



## Student Bullying Policy

<b>Purpose:</b>	The purpose of this policy is to protect students from bullying and to respond appropriately when bullying does occur	
<b>Scope:</b>	Students, parents and employees, including full-time, part-time, permanent, fixed-term and casual employees, as well as contractors, volunteers and people undertaking work experience or vocational placements	
<b>Status:</b>	Approved	<b>Supersedes:</b> January 2023
<b>Authorised by:</b>	School Director	<b>Date of Authorisation:</b> February 2025
<b>References:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulations 2001 (Qld)</u></li> <li>• <u>Australian Education Act 2013 (Cth)</u></li> <li>• <u>Australian Education Regulations 2013 (Cth)</u></li> <li>• SVSS Social Health and Wellbeing Policy</li> <li>• SVSS Child Protection Policy</li> <li>• SVSS Disability Discrimination Policy</li> <li>• SVSS Complaints Resolution Policy</li> <li>• SVSS Complaints Resolution Procedures</li> <li>• SVSS Workplace Bullying Policy</li> </ul>	
<b>Review Date:</b>	Every 2 years	<b>Next Review Date:</b> February 2027
<b>Policy Owner:</b>	School Director	

## Policy Statement

SVSS is committed to taking action to protect students from bullying and to respond appropriately when bullying does occur.

In order to prevent bullying from occurring, SVSS will implement the following actions:

- Raise awareness of the school community's shared understanding of what bullying is, how it impacts on people and how bullying is responded to at the school
- Develop and promote effective social skills and positive relationships amongst students

In order to respond appropriately to any incidences of bullying, SVSS will:

- Develop an appropriate mechanism for students and parents to report bullying
- Educate students and parents on how to respond, in the first instance, to incidences of bullying, and how to then report all incidences of bullying
- Educate employees on how to appropriately respond to reports of bullying
- Investigate and act upon all reports of bullying
- Take appropriate action, which might include support for targets of bullying and perpetrators and/or disciplinary measures.

SVSS Student Bullying Reporting and Response Procedures explains the bullying reporting mechanism for students and parents, and details how employees will respond to reports, including that all reports will be investigated and acted upon, with appropriate support and consequences implemented.

## Definitions

- **Bullying:** is a systematic and repeated abuse of power. In general bullying may be defined as:
  - dominating or hurting someone
  - unfair action by the perpetrator(s) and an imbalance of power
  - a lack of adequate defence by the target and feelings of oppression and humiliation

It can occur at any age, across cultures, genders and socioeconomic groups. It can happen in the playground, toilet areas, to and from school or in the classroom.

Behaviours that do not constitute bullying include:

- mutual arguments and disagreements (where there are no power imbalances)
- 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.

- **Physical bullying:** this is when a person (or group of people) uses repeated and intentional physical actions to physically hurt another, such as hitting, poking, tripping or pushing. Repeatedly and intentionally damaging someone's belongings is also physical bullying.
- **Verbal bullying:** repeated or systematic name calling, insults usually against protected attributes, such as homophobic or racist remarks and/or verbal abuse.

- **Covert bullying:** such as lying about someone, spreading rumours, playing a nasty joke that make the person feel humiliated or powerless, mimicking or deliberately excluding someone.
- **Psychological bullying:** for example, threatening, manipulating or stalking someone.
- **Cyber bullying:** using technology, such as email, mobile phones, chat rooms, social networking sites to bully verbally, socially or psychologically.

## **Responsibilities**

### **School Responsibilities**

SVSS acknowledges its responsibility to:

- Raise awareness of bullying and how the school will respond to it
- Take action to help prevent bullying
- Implement a reporting mechanism for students and parents
- Educate students and parents on how to respond to bullying and how to report it
- Educate employees on how to appropriately respond to bullying
- Investigate and act upon all reports of bullying, including providing appropriate support and consequences

### **Employee Responsibilities**

At SVSS employees have a responsibility to:

- Uphold and consistently apply this Policy
- Respond appropriately to reports of bullying, including by investigating and acting upon reports of bullying, and by providing appropriate support and consequences in accordance with the SVSS Social Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Where bullying is observed, intervene immediately to stop the bullying.
- Offer both students immediate support and inform the relevant Class Teachers.
- 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.
- Ensure they do not model bullying behaviour in interactions they have with students.

