



Child Safe - Bullying Prevention



Help for non-English speakers.

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Sherbourne PS on 9434 7142 so that an interpreter can be booked.

PURPOSE

Sherbourne PS is committed to providing a safe and respectful learning environment where bullying will not be tolerated.

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. explain the definition of bullying so that there is shared understanding amongst all members of the Sherbourne PS community;
2. make clear that no form of bullying at Sherbourne PS will be tolerated;
3. outline the strategies and programs in place at Sherbourne PS to build a positive school culture and prevent bullying behaviour;
4. ask that everyone in our school community be alert to signs and evidence of bullying behaviour, and understands the importance of reporting bullying behaviour to school staff;
5. ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are appropriately investigated and addressed;
6. ensure that support is provided to students who may be affected by bullying behaviour (including targets, bystanders, witnesses and students engaging in bullying behaviour);
7. seek parental and peer group support in addressing and preventing bullying behaviour at Sherbourne PS

When responding to bullying behaviour, Sherbourne PS aims to:

- be proportionate, consistent and responsive
- find a constructive solution for everyone
- provide support, education and strategies to the student engaging in bullying behaviour to minimise the risk of repeated bullying behaviour
- provide an opportunity to restore the relationships between the students involved where appropriate

Sherbourne PS 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 Sherbourne PS aims to prevent, address and respond to student bullying behaviour. Sherbourne PS 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 and 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:

8. It involves a misuse of power in a relationship
9. It is ongoing and repeated, and
10. It involves behaviours that can cause harm.

There are four main types of bullying behaviour:

11. Physical – examples include hitting, pushing, shoving or intimidating or otherwise physically hurting another person, damaging or stealing their belongings. It includes threats of violence.
12. Verbal/written – examples include name-calling or insulting someone about an attribute, quality or personal characteristic.
13. 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.
14. 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 \(education.vic.gov.au\)](http://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 Code of Conduct and [Student Wellbeing and Engagement policy](#) and Inclusion and Diversity 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. Sherbourne PS 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](#).

Bullying Prevention

Sherbourne PS has a number of programs and strategies in place to build a positive and inclusive school culture and relationships to promote wellbeing. We strive to foster a school culture that prevents bullying behaviour by modelling, encouraging and teaching behaviour that demonstrates acceptance, kindness and respect.

Bullying prevention at Sherbourne PS is proactive and is supported by research that indicates that a whole school, multifaceted approach is the most effective way to prevent and address bullying. At our school:

- 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. It is supportive and inclusive of LGBTIQ+ students.
- We celebrate the diverse backgrounds of members of our school community and teach multicultural education, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 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 (SEL) curriculum, such as the Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships program and the Social Stencil program, 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 positively and safely take appropriate action when they see or hear of a peer being bullied.
- 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.
- 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 Sherbourne PS

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 or another trusted adult 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 Sherbourne PS are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

We encourage students to speak to their class teacher. However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff including teachers, Education Support staff and the Principal.

Parents or carers who develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Sherbourne PS should contact the Principal via email or calling the school.

Investigations

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

1. record the details of the allegations in Compass and
2. follow the Major Behaviour Response Continuum (which includes informing the Principal)

The Principal is responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, they 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 parent/carer(s) 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 Teacher/ Principal 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 Principal has gathered sufficient information to understand the circumstances of the reported bullying behaviour and the students involved, a range of responses and supports may be implemented in consultation with relevant staff and Student Support Services (where appropriate).

When determining an appropriate response, Sherbourne Primary School will consider:

- the age, developmental stage, individual needs, and circumstances of the students involved
- the nature, severity, frequency, and duration of the bullying behaviour
- the impact of the behaviour on the affected student/s
- whether there is a history or pattern of concerning behaviour

- whether the behaviour occurred within a group dynamic or between individuals
- the level of insight, accountability, and willingness to repair harm demonstrated by the student/s engaging in the bullying behaviour
- any underlying factors that may have contributed to the behaviour
- the safety and wellbeing needs of all students involved

The Principal may implement one or more of the following responses and supports:

- Provide wellbeing support and/or referral to Student Support Services for:
 - the student/s impacted by the bullying behaviour
 - the student/s engaging in the bullying behaviour
 - other affected students, including bystanders, peers, or friendship groups
- Facilitate a restorative practice process where appropriate. Restorative approaches aim to repair harm, rebuild relationships, promote accountability, and support positive future interactions. Participation will be guided by the readiness, safety, and wellbeing of all students involved.
- Convene a Student Support Group meeting and/or develop a Behaviour Support Plan, Safety Support Plan or Positive Play Plan to support student wellbeing, safety, and positive behaviour development.
- Implement strategies to minimise contact between students where required to support safety and wellbeing.
- Monitor the wellbeing, behaviour, and peer interactions of students involved over an appropriate period of time, with follow-up actions implemented as needed.
- Implement targeted class, cohort, or whole-school preventative strategies to strengthen positive behaviours and respectful relationships, including:
 - the School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) framework
 - targeted Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) lessons
 - whole-school values and expectations start-up programs
 - explicit teaching of help-seeking, emotional regulation, and respectful relationship skills
 - small-group or individual social skills support and wellbeing intervention facilitated by the Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader and/or other relevant staff.
- Sherbourne Primary School will respond to bullying behaviours in a fair, consistent, restorative, and proportionate manner, aligned with Department of Education policies, School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) practices, and the values and integrity of our school community.

Sherbourne PS 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 also endeavour to provide parents and carers with updates on the management of bullying incidents.

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

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 information on the shared drive.
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- Discussed (at least) annually with students
- Made available in hard copy from the school office upon request

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

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

- Sherbourne PS Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Sherbourne PS Parent Complaints policy
- Sherbourne PS Duty of Care Policy
- Sherbourne PS 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](#)
- [LGBTIQA+ 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
- 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 Council.

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	May2026
Consultation	Mental Health & Wellbeing Leader & School Council
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	May 2028



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