



St Kilda Primary School

Bullying Policy

PURPOSE

St Kilda Primary School 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
- make clear that all forms of bullying at St Kilda Primary School will not be tolerated
- 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 St Kilda Primary School.

When responding to bullying behaviour, St Kilda Primary School 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.

St Kilda 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 St Kilda Primary School aims to prevent and respond to student bullying behaviour. St Kilda 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 *Code of Conduct* and *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy*.

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

POLICY

Definitions

Harassment is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome or offensive to a person. Harassment can also constitute bullying if it amounts to a pattern of behaviour or course of conduct towards another person that is demeaning, offensive or intimidating to a person.

Bullying occurs when someone, or a group of people, deliberately and repeatedly upset, harass, intimidate, threaten or hurt another person or damage their property, reputation or social acceptance. There is an imbalance of power in incidents of bullying, where the bully or bullies have more power than the victim due to their age, size, status or other reasons.

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.

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

Examples of cyber bullying behaviour are:

- teasing, being made fun of and spreading rumours online
- sending unwanted messages
- defamation
- threatening behaviour

Cyber bullying can happen to anyone and the bully can potentially act anonymously. People can also be bullied online by groups of people such as class groups or collective members of an online community. We will continue to actively seek out the necessary professional learning for our staff to support them in ensuring this type of bullying is dealt with as effectively as possible. As a school we take the stance that no students should be accessing Facebook or other age inappropriate social networking sites and encourage our families to have discussions around this area on a regular basis. We will provide the opportunity for families to attend workshops and we are working on developing a curriculum that will provide students with the skills they need to be able to have a safe and positive experience when using the internet. The Acceptable Use of Digital Technologies Agreement also provides an opportunity for parents to become familiar with the expectations of school and to have a conversation with their child regarding safe practices on the internet.

We aim to provide a safe and friendly environment for students and staff and to encourage care, courtesy and respect for others. All persons have a legal right to protection from harassment under the Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act and the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act.

The effects of harassment or bullying include:

- poor health – anxiety, depression
- lower self esteem
- reduced study performance
- missed classes, social withdrawal
- reduced career prospects

If a student sees another person being harassed or bullied they should tell the person that they witnessed the incident and advise them to report it to an appropriate person. Alternatively, if their friend is harassing another person they should let them know that their behaviour is unacceptable.

Bystanders who do nothing to stop bullying may be contributing to the problem by providing an audience for the bully.

Harassment is usually directed at a person because of their gender, race, creed or abilities. It can be subtle or explicit.

SKPS believes that it is imperative that a student reports an incidence of bullying to a trusted adult as soon as possible. All staff at SKPS would report such an issue to the Principal, Assistant Principal or Welfare Coordinator and action would be taken immediately. Parents would be informed and included in the restorative process to ensure that all parties are given adequate support to re-engage in school in a positive way.

Subtle/indirect: (the most common)

They include:

- spreading rumours
- offensive staring and leering
- unwanted comments about physical appearance and sexual preference
- racist or smutty comments or jokes
- playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
- persistent comments about a person's private life or family
- physical contact e.g. purposely brushing up against another's body
- offensive name calling
- mimicking
- encouraging others to socially exclude a person and/or damaging a person's social reputation or social acceptance

Explicit/direct: (obvious)

They include:

- grabbing, aggressive hitting, pinching and shoving etc
- unwelcome patting, touching, embracing
- offensive gestures, jokes, comments, letters, phone calls or e-mail
- sexually and/or racially provocative remarks
- displays of sexually graphic material– pornography. Extreme forms of sexual harassment will lead to criminal prosecution
- grabbing, aggressive staring, hitting, pinching kicking, pushing and shoving
- publicly excluding a person from your group
- taking or breaking a person's property
- knocking a person's books or belongings out of their hands or off their desk
- teasing a person because of their looks

Other distressing behaviours

Many distressing behaviours may not constitute bullying even though they are unpleasant. Students who are involved in or who witness any distressing behaviours should report their concerns to school staff and our school will follow the Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy, particularly the sections relating to Rights and Responsibilities and the Code of Conduct.

Mutual conflict

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

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

Single-episode acts of harassment, nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If someone is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion, they are not being bullied. Harassment, nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different people is not the same as bullying. However, single episodes of harassment, nastiness or physical aggression are not acceptable behaviours at our school.

Many distressing behaviours may not constitute bullying even though they are unpleasant. Students who are involved in or who witness any distressing behaviours of concern are encouraged to report their concerns to school staff.

BULLYING PREVENTION

St Kilda Primary School 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 St Kilda 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 have a positive school environment that provides safety, security and support for students and promotes positive relationships and wellbeing.
- 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.
- 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 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.

In 2018/19, we will continue to use Sentral (School and Student Management Software) to monitor the rates of bullying, cyberbullying and other forms of harassment and abuse at school. This information will be monitored and analysed by the Welfare Team on a regular basis to determine the effectiveness of our responses to these issues. This software will also allow us to track the rates of these incidents which will also be a measure of the effectiveness of our program. We will also use the Student Attitude to School Survey and the Parent Survey data to monitor the success of all school based strategies and approaches.

INCIDENT REPSONSE

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.

In most circumstances, we encourage students to speak to their teacher. However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff including teachers, wellbeing staff, etc.

Parents or carers who may develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at St Kilda Primary School, should contact the Principal, Sue Higgins, by phone on 95343993 by email directed to higgins.susan.a@edumail.vic.gov.au.

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 Primary School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

Investigations

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

1. record the details of the allegations in Sentral and
2. inform a member of the Leadership Team or Welfare Team

The Leadership/Welfare Team is responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, the school leader 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 school leader 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 school leader 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 Student Wellbeing Team, teachers, SSS, Assistant Principal, Principal, etc].

There are a number of factors that will be considered when determining the most appropriate response to the behaviour. When making a decision about how to respond to bullying behaviour, St Kilda 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 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.

The school leader may implement all, or some of the following responses to bullying behaviours:

- Offer counselling support to the victim student or students, including referral to [insert i.e. the Student Wellbeing Team, SSS, external provider].
- Offer counselling support to the perpetrator student or students, including referral to [insert i.e. the Student Wellbeing Team, SSS, external provider].
- Offer counselling support to affected students, including witnesses and/or friends of the victim student, including referral to [insert i.e. the Student Wellbeing Team, SSS, 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 of the students involved to help to encourage students to take responsibility for their behaviour and explore underlying reasons for conflict or grievance.
- Implement disciplinary consequences for the perpetrator students, which may include removal of privileges, detention, 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.
- Facilitate a Student Support Group meeting and/or Behaviour Support Plan for affected students.
- Prepare a Safety Plan or 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 [insert specific examples, i.e. connect affected students with an older Student Mentor, resilience programs, etc].
- Monitor the behaviour of the students involved for an appropriate time and take follow up action if necessary.
- Implement year group targeted strategies to reinforce positive behaviours (For example s please go to the Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy)

The school leader is responsible for maintaining up to date records of the investigation of and responses to bullying behaviour.

St Kilda Primary School 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 St Kilda Primary School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy

Statement of Values

[Bully Stoppers](#)

[Safe Schools](#)

[Bullying NO WAY!](#)

EVALUATION

This will be reviewed on an annual basis following analysis of school data on reported incidents of, and responses to bullying to ensure that this policy remains up to date, practical and effective.

Data will be collected through:

- Interactions with students and other means as appropriate
- assessment of school based data, AToSS

Proposed amendments to this policy will be discussed with staff, parents and school council.

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated May 2019 and is scheduled for review May 2021