

Anti-Bullying Policy

Policy Number:	202	
Status:	Approved	
Applies to:	All staff, parents and students, including full-time, part-time, permanent, fixed-term and casual employees, as well as contractors, volunteers and people undertaking work experience or vocational placements	
Supersedes:	Anti-Bullying Policy 2012	
Authorised by:	Director	Date of Authorisation: 1/02/2017
Review:	Review initially after 6 months Then every two years	Next Review Date: 6 months from date of effect
Policy Owner:	Director	

Please do not retain hard copies of policies for a length of time; the latest version will be available online.

PURPOSE The purpose of this Policy is to outline the School's approach to bullying behaviour and to ensure that students and staff feel safe from bullying in all its forms.

DEFINITIONS **Bullying:** is repeated oppression, psychological or physical, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person and occurs when someone, or a group of people, upset or create a risk to another person's health and safety, or their property, reputation or social acceptance.

If bullying amounts to harm as referred to in the school's Child Protection Policy then the matter must be dealt with under the Child Protection Policy.

Cyber-bullying, or e-bullying, is a reasonably recent type of bullying which involves the use of information and communication technologies such as email, (mobile) phone and text messages, instant messaging (SMS), chat rooms and video internet sites e.g. YouTube.

Bullying is not:

- A mutual conflict or disagreement with no imbalance of power
- Social rejection or dislike
- Single or infrequent episodes of nastiness or meanness, or random acts of aggression or intimidation.

See Appendix 1 for more detailed definitions.

SLT: Senior Leadership Team
EA: Education Administrator
HS: High School
PS: Primary School
EC: Early Childhood

WHEN IT APPLIES This Policy applies at all times when students are under the duty of care of a staff member, in attendance at the School or on School-related excursions or camps.

It applies to staff (as an employee or contractor) whilst undertaking tasks and activities for the School.

It applies to parents attending the school grounds and engaging with school staff, students and other parents

PRINCIPLES The basic principles underlying this Policy are:

- Every individual has value in the School community
- Every individual has the right to feel safe from bullying or harassment in all its forms
- Every conflict can be resolved: those being bullied and those engaging in bullying behaviours both need help to resolve conflict
- To develop into healthy and socially adept adults, children need love, time, space and support as opposed to punishment and moral judgement

POLICY **This Policy is to be read in conjunction with the SVSS Student Health and Well-Being Policy and Procedures, which provide the framework for the School's approach to student development and behaviour management.**

Bullying may occur between students, between staff and students, or between parents and staff. The School has a duty of care to its students and staff to provide a safe environment, within the boundaries of normal and reasonable behaviour at a school; taking account of differing age groups and developmental stages.

The School is committed to taking action to protect students and staff from bullying and to respond appropriately when bullying does occur. It has a 'no-blame' approach to bullying: that is, the main aim is to stop the bullying rather than punish the person engaging in bullying behaviour; although that does not preclude sanctions if bullying persists. The School's preferred first approach to managing bullying behaviour is through Restorative Practices. If this is unsuccessful, or developmentally inappropriate, other strategies will be considered as per Appendix 2.

Immediate intervention is required where there is an assessed risk of harm to another.

In order to prevent bullying from occurring, the School will implement the processes as identified in this Policy and its Appendices.

The teacher responsible for the care and management of the students at the time of an incident is afforded discretionary power to deal with the situation or behaviour in a way that they deem to be most appropriate for that child and specific circumstance as long as action taken is in accordance with this Policy and has regard for the following considerations and exclusions:

- Corporal or physical punishment of any kind is not permitted
- Any behaviour that causes physical harm to another student or damage to personal or school property must be reported to the EA and documented in an incident report. This information must also be copied to the Director.
- Ongoing behaviour issues of a student are to be reported to and discussed with the EA.
- Where bullying is identified by the school as occurring, the School (via the Teacher and/or the EA) must implement a process for addressing it (see Appendix 2).

REVIEW OF POLICY

A review of this policy will be carried out initially after 6-months, and then every two years, to assess effectiveness and applicability.

ADMINISTRATION

Incident reports must be completed by the teacher and provided to the EA within 24 hours of the occurrence of an incident that requires reporting

The teacher or EA will contact parents of all students involved in an incident recorded in an incident report within 24 hours of the EA receiving that incident report.

