



Dingley Primary School Bullying Prevention Policy

1. **Purpose:**

Dingley 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:

- 1.1. explain the definition of bullying
- 1.2. make clear that all forms of bullying at Dingley Primary School will not be tolerated
- 1.3. ask that everyone (including targets, bystanders and perpetrators) in our school community be alert to signs and evidence of bullying behaviour, and accept responsibility to report bullying behaviour to school staff
- 1.4. ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are appropriately investigated and addressed
- 1.5. ensure that support is provided to students who may be affected by bullying behaviour (including targets, bystanders and perpetrators)
- 1.6. seek parental and peer group support and co-operation in addressing and preventing bullying behaviour at Dingley Primary School.

2. **Aims:**

Dingley 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.

When responding to bullying behaviour, Dingley Primary School aims to:

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

3. **Scope:**

- 3.1. This policy addresses how Dingley Primary School aims to prevent and respond to student bullying behaviour. Dingley 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*.
- 3.2. This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

4. **Definitions**

- 4.1. *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 target due to their age, size, status or other reasons.
 - 4.1.1. Bullying may be direct or indirect, physical or verbal, and includes cyberbullying. Bullying is not a one-off disagreement between two or more people or a situation of mutual dislike. In this policy any reference to 'bullying' includes all forms of bullying including cyberbullying.
 - 4.1.2. Bullying can be:
 - 4.1.2.1. *direct physical bullying* – e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.
 - 4.1.2.2. *direct verbal bullying* – e.g. name calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.
 - 4.1.2.3. *indirect bullying* – includes action designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Indirect bullying includes: 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
- 4.2. *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.
- 4.3. *Cyberbullying* 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.
- 4.4. Dingley Primary School acknowledges that individuals who bully others may not be bullies in every situation. We similarly acknowledge that targets of bullying are not targets in every situation.
- 4.5. **Other distressing behaviours**
 - 4.5.1. 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.
 - 4.5.1.1. *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



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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.

- 4.5.1.2. *Social rejection or dislike* is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.
- 4.5.1.3. *Single-episode acts* of harassment, disrespect, nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If someone is verbally or physically abused 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.

5. **Implementation:**

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- 5.1. Dingley Primary School has a number of whole-school programs and consistent strategies in place to build a positive and inclusive school culture. We strive to foster a school culture that prevents bullying by modelling and encouraging behaviour that demonstrates acceptance and kindness, alongside the school's six values of; empathy, honesty, persistence, resilience, respect and responsibility.
- 5.2. Bullying prevention at Dingley Primary School 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:
 - 5.2.1. We have a positive school environment that provides safety, security and support for students and promotes positive relationships and wellbeing.
 - 5.2.2. 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.
 - 5.2.3. All staff undertake professional development relating to all forms of bullying (including cyberbullying) harassment, positive behaviour management, inclusive of restorative practices.
 - 5.2.4. Teachers incorporate classroom management strategies that discourage bullying and promote positive behaviour.
 - 5.2.5. In the classroom, our social and emotional learning curriculum teaches students what constitutes bullying and how to respond to bullying behaviour assertively in the role of an upstander. This promotes resilience, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.
 - 5.2.6. Through the use of Restorative Practices, we seek to empower students to be confident communicators and to resolve conflict in a non-aggressive and constructive way.
 - 5.2.7. Students are encouraged to look out for each other and to talk to staff about any bullying they have experienced or witnessed.
 - 5.2.8. We educate the school community about the seriousness of bullying, and the expectations we have as a school to co-operate in addressing and preventing bullying behaviour at Dingley Primary School.
- 5.3. For further information about our engagement and wellbeing initiatives, please see our *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy*.
- 5.4. Often bullying behaviour is learned. Bullies underestimate their actions and some may come to believe their behaviour is acceptable and normal. Often consistent bullying behaviour is associated with other forms of anti-social behaviour or aggression. It is the responsibility of the school, parents and community to mentor, coach, train and teach our children at an early age to be assertive, to speak up and have a zero tolerance toward bullying behaviour.

Incident Response:

Reporting concerns to Dingley Primary School

- 5.5. Bullying complaints will be taken seriously and responded to sensitively at our school.
- 5.6. 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 with any trusted member of staff including teachers, education support staff, Principal, Assistant Principal, etc.
- 5.7. Parents or carers who may develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Dingley Primary School, should contact the home group teacher, in person, or by phone on 9551 3555. Parents may also choose to contact the Assistant Principal, as the Student Wellbeing Coordinator.
- 5.8. 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 Dingley Primary School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.



