

	Policy Name:	Bullying Prevention Policy	Date of Approval:	2021
	Responsible:	Leadership Team	Review Date:	2024

BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY

PURPOSE

Tyabb 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 so that there is shared understanding amongst all members of the Tyabb Primary School community.
- make clear that no form of bullying at Tyabb Primary School will be tolerated.
- outline the strategies and programs in place at Tyabb 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 Tyabb Primary School.

When responding to bullying behaviour, Tyabb 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.

Tyabb 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 Tyabb Primary School aims to prevent, address and respond to student bullying behaviour. Tyabb 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, Welfare and Discipline Policy, Inclusion and Diversity Policy, Duty of Care Policy and Statement of Values.

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

POLICY

Definitions

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.

Bullying can be:

- *direct* physical bullying – e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.
- *direct* verbal bullying – e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.
- *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.

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 Wellbeing and Engagement Policy/Student Engagement Policy/Code of Conduct.

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. Tyabb 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. Further information about these two forms of harassment, including definitions, is set out in our Inclusion and Diversity. Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated at Tyabb Primary School and may have serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour. Tyabb Primary School will use its Student Wellbeing and 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.

Subtle forms of harassment include: (The most common)

- offensive staring and leering
- unwanted comments about physical appearance and sexual preference
- racist or smutty comments or jokes
- questions about another's sexual activity
- persistent comments about a person's private life or family
- physical contact e.g. purposely brushing up against another's body
- offensive name calling.

Explicit forms of harassment include: (obvious)

- grabbing, aggressive hitting, pinching, shoving, etc
- repeated requests for dates, especially after refusal
- offensive gestures, jokes, comments, letters, phone calls or e-mail
- sexually and/or racially provocative remarks
- displays of sexually graphic material– pornography
- requests for sexual favours.

Extreme forms of sexual harassment will lead to criminal prosecution.

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

Tyabb 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 Tyabb 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:

- We prevent and combat bullying by providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment where positive behaviours are celebrated by the whole school community and inappropriate behaviours are not tolerated. Our school has a zero tolerance towards bullying.

- 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.
- Our Whole School Values of RESPECT, SAFETY, RESPONSIBILITY, INTEGRITY and OPTIMISM are promoted in the community and explicitly taught during our 'Start Up' program and reinforced through classroom lessons and daily interactions with each other. Our whole school approach to positive behaviours and behaviour management focus on these school values.
- A range of year level incursions and programs are planned for each year to raise awareness about bullying and its impacts.
- Our school will organise preventative curriculum programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving eg You Can Do It Program and our whole school approach to the teaching and reinforcement of our values.
- The curriculum will include anti-bullying messages and strategies in line with current DET materials eg: Bully Stoppers; Make a Stand, Lend a Hand and 'No Blame Approach to Bullying' programs.
- 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.
- Our Buddy Program and The Peer Support Program encourages positive relationships between students in different year levels. 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.
- Parents, teachers, students and the community will understand the definition of bullying and our Bullying Prevention Policy. The Bullying Prevention Policy will be widely promoted to students, staff, parents/carers and the local community.
- A policy will be included in the Student Enrolment Pack while new staff will receive documentation as part of the school's induction process.
- 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/Student Engagement Policy.

INCIDENT RESPONSE

Reporting concerns to Tyabb 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 Tyabb Primary School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

We encourage students to speak to their classroom teacher. However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff including all Principal, Assistant Principal & Welfare Coordinator, all teachers and education support staff.

Parents or carers who may develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Tyabb Primary School should contact the school to speak to our Assistant Principal and Welfare Coordinator on 5977 4584.

Investigations

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

1. record the details of the allegations on a Student Incident Form and present this information to the Assistant Principal (Welfare Coordinator)
2. inform the Principal or Assistant Principal (Welfare Coordinator)

The Assistant Principal (Welfare Coordinator) is responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, the Assistant Principal (Welfare Coordinator) may:

- speak to the students 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 (Welfare 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.

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 (Welfare 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 relevant staff eg. Principal, Assistant Principal & Welfare Coordinator, Teachers and Education Support Staff.

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, Tyabb 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 student/s engaging in bullying behaviour demonstrates insight or remorse for their behaviour
- the alleged motive of the behaviour, including any element of provocation.

