



Yarraville West Primary School

Bullying Prevention Policy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	15 th September 2021
Consultation	Staff – Survey November 2020; September 2021 Email with Policy attached and discussed at PLT & Staff meetings; Respectful Relationships Team 6, September 2021 Parents/Carers – Forum 10 August 2021, Survey August 2021, School Council meeting 14 September 2021 Students – Forums 23-27 August 2021, and 7 September 2021
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	September 2023



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Nicole Arnold or Sally Emery, 9314-7714.

PURPOSE

Yarraville West Primary School is committed to providing a safe and respectful learning environment where bullying will not be tolerated. All children have the right to feel safe and to work and play in a secure and caring environment.

We strive to live the school values of Respect, Responsibility, Resilience and Teamwork to ensure students are happy, healthy, and safe so that they may reach their full potential. Our belief that a comprehensive Student Engagement Policy and Bullying Prevention Policy will together allow us to best support the needs of our students, parents, and teachers.

YWPS does not permit any form of corporal punishment at any time.

At YWPS we commit to keeping children safe and happy. As a staff, we comply with the Child Safe Standards as outlined in Ministerial Order 870. Please refer to the Child Safe Policy and Code of Conduct for more information.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- define bullying so that there is shared understanding amongst all members of the Yarraville West Primary School community
- make clear that no form of bullying at Yarraville West Primary School will be tolerated
- outline the strategies and programs in place at Yarraville West 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 targets, bystanders and students engaging in bullying behaviour)

- seek parental and peer group support in addressing and preventing bullying behaviour at Yarraville West Primary School.

When responding to bullying behaviour, Yarraville West 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.

Yarraville West 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, which can include harm that may be caused by bullying behaviour.

SCOPE

This policy addresses how Yarraville West Primary School aims to prevent, address and respond to student bullying behaviour. Yarraville West 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 Wellbeing and Engagement Policy.

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

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 deliberate misuse of power in a relationship, eg an older student towards a younger student
- It is ongoing and repeated, and
- It involves behaviours that can cause harm.

Bullying can be:

1. *direct* physical bullying – e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.
2. *direct* verbal bullying – e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.
3. *indirect* bullying – e.g. spreading rumours, playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate, mimicking, encouraging others to socially exclude a person and/or damaging a person's social reputation or social acceptance.

Cyberbullying is direct or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technology. For example via a mobile device, computers, chat rooms, email, social media, etc. It can be verbal, written and include images, video and/or audio.

How Students Describe Bullying

Bullying is when someone:

- keeps picking on you again and again and tries to make you feel bad
- says or does lots of mean things that upset you
- makes fun of you a lot / frequently
- tries to stop you from joining in or make others not like you
- keeps hurting you such as hitting or punching you.

Bullying feels awful. You feel like you can't stop it.

Bullying can happen in person or online. It might be something people can see or it might be hidden.

Sometimes you might have a fight or argument with someone. If it happens once, it is not bullying even though it can be upsetting. It is also not bullying if you sometimes fight with a friend and you can sort it out.

Bullying is not OK. You have the right to feel safe.

(Bullying, No Way!, 2021)

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 Engagement Policy. Where these instances occur in the classroom or yard, please refer to the Yard Duty / Classroom Incident Management Flow Charts (*Appendix B*)

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. Yarraville West Primary School will use its Student 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. Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated at Yarraville West Primary School and may have serious consequences for students

engaging in this behaviour. Yarraville West Primary School will use its Student Engagement Policy to guide a response to students demonstrating harassing behaviour, unless the behaviour also constitutes bullying, in which case the behaviour will be managed in accordance with this Bullying Prevention Policy.

Bullying Prevention

Yarraville West Primary School has 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 Yarraville West Primary School 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 strive to have a positive school environment that provides safety, security and support for students and promotes positive relationships and wellbeing
- we have a range of wellbeing and inclusion activities during the lunch break for all students to engage in, particularly for students with diverse learning needs
- 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.
- teachers and students co-design classroom agreements that discourage bullying and promote positive behaviour
- teachers incorporate classroom management strategies that discourage bullying and promote positive behaviour
- Students are encouraged to look out for each other and to talk to teachers and/or trusted adults or friends about any bullying they have experienced or witnessed
- all students agree to follow our Digital Technologies Acceptable Use Agreement that establishes cyber-safety guidelines. This is supported through annual Cyber-bullying lessons.
- a range of year level incursions and programs are planned for each year to raise awareness about bullying and its impacts, (Kids Helpline @ School, Respectful Relationships)
- we participate in the National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence.
- we are an E-smart school (an evidence-based cyber safety and wellbeing program designed to help Australian schools reduce cyber bullying and bullying).
- data gathered from the Student Attitudes to School Survey is used to measure the effectiveness of approaches aimed at reducing instances of bullying
- our Buddy Program builds connections between students across year levels so students are encouraged to talk to their older peers about any bullying they have experienced or witnessed.