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Investigations

- 5.9.** When first notified of alleged bullying behaviour, school staff are required to:
- 5.9.1.** record the details of the allegations; and
 - 5.9.2.** inform the relevant home group teacher/s or/and the Student Wellbeing Coordinator.
 - 5.9.3.** The home group teacher/Student Wellbeing Coordinator is then responsible for investigating allegations of bullying using a restorative approach. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, the home group teacher/Student Wellbeing Coordinator may:
 - i.** speak to the students involved in the allegations, including the target/s, the alleged perpetrator/s and any witnesses to the incidents,
 - ii.** speak to the parents of the students involved:
 - iii.** speak to the teachers of the students involved
 - 5.9.4.** When investigating an allegation of bullying, the home group teacher/Student Wellbeing Coordinator will take detailed notes of all discussions for future reference and may obtain written statements from all or any of the above.
- 5.10.** All communications with and by the home group teacher/Student Wellbeing Coordinator 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.
- 5.11.** 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.
- 5.12.** 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

- 5.13.** When home group teacher/Student Wellbeing Coordinator 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 Student Wellbeing Coordinator, teachers, Principal, Department of Education and Training specialist staff etc.
- 5.14.** 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, Dingley Primary School will consider:
- 5.14.1.** the age and maturity of the students involved
 - 5.14.2.** the severity and frequency of the bullying, and the impact it has had on the target student
 - 5.14.3.** whether the perpetrator student or students have displayed similar behaviour before
 - 5.14.4.** whether the perpetrator demonstrates insight or remorse for their behaviour
 - 5.14.5.** the alleged motive of the behaviour, including any element of provocation.
- 5.15.** Home group teacher/Student Wellbeing Coordinator may implement all, or some of the following responses to bullying behaviours:
- 5.15.1.** 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.
 - 5.15.2.** 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. Mediation is only suitable if all students are involved voluntarily and demonstrate a willingness to engage in the mediation process.
 - 5.15.3.** Offer counselling support to:
 - i.** the target student or students.
 - ii.** the perpetrator student or students
 - iii.** affected students, including witnesses and/or friends of the target student.
 - 5.15.4.** 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.
 - 5.15.5.** Facilitate a Student Support Group meeting and/or Behaviour Support Plan for affected students with parents/carers.
 - 5.15.6.** Prepare a Behaviour Support Plan restricting contact between target and perpetrator students.



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- 5.15.7. Monitor the behaviour of the students involved for an appropriate time and take follow up action if necessary.
- 5.15.8. Implement year group targeted strategies to reinforce positive behaviours.
- 5.15.9. The Home group teacher, in consultation with the Student Wellbeing Coordinator is responsible for maintaining up to date records of the investigation of and responses to bullying behaviour. Dingley 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 also endeavour to provide parents and carers with updates on the management of bullying incidents.

6. Responsibilities:

6.1. Staff Responsibilities:

- 6.1.1. To model, educate and discuss appropriate behaviours.
- 6.1.2. To be alert to signs and evidence of bullying behaviour.
- 6.1.3. To record all incidents or suspected incidents
- 6.1.4. To follow the responses to incidents as detailed in this policy

6.2. Parent Responsibilities:

- 6.2.1. To be aware of, and support Dingley Primary School's Bullying Prevention Policy
- 6.2.2. To be alert to signs and evidence of bullying behaviour
- 6.2.3. To model and discuss appropriate behaviours.
- 6.2.4. To speak to your child's home group teacher if you suspect or know that your child is experiencing bullying behaviour. Under no circumstances do parents take up the issue with the children involved, or their parents.
- 6.2.5. To instruct your child to 'report' if they are experiencing bullying behaviour and not to engage in anti-social behaviours
- 6.2.6. To listen to and reassure you child. Empathise with their feelings and show genuine concern.
- 6.2.7. To adhere to and support the school's strategies and procedures for responding to bullying behaviours.

6.3. Student Responsibilities:

- 6.3.1. To behave appropriately at all times, demonstrating the school's six values.
- 6.3.2. To 'report' if they are being bullied or if they see someone being bullied – both at school and when travelling to and from school.
- 6.3.3. To attempt to use learnt strategies to deal with bullying incidents.

7. Further Information and Resources:

This policy should be read in conjunction with Dingley Primary School's:

- 7.1. Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- 7.2. DET Parent Complaints policy
- 7.3. DET Dignity and Respect Statement
- 7.4. Child Safe Standards
- 7.5. Inclusion and Diversity 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:

- 7.6. [Bully Zero](#)
- 7.7. [Bully Stoppers](#)
- 7.8. [Kids Helpline](#)
- 7.9. [Lifeline](#)
- 7.10. [Bullying. No way!](#)

8. Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed on a two-year basis, or earlier as required, reviews will include analysis of school data on reported incidents of, and responses to bullying to ensure that the policy remains practical and effective.

Review Date: 2020

This policy was last ratified by School Council in: **November 2018**