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Bullying Prevention Policy

Scope

This policy addresses how St. Kilda Park Primary aims to prevent, address and respond to student bullying behaviour. St. Kilda Park Primary 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

1. Physical – examples include hitting, pushing, shoving or intimidating or otherwise physically hurting another person, damaging or stealing their belongings. It includes threats of violence.
2. Verbal/written – examples include name-calling or insulting someone about an attribute, quality or personal characteristic.
3. 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.
4. 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) 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 the 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. St. Kilda Park Primary 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, racial 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

St. Kilda Park Primary has several programs and strategies in place to build a positive and inclusive school culture. We strive to foster a school culture that prevents bullying behaviour by modelling and encouraging behaviour that demonstrates acceptance, kindness and respect.

Bullying prevention at St. Kilda Park Primary is proactive and supported by research that indicates that a whole school, multifaceted approach is the most effect way to prevent and address bullying. At our school:

- We have a positive school environment that provides safety, security and support for students and promotes positive relationships and wellbeing. We identify and implement evidence-based programs and initiatives from the Schools Mental Health Menu that are relevant to preventing and addressing bullying and help us to build a positive and inclusive school climate
- We strive to build strong partnerships between the school, families and the broader community that means all members work together to ensure the safety of students.
- Teachers are encouraged to incorporate classroom management strategies that discourage bullying and promote positive behaviour.
- 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 us foster a safe environment that is supportive and inclusive of LGBTIQA+ students.

- We promote upstander behaviour as a way of empowering our students to positively and safely take appropriate action when they see or hear of a peer being bullied.
- We participate in the National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence.
- A range of year level incursions and programs are planned annually to raise awareness about bullying and its impacts e.g., Bully bystanders, Respectful relationships.
- 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.
- The CAPSE (Creating a Positive School Environment) Program and the Buddy program encourage positive relationships between students in different year levels. We seek to empower students to be confident communicators and to resolve conflict in a non-aggressive and constructive way.
- Students are encouraged to look out for each other and to talk to teachers and older peers about any bullying they have experienced or witnessed.

For further information about our engagement and wellbeing initiatives, please see our Student Wellbeing and Engagement policy.

Incident Response

Reporting concerns to St. Kilda Park Primary

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 as soon as possible.

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

We encourage students to speak to their classroom teacher to discuss their concerns or with any trusted member of staff including teachers and Education Support Staff.

Parents or carers who develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at St. Kilda Park Primary should contact the Student Wellbeing Coordinator Michelle Bové, on 85986444 or by email at Michelle.Bove@education.vic.gov.au

Investigations

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

1. inform both the classroom teacher and principal class officer who will make initial inquiries and investigate further
2. record the details of the allegations to the principal class officer who will record these in a chronicle entry on Compass

Principal Class officers are responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely, confidential and sensitive manner to appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, they 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
- discuss this at a Risk Assessment Management Program (RAMP) meeting
- speak to the parents 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 Student Wellbeing Coordinator while investigating an allegation of bullying will be managed confidentially and sensitively. Investigations will be completed as quickly as possible to allow 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 implement an appropriate response most effectively 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 Student Wellbeing Coordinator has 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 the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, Classroom teacher, Education support staff, Principal, Department of Education and Training specialist staff including the Student Support Service Psychologist.

There are several factors to consider when determining the most appropriate response to the behaviour. When deciding about how to respond to bullying behaviour, St. Kilda Park Primary 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, including any element of provocation

The Principal Class Officer may implement all, or some of the following responses to bullying behaviours:

- Offer wellbeing support including referral to the Student Wellbeing Co-ordinator, SSS or counselling to:
    - to the target student
    - the targeted student or students
    - the students the students engaging in the bullying behaviour
    - affected students, including witnesses and/or friends of the target student. (new inclusion)
- 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
- Prepare a DET Behaviour Management Plan supporting and/or 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, including
- Monitor the behaviour of the students involved for an appropriate time and take follow up action if necessary.
- Implement a Shared Concern Method process with all students involved in the bullying.
- Facilitate a Student Support Group meeting and/or Behaviour Support Plan for affected students.
- Implement cohort targeted strategies to reinforce positive behaviours, for example practices supported by the Creating a Positive School Environment (CAPSE) program.
- Implement proportionate disciplinary consequences for the students engaging in bullying behaviour, which may include removal of privileges, referral to Child Protection and/or Victoria Police, 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.

St. Kilda Park Primary 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 Student Wellbeing Coordinator is responsible for maintaining up to date records of the investigation of 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
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

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Further Information and Resources

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

- SKiPPS Student Engagement Policy in CAPSE Parent Complaints policy

- Statement of Commitment to Child Safety
- Duty of Care Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Privacy and Confidentiality policy

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

- Bullying Prevention and Response
- Cybersafety and Responsible Use of Digital Technologies
- Equal Opportunity and Human Rights - Students
- LGBTIQA+ 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
- Kids Helpline
- Lifeline
- Bullying. No way!
- Student Wellbeing Hub
- eSafety Commissioner
- Australian Student Wellbeing Framework
- Child Protection-DFFH

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years or earlier as required, following analysis of school data on reported incidents of, and responses to bullying to ensure that the policy remains up to date, practical and effective.

Data will be collected through:

- discussion and consultation with students and parent/carers
- regular student bullying surveys

- Attitudes to School Survey
- Staff Opinion Survey
- PIVOT /Life Skills Go student welfare survey
- Parent Opinion Survey

Proposed amendments to this policy will be discussed with the Education Sub Committee and staff members.

Policy Review and Approval

Policy last reviewed	July 2025
Consultation	Education & Policy Sub Committee meeting 30/07/2025 Staff - email 31st July 2025 for staff to review
Approved by	School Council - Wednesday 6th August
Next scheduled review date	July 2027.