CONTACT

EAs, Director

REFERENCES

- [Education \(Accreditation of Non-State Schools\) Regulations 2001 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Australian Education Act 2013 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Australian Education Regulations 2013 \(Cth\)](#)
- <https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/>

LINKED POLICIES OR DOCUMENTS

- SVSS Student Health and Well Being Policy (Behaviour Management)
- SVSS Child Protection Policy
- SVSS Anti-Discrimination Policy
- SVSS Complaints Resolution Policy

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 – Detailed Definitions of Bullying
- Appendix 2 – Implementation Guidelines and Procedures

APPENDIX 1

Detailed Definitions of Bullying Behaviour

The national definition of bullying for Australian schools says:

Bullying is an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more persons. Bullying can happen in person or online, and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert).

Bullying of any form or for any reason can have 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.

Behaviours that do not constitute bullying include:

- mutual arguments and disagreements (where there is no power imbalance)
- not liking someone or a single act of social rejection
- one-off acts of meanness or spite
- isolated incidents of aggression, intimidation or violence.

However, these conflicts still need to be addressed and resolved.

Download the national definition of bullying for Australian schools (PDF, 136KB), Accessible version (RTF, 48KB).

Versions of the definition of bullying suitable for students at various ages are available in the Resources section.



Exploring the definition further

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.

*From **Bullying No Way** <https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/>*

APPENDIX 2

IMPLEMENTATION: Guidelines, Procedures and Responsibilities

A. When a student engages in bullying behaviour:

Immediate Action

Any incidents of an unhealthy relational nature will be dealt with on the spot by staff to defuse the immediate conflict. These incidents may or may not be defined as bullying behaviour.

Once the immediate issues have been dealt with, the following steps should be taken:

1. Identification. A student, parent or staff member reports suspected bullying incidents/problem to a staff member or senior student who notifies the relevant Class Teachers of both parties. The Class Teachers will notify the EA that a report of suspected bullying has been made.
2. Initial interview. The Class Teacher interviews the parties separately, when developmentally appropriate, and records the details of the incident/s in writing. The teacher discusses the information collected with the EA and it is determined whether the suspected bullying is a genuine case of bullying or another form of relational behaviour. If it is determined that bullying is occurring the following initial strategies will be enacted.
 - a. Both parties will be made aware that the relational difficulties have been identified as bullying and parents will be informed.
 - b. The Class Teacher will work with the students to devise strategies for conflict resolution.

Restorative Practice will be used in an age appropriate way. The Class Teacher attempts to reach a position where both parties are satisfied with the outcome; i.e. the student who has experienced the bullying behaviour feels secure and the student engaging in the behaviour is prepared to modify his/her behaviour in future. The student who has experienced the bullying behaviour understands that any further bullying must be reported immediately. The Class Teacher at any time may request the support of the Education Administrator or an external expert to support or conduct these conversations.

The strategy at this stage is not to apportion blame, or to punish; but to support both/all students and make the perpetrator aware of the behaviour and the impact it is having upon the other student, parents, the teacher and the whole class.

Follow-up Interview and process

1. The Class Teacher will closely monitor the situation and, in consultation with the EA, put into place strategies that will support resolution of difficulties. These may include:
 - a. Imposing individual boundaries around play areas and eating areas
 - b. Facilitating ongoing supported conversations with both parties and the class
 - c. Advising all playground supervisors and specialist staff about the issues
 - d. Other strategies that may be deemed to be supportive.
2. The Class Teacher will "check in" daily with both/all students and will make written notes on these conversations.

In the case of successful resolution:

1. The Teacher will acknowledge the efforts of both parties in resolving the problem.
2. The Teacher will continue weekly monitoring for a minimum of one Term.

If the problem is not resolved and bullying continues:

1. The EA will interview both the students individually.
2. The EA will inform the student engaged in the ongoing bullying of the consequences that may flow

from a repeat of the specific behaviours that have been identified as bullying. A letter will be sent to their parents outlining the same. These sanctions may include but are not limited to:

- a. Official warnings to cease offending and the implementation of an individual behaviour contract
 - b. Detention
 - c. Exclusion from certain areas of the school premises
 - d. Internal Suspension
 - e. Major fixed term suspension
 - f. Seeking help from the School's Well Being Officer or a qualified external counsellor
 - g. Permanent exclusion
3. The EA may determine at any stage that an external mediator or counsellor may be required to support either student.

An important consideration for schools, teachers, parents and students is that overcoming bullying is neither simple nor quick. Teachers need to be alert to the social health of the students, students need to be made aware of their responsibilities not to bully and not to condone bullying by being silent bystanders; and parents need to be confident to approach the school with their concerns, and encouraged to work with the school's "no-blame" approach to the situation.

What to avoid when dealing with Bullying

There are many beliefs about bullying and ways of dealing with behaviour that have been shown, through research, to be far less effective than whole-school positive behaviour support approaches. These include:

- zero tolerance and 'get tough' suspensions and exclusions
- rigid control of student behaviour
- belief that students must receive punitive and negative consequences in all cases
- increased security measures
- unfair and inconsistent use of discipline
- punishment without support.