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

Incident Response

Reporting concerns to Yarraville West Primary School

Bullying complaints will be taken seriously and responded to sensitively at our school.

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 Yarraville West Primary School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

We encourage students to speak to their classroom teacher in the first instance to report bullying. However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff including teachers, Education Support Officers and members of the Principal team.

Parents or carers who develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Yarraville West Primary School should in the first instance contact their child's teacher.

The teacher will inform the relevant Assistant Principal in all instances.

Investigations

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

1. Ascertain whether the alleged behaviour is bullying or not bullying (check the definition above)
2. If it is determined that the alleged bullying behaviour is not bullying (ie it does not meet the above definition), support the student to respond to the unwanted behaviour and address the source of the unwanted behaviour. Ensure follow up and encourage the student to keep staff informed if the unwanted behaviour continues, in case it becomes bullying.
3. If it is determined that the behaviour could be bullying, sit with the student and note what they disclose in the Bullying Template in Chronicle on Compass
4. Use details gained from this conversation to take further action, (eg. reviewing with the class behaviour expectations), including informing the relevant Assistant Principal (P-2, or 3-6)

The Assistant Principals, Nicole Arnold and Sally Emery, are responsible for ensuring investigating allegations of bullying occur in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, the Assistant Principal 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
- 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 Assistant Principal/s in the course of 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 most effectively implement an appropriate response 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 Assistant Principal has sufficient information to understand the circumstances of the alleged bullying and the students involved, a number of strategies may be implemented to address the behaviour and support affected students in consultation with the classroom teacher, Principal and Department of Education and Training.

A number of factors will be considered when determining the most appropriate response to the behaviour. When making a decision about how to respond to bullying behaviour, Yarraville West Primary School 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 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 Assistant Principal/s may implement all, or some of the following responses to bullying behaviours:

- offer counselling support to the target student/s and student/s engaging in bullying behaviour, including referral to the Department of Education and Training's Student Support Services
- 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, eg an admission of the behaviour and an apology, and acceptance of the apology by the person who has been bullied.
- Provide discussion and/or mentoring for different social and emotional learning competencies of the students involved
- Support school staff to monitor the behaviour of students involved for an appropriate time and take follow up action if necessary
- prepare a Positive Behaviour Support Plan supporting and/or restricting contact between target and students engaging in bullying behaviour
- review whole of school current prevention strategies, and strengthen in response to incidences of bullying
- implement disciplinary consequences for the students engaging in bullying behaviour, which may include removal of privileges, detention, suspension and/or expulsion consistent with our Student Engagement policy, the Ministerial Order on Suspensions and Expulsions and any other relevant Department policy.

Yarraville West Primary School 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 provide parents and carers with updates on the management of bullying incidents.

Yarraville West Primary School is responsible for maintaining up to date records of the investigation of and responses to bullying behaviour. These records will be kept on our Compass system.

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
- Discussed at staff meetings as required
- Discussed at parent information sessions
- Included in enrolment packs

- Included as an annual reference in school newsletter
- Discussed at student forums and year level assemblies
- Made available in hard copy from the school office

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

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

- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Student Engagement Policy
- Parent Complaints Policy
- Duty of Care 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](#)
- [Office of the 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 will be collected through:

- discussion and consultation with students and parent/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 school staff, Junior School Council, and School Council.

What to do if a student discloses bullying behaviour

Reassure them – *thank you for telling me; I'm really glad that you have told me*

Check for safety - *Are you feeling safe right now?*

If **Yes** : listen and note down what they tell you. Reassure: *what you have to tell me is important, so I need to write it down.*

If **No**:

In the yard: *let's find a way to help you feel safe* – take to an area where the student can feel safe; if staff member cannot leave duty area, direct student with a friend or responsible student nearby to go together to a safe space and to wait there for the staff member to attend later eg the library, near their classroom, a place that the student nominates. **If the staff member is unable to follow up eg has teaching duties directly after yard duty ends, they must notify the student's teacher, who must follow up with the student.**

In a classroom: *let's find a way to help you feel safe* – take to an area where the student can feel safe, or send temporarily with an ESO to a nearby classroom. If this is not possible, contact the Principal team for support.

Taking a record of the disclosure

The staff member can note it directly onto Chronicle: BDD Bullying/Harassment, or use pen and paper and then transfer to Chronicle later.

Key points to record:

- Name of student/s engaged in bullying behaviour
- The bullying behaviour, eg verbal name-calling – note exactly what the names are
- Location of the behaviour in the school
- Date/s and time/s of when behaviour occurred
- Other students involved / any witnesses
- Summary of what happened
- Follow Up: any strategies or plans put in place immediately, eg change seating placement in the classroom
- Notification chain: classroom teacher/s of the students involved; relevant Assistant Principal