Tyabb Primary School may implement all, or some of the following responses to bullying behaviours:

- 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. Mediation is only suitable if all students are involved voluntarily and demonstrate a willingness to engage in the mediation process.
- Implement a Method of Shared Concern process with all students involved in the bullying.
- Facilitate a process using the Support Group Method, involving the target student(s), the students engaging in bullying behaviour and a group of students who are likely to be supportive of the target(s).
- Facilitate a Student Support Group meeting and/or Behaviour Support Plan for affected students.
- Prepare an Individual Behaviour Management Plan restricting contact between target and students engaging in bullying behaviour
- 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 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, involving the target student/s, the students engaging in bullying behaviour and a group of students who are likely to be supportive of the target/s.
- Prepare a Safety Plan or Behaviour Management Plan for students involved.
- Offer counselling support to the target student or students, including referral to our Student Wellbeing Team, SSS, external provider eg psychologist.
- Offer counselling support to the student/s engaging in bullying behaviour, including referral to our Student Wellbeing Team, SSS, external provider eg psychologist
- Offer counselling support to affected students, including witnesses and/or friends of the victim student, including referral to our Student Wellbeing Team, SSS, external provider eg psychologist
- Provide discussion and/or mentoring for different social and emotional learning competencies of the students involved eg mentoring with the Assistant Principal, SSS Social Skills Program, You Can Do It lessons, connecting affected students with an older student mentor, resilience program.
- 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 SSS Social Skills Program, You Can Do It lessons, connecting affected students with an older student mentor and resilience lessons.

Tyabb 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.

Tyabb Primary School is responsible for maintaining up to date records of the investigation of and responses to bullying behaviour. These will be recorded and updated on the Student Incident Form.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

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

Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
Parent Complaints Policy
Duty of Care Policy
Statement of Values

Statement of Values and School Philosophy
Inclusion and Diversity Policy
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:

- [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 3 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
- attitude to School Survey
- regular student bullying surveys
- regular staff surveys
- [Bully Stoppers 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.
- [Parent Opinion Survey](#)

Proposed amendments to this policy will be discussed with staff, student representative groups eg JSC and parent representative groups eg PFA and School Council.

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated in March 2021 and is scheduled for review in March 2024.

Appendix A

DET Anti-Bullying (including cyberbullying) and Anti-Harassment Procedures

What are Bullying, Cyberbullying and Harassment?

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, who have more power at the time, deliberately upset or hurt another person, their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion.

Types of Bullying

There are three broad categories of bullying:

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** – this form of bullying is harder to recognise and often carried out behind the bullied student's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Indirect bullying includes:
 - lying and spreading rumours
 - playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
 - mimicking
 - encouraging others to socially exclude someone
 - damaging someone's social reputation and social acceptance
 - cyber-bullying, which involves the use of electronic means to humiliate and distress

What Bullying is Not

Many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management. There are three socially unpleasant situations that are often confused with bullying:

Mutual Conflict

In mutual conflict situations, there is an argument or disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the problem. However, unresolved mutual conflict sometimes develops into a bullying situation with one person becoming targeted repeatedly for 'retaliation' in a one-sided way.

Social Rejection or Dislike

Unless the social rejection is directed towards someone specific and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others, it is not bullying.

Single-episode acts of nastiness or meanness, or random acts of aggression or intimidation

Single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If a student is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied.

Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different students is not the same as bullying.

Cyberbullying

Consists of covert, psychological bullying, conveyed through the electronic mediums such as cell-phones, web-logs and web-sites, on-line chat rooms, 'MUD' rooms (multi-user domains where individuals take on different characters) and Xangas (on-line personal profiles where some adolescents create lists of people they do not like). It is verbal (over the telephone or mobile phone), or written (flaming, threats, racial, sexual or homophobic harassment) using the various mediums available.

Harassment Is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome or which could reasonably be expected to cause offence, humiliation or intimidation.

Why do we have a Policy on these?

To provide a safe and friendly college 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*.

What are the potential consequences of Bullying and Harassment?

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

Am I bullying or harassing someone?

If you are not sure about your behaviour you can:

- check it out by asking if it is offensive or inappropriate
- stop it
- apologise
- take it seriously if someone says they are feeling uncomfortable
- talk it over with an adviser or somebody who has an understanding of the issues

What are some of the feelings targets of bullying or harassment may experience?