### **Parent Responsibilities**

At SVSS parents have a responsibility to:

- Encourage their child to be socially inclusive and not to bully others.
- Encourage their child to report bullying to themselves or others.
- Encourage their child to take steps to stop bullying as directed under this Policy and the Social Health and Wellbeing Policy.
- Speak to the Faculty Director, Class Teacher or Guardian if they think their child is being bullied and/or advise their child to tell a trusted teacher.
- Take an active interest in their child's social life.
- Watch for signs of distress in their child and discuss this with the Class Teacher or Guardian.
- Ensure they do not model bullying behaviour in interactions they have with others
- Not contact other parents regarding the issue or approach the student/s involved.

### **Student Responsibilities**

At SVSS students have a responsibility to:

- Uphold the school rules and not engage in bullying behaviour towards others
- Report bullying occurring to them or others to a trusted senior student, teacher or guardian, or other staff member.

- Take steps to stop bullying as directed under this policy and the Social Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Actively support students they know are being bullied.
- Refuse to become involved in bullying of any form

### **Implementation , Compliance and Monitoring**

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 or Guardians of both parties. The Class Teachers or Guardians will notify the Faculty Director that a report of suspected bullying has been made.
2. **Initial interview:** The Class Teacher or Guardian 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 Faculty Director 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 or Guardian will work with the students to devise strategies for conflict resolution.
3. **Restorative Practice:** SVSS is committed to Restorative Practice which will be implemented where age appropriate. The Class Teachers or Guardians will attempt 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 cease all bullying behaviour.

A Restorative Agreement may be developed and signed (where deemed appropriate). The student who has experienced the bullying behaviour understands that any further bullying must be reported immediately. The student who has engaged in bullying behaviour will understand that any further acts of bullying will receive consequences in accordance with the Social Health and Wellbeing Policy. A teacher may at any time may request the support of the Wellbeing Officer, trained SVSS Restorative Practitioner or Faculty Director to help conduct these conversations. Parents may be called in at any time that it is thought appropriate or necessary. At the discretion of the School Director, external agencies may be brought in to support serious incidences.

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.

All actions are to be recorded in the students' files on Teacher Kiosk and parents are to be kept informed of the process.

### **Follow-up process**

1. The Class Teacher or Guardian will closely monitor the situation and, in consultation with the Faculty Director, 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 or restorative class circles
  - 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 or Guardian will "check in" daily with both/all students and will make written notes on these conversations as appropriate.

In the case of successful resolution:

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

If the problem is not resolved and bullying continues:

1. The Faculty Director will interview both the students individually
2. The Faculty Director will inform the student engaged in the ongoing bullying of the consequences that may follow 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 Well Being Officer or a qualified external counsellor
  - g. Permanent exclusion
3. The Faculty Director 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. All staff should work within the guidelines of this policy and the Social Health and Wellbeing Policy.

## **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
- failure to uphold restorative agreements or provide further consequences for breaches of agreements

## **Student feeling bullied by a Teacher**

During their schooling, students 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 testing boundaries and teachers holding appropriate expectations of 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:

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

## **Process**

If a student feels bullied by a teacher, then they may report it to their parent, another teacher, the Faculty Director or to the Well Being Officer, or to another trusted adult who should take the concern to the relevant Faculty Director.

The Faculty Director will investigate the concerns using procedural fairness and decide appropriate steps to find a resolution. If it is deemed a teacher has acted inappropriately then further steps will be taken in accordance with the SVSS Performance Management System.

## **Resources**

<https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/resources>

<https://thebullyproject.com.au/learn/resources/>

<https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/bullying>