



A School With A View

BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the school office on 97292614.

PURPOSE

Boronia Heights 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 Boronia Heights Primary School community
- make clear that all forms of bullying at Boronia Heights will not be tolerated
- outline the strategies and programs in place at Boronia Heights 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 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 victims, bystanders and perpetrators)
- seek parental and peer group support in addressing and preventing bullying behaviour at Boronia Heights.

When responding to bullying behaviour, Boronia Heights aims to:

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

Boronia Heights 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 Boronia Heights Primary School aims to prevent, address and respond to student bullying behaviour. Boronia Heights 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 Code of Conduct, 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 \(education.vic.gov.au\)](https://www.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. Boronia Heights 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 [template Inclusion and Diversity Policy](#) on the School Policy Templates Portal

BULLYING PREVENTION

Boronia Heights has a number of 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 Boronia Heights is proactive and is 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 through our whole school approach through our Values and Berry Street Education Model (trauma informed practice)
- We use whole School common language to promote positive relationships 'bucket filling' and identify negative communication 'bucket dippers' throughout classrooms. The use of 'Growth Mindsets' supports and directs students to seek a positive approach to relationships and learning.

- Explicit teaching of emotional regulation through the Berry Street Education model
- We use a whole school approach through the development of our 'Rigor, Routine and Respect Program' at the beginning of every year. This explicitly teaches and supports our students how to build positive relationships with their peers and teachers while transitioning to a new class. Setting clear expectations and creating respectful classrooms across the school is a priority.
- 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.
- Provide weekly social skills and friendship groups by our school chaplain to further develop and support social skills for students. These groups are designed on a needs basis in our school to encourage and develop positive relationships.
- Teachers are encouraged to incorporate classroom management strategies that discourage bullying and promote positive behaviour.
- 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 Peer Support Program and the Peer Mediation Program encourage positive relationships between students in different year levels (1,2 and 5). We seek to empower students to be confident communicators and to resolve conflict in a non-aggressive and constructive way.
- The Buddies program encourages positive relationships between students from Prep and Year 4. Encouraging younger students to communicate, build positive relationships and feel safe with older students in the school and can continue these relationships for three years before the Buddy finishes primary school.
- Through our 'Student Leadership Program' 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.
- 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.
- We participate in the Respectful Relationships initiative, which aims to embed a culture of respect and equality across our school, to foster a safe environment that is supportive and inclusive of LGBTIQIA+ students
- 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.
- 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 for 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 upstander behaviour as a way of empowering our students to take appropriate action positively and safely when they see or hear a peer being bullied.
- 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.
- We participate in the National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence.

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

INCIDENT RESPONSE

Reporting concerns to Boronia Heights

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.

We encourage students to speak to their teacher/team leader. However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff including teachers, wellbeing staff, school chaplain or Assistant Principal or Principal

Parents or carers who may develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Boronia Heights should contact Leanne Jennings, Kristy Foster or Leah Hodgson, Principals, by phone on 9729 2614 or by email via Compass

Investigations

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

1. record the details of the allegations in Compass; and
2. inform Student Wellbeing Team, Assistant Principal, Principal

The Principal Class is responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, the principals may:

- speak to the students involved in the allegations, including the victim/s, the alleged perpetrator/s and any witnesses to the incidents
- 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 Principal Class while 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 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 Boronia Heights 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. Student Wellbeing Team, teachers, SSS, Assistant Principal, Principal or Chaplain

There are several factors that will be considered when determining the most appropriate response to the behaviour. When deciding about how to respond to bullying behaviour, Boronia Heights will consider:

- the age and maturity of the students involved
- the severity and frequency of the bullying, and the impact it has had on the victim student
- whether the perpetrator student or students have displayed similar behaviour before
- whether the bullying took place in a group or one-to-one context
- whether the perpetrator demonstrates insight or remorse for their behaviour
- the alleged motive of the behaviour, including any element of provocation

Boronia Heights may implement all, or some of the following responses to bullying behaviours:

- Offer wellbeing support to the victim student or students, including referral to Student Wellbeing Team, Student Support Services, Chaplain, or external provider.
- Offer counselling support to the perpetrator student or students, including referral to Student Wellbeing Team, Student Support Services, Chaplain, or external provider.
- Offer counselling support to affected students, including witnesses and/or friends of the victim student, including referral to the Student Wellbeing Team, Student Support Services, Chaplain, or external provider.
- 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 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.
- Implement disciplinary consequences for the perpetrator students, which may include removal of privileges, detention, suspension and/or expulsion consistent with, the Ministerial Order on Suspensions and Expulsions and any other relevant Department policy.
- Facilitate a Student Support Group meeting and/or Behaviour Support Plan for affected students.
- Prepare an Individual Management Plan restricting contact between victim and perpetrator students.
- Provide discussion and/or mentoring for different social and emotional learning competencies of the students involved, including social skills programs
- Monitor the behaviour of the students involved for an appropriate time and take follow up action if necessary.

Boronia Heights is responsible for maintaining up to date records of the investigation of and responses to bullying behaviour.

Boronia Heights understands the importance of monitoring the progress of students who have been involved in or affected by bullying behaviour. Our ability to effectively reduce and eliminate bullying behaviour is greatly affected by students reporting concerning behaviour as soon as possible, so that the responses implemented by Boronia Heights are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

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 in transition and enrolment packs
- Included as annual reference in school newsletter
- Discussed at Junior School Council
- 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 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](#)

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years, or earlier as required 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 parent/carers
- regular student bullying surveys
- regular staff surveys
- Data Collection tool
- 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

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Policy last reviewed | August 2022 |
| Consultation | School Captains August 2022 School Council via Education Sub Committee 22 nd August |
| Approved by | Principal |
| Next scheduled review date | July 2024 |