B. When an adult is the bully (staff member, parent)

Student feeling bullied by a Teacher

This should be a rare occurrence. During their schooling, students (especially at HS) may feel they are being 'picked on' or that a particular teacher is 'pushing them' in their work. There are many factors to be considered here, such as teenage behaviour in testing boundaries and teachers legitimately pushing students in order to assist them to reach their potential.

It is important that the definition of bullying is to be applied. As examples, the following do NOT constitute bullying:

1. Receiving poor grades for incomplete work
2. Being repeatedly asked to comply with the School dress code
3. Being repeatedly asked to hand in an assignment or other work by a due date
4. Being expected to undertake the work as outlined in the curriculum which applies to the whole class.

Process

1. If a student feels bullied by a teacher, then they may report it to their parent, another teacher, the EA or to the School's Well Being Officer, or to another trusted adult.
2. After discussion with the student, the EA and/or other staff as appropriate, the first step will be to

undertake a Restorative approach to outline the concerns and to ensure that the adult understands the impact of their behaviour on the student. The student may also get a different perspective of the adult's behaviour.

3. Where the student does not feel comfortable or able to approach the perpetrator, even with support from an adult, this may be done by a third person (egg. their parent, another teacher).

A staff member feeling bullied by another staff member or by a parent

1. The staff member should first approach the other adult, if possible, to outline the behaviour of concern, its impact on them, and to request that they stop. A third adult may be asked to be present if desired (egg. another staff member or an EA). The adult engaging in behavior identified as bullying may not be aware of their behaviour or its impact and a discussion or request may simply resolve the issue.
2. In some cases, the staff member may not feel comfortable or able to approach the person engaging in bullying behaviours. In these cases, assistance may be sought from an EA, the Director, or the School's Well-Being Officer.

Restorative Practices will be considered as the preferred option for resolution, facilitated by a qualified person (either internal or external). It is important that all parties are comfortable with the choice of facilitator; otherwise the process is unlikely to be successful. Consideration is to be given to actual and perceived conflicts of interest raised by all parties in appointing a facilitator to undertake restorative process.

Follow-up Process

The EA will closely monitor the situation through conversation with all parties and, in consultation with the Director (and others as needed), identify and implement strategies that will support resolution of difficulties.

This may include:

- Mediation
- Official warnings to the person to cease the bullying behaviour
- Performance management processes
- Restrictions on interactions with students or staff
- Exclusions from the School premises
- Seeking help from the School's Well Being Officer or a qualified external counsellor

C. Responsibilities and Accountabilities

The School:

1. Ensure all staff members are familiar with the School's Anti-Bullying Policy and associated procedures, Student Health and Well-Being Policy (Behaviour Management), and Child Protection Policy.
2. Provide appropriate professional development to employees on how to appropriately respond to bullying, including at the time of induction of new staff members.
3. Take action to prevent bullying.
4. Implement a reporting mechanism for students and parents.
5. Educate students and parents on how to respond to bullying and how to report it.
6. Investigate and act upon all reports of bullying, including providing appropriate support to all parties.

Staff members:

1. Uphold and consistently apply this Policy.
2. Respond appropriately to reports of bullying, including by investigating and acting upon reports of bullying, and by providing appropriate support to all parties in accordance with the SVSS Anti-Bullying Implementation Processes and the SVSS Student Health and Well-Being Behaviour Management Policy

3. Where bullying is observed, intervene immediately to stop the bullying.
4. Offer both students immediate support and inform the relevant Class Teachers.
5. Educate all students in an age appropriate way (e.g. therapeutic stories for younger children through to more direct conversation, drama, role-play for older students), of their responsibilities as bystanders to a bullying incident.
6. Ensure they do not model bullying behaviour in interactions they have with students.

Parents:

1. Speak to the EA, Class Teacher or Guardian if they think their child is being bullied and/or advise their child to tell a trusted teacher.
2. Take an active interest in their child's social life.
3. Watch for signs of distress in their child and discuss this with the Class Teacher or Guardian.
4. Ensure they do not model bullying behaviour in interactions they have with the school staff and administration.
5. Parents should not:
 - a. Encourage their child to hit back or respond verbally.
 - b. Contact other parents regarding the issue or approach the student/s involved.

Students:

1. Report all incidents of bullying to a trusted senior student, teacher or guardian, or other staff member.
2. Actively support students they know are being bullied.
3. Refuse to become involved in bullying, including as a bystander.