- *"I will ignore it and it will go away."*
At times, when a person is ignored they often lose interest in continuing the bullying. If this doesn't work or it is getting worse - tell someone and ask for their help.
- *"I don't want to cause trouble."*
Most causes of harassment are sorted out quite simply. By speaking up, action can be taken to address the problem.
- *"Am I to blame?"*
Targets of harassment or bullying sometimes feel that it is their fault. Targets are made to feel guilty by the perpetrator and often blame themselves. It is your right to have a safe environment free from harassment or bullying.
- *"Am I imagining things?"*
Often our hunches are correct. Rather than put up with nagging doubts, talk to someone about your feelings.

Bullying or harassment can often make people feel:

- embarrassed or ashamed
- offended or humiliated
- intimidated or frightened
- uncomfortable

What should you do if you see another person being bullied or harassed?

If you feel safe when you see the bullying happening, you could encourage the target to walk away and support them to find and teacher to help stop the bullying.

However, if it is your friend who is harassing another person, 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.

Bullying can involve

- grabbing, aggressive staring, hitting, pinching kicking, pushing and shoving
- publicly excluding a person from your group
- knocking a person's books or belongings out of their hands or off their desk
- teasing a person because of their looks

Cyberbullying can involve

- *Flaming* – online fights using electronic messages with angry or vulgar messages
- *Harassment* – repeatedly sending nasty, mean and insulting messages
- *Denigration* – posting or sending gossip or rumours about a person to damage his/her reputation or friendships
- *Outing* – sharing someone's secrets or embarrassing information or images online
- *Exclusion* – intentionally and cruelly excluding someone from an online group
- *Cyber-stalking* – repeated, intense harassment and denigration that includes threats or creates significant fear

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

Subtle (the most common) they include:

- offensive staring and leering, offensive name calling
- unwanted comments about physical appearance and sexual preference
- racist or smutty comments or jokes
- questions about another's sexual activity
- persistent comments about a person's private life or family
- physical contact e.g. purposely brushing up against another's body

Explicit (obvious) they include:

- grabbing, aggressive hitting, pinching and shoving, etc
- unwelcome patting, touching, embracing
- repeated requests for dates, especially after refusal
- offensive gestures, jokes, comments, letters, phone calls or e-mail
- sexually and/or racially provocative remarks
- displays of sexually graphic material – pornography
- requests for sexual favours
- extreme forms of sexual harassment will lead to criminal prosecution

What do you do if you are being bullied or harassed?

- tell the person you don't like what they are doing and you want them to stop
- discuss the matter with a Coordinator, Student Welfare Coordinator or peer mediator, peer support leader or a teacher that you feel comfortable with
- the school will take your concerns seriously - all complaints will be treated confidentially

How will your complaint be dealt with?

Your concerns will be taken seriously. All complaints will be treated confidentially.

School procedures for responding to a student who bullies or harasses others are set out below.

Level 1

If the incident is minor or first time occurrence, teachers may elect to use one or more anti-bullying practices:

- stopping the bullying/re-statement of rules and consequences
- restorative questioning
- think time detention
- private conference
- shared control discussion

If the student does not take control over his/her behaviour, an Incident Report Form should be completed and submitted to the student welfare coordinator or principal/assistant principal.

Level 2

If the bullying or harassment continues, or in instances of severe bullying or harassing, a referral should be made to the Student Welfare Coordinator.

Here, the Student Welfare Coordinator (or another who has responsibility for student welfare) may:

- meet with the student to develop a behaviour contract
- provide discussion/mentoring of different social and emotional learning competencies including structured learning activities
- conduct a restorative conference separately with the perpetrator and "target"

Level 3

For 'at risk' students (many risk factors, few protective factors) whose bullying or harassing behaviour is severe and for other non-at risk students whose bullying or harassing and other aggressive behaviour is resistant to change, an individual 'strength building' plan should be developed by the student welfare coordinator in consultation with student, parents/carers and teachers. Individual strength-building plans and associated interventions help connect the student to positive people, programs and actions in the community, school and home as well as develop the student's inner social and emotional strengths (skills, values).

Level 4

Students whose severe bullying or harassing behaviour resists school efforts and represents a significant threat to the safety and wellbeing should be referred to outside agencies for evaluation. Student Welfare Coordinators will need to be familiar with those community agencies and organisations that can offer more intensive services to the student and student's family.