

BULLYING PREVENTION

October 2018



PURPOSE:

Gladstone Views Primary School is committed to providing a safe and respectful learning environment where bullying will not be tolerated. School staff owe a duty of care to students to take all reasonable steps to reduce inappropriate behaviour and the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm, which can include harm that may be caused by bullying behaviour.

This policy is in place to;

- clarify the definition of bullying
- illustrate that all forms of bullying at Gladstone Views 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
- provide a guide for the investigation and management of bullying incidents
- ensure that support is provided to students who may be affected by bullying behaviour (including victims, bystanders and perpetrators).

When responding to bullying behaviour, we aim to;

- be responsive, fair and consistent
- act in a timely manner
- find a constructive and positive solution for everyone
- stop the bullying from happening again
- provide support for all those involved.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions. The focus of this policy is on students (*workplace bullying is addressed in the Prevention of Workplace Bullying Policy*).

COMMUNICATION PLAN:

Students will be informed of relevant contents of this policy at the commencement of each school year, and will be regularly reminded of aspects throughout the year both formally and informally.

Parents will be referred to this policy at the start of the year and will be able to access the policy on the school website.

Teachers will be referred to this policy at the start of each year and on induction for new staff. A copy of the policy will be available on COMPASS.

DEFINITIONS:

Bullying occurs when someone, or a group of people deliberately and repeatedly upset, harass, intimidate 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 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.

Direct physical bullying - assault (hitting, tripping, pushing), intimidating or aggressive body language, damage to property

Direct verbal bullying – offensive language, name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks.

Indirect bullying – encouraging others to socially exclude a person and/or damaging a person's social reputation or social acceptance in any way including spreading rumours.

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.

Cyberbullying is direct or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technology, for example via a mobile phone, tablet, computer, chat room, email, social media. It can be verbal, written or include images, video and/or audio.

Mutual conflict involves an argument of disagreement between people with no imbalance of power.

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 harassment; nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. Harassment, nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different people is not the same as bullying. However, these behaviours are not acceptable at Gladstone Views Primary School.

PREVENTION:

At Gladstone Views Primary School, everyone has the right to feel safe and comfortable.
At Gladstone Views Primary School, everyone has the right to learn.

These rights form the basis of our approach to developing personal and communal responsibility in all students. Along with the school values of Honesty, Learning, Responsibility and Respect, these rights recognise what is important at Gladstone Views Primary School.

Socially acceptable behaviours, skills and attitudes are taught formally and informally at all year levels with formal teaching based on the Respectful Relationships materials provided by the Department of Education and Training. This includes regular reference to what is and what is not appropriate behaviour, what is considered bullying and the actions to take if bullied or witness to bullying.

Leaders and staff have a responsibility to monitor student behaviour at all times and to take all reasonably practical steps to prevent bullying.

Our Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Inclusion Policy provides more information in regard to school expectations and the development of a safe, inclusive and supportive environment.

RESPONDING TO BULLYING:

Reporting bullying as soon as possible is important as immediate action to address the behaviour is vital. Students are encouraged to report any incidents of concerning behaviour (directed at them, or witnessed occurring to others) to a staff member as soon as possible.

Parents/carers with concerns should, in most cases, contact their child's classroom teacher. However, depending on the concern and circumstances they may contact the Principal or Assistant Principal directly.

Reports regarding bullying will be taken seriously and responded to in a timely manner.

Investigating Incidents

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

- a take immediate action to ensure the safety of students
- b listen to the person reporting the incident and ask clarifying questions to gain a thorough understanding
- c further clarify the incident by talking to all those involved, including witnesses
- d record details of the incident on COMPASS (including an alert to Principal and Assistant Principal)
- e contact the parents/carers of students affected
- g refer more serious matters to the Principal or Assistant Principal who may report to the Incident Support Operations Centre (ISOC).

Actions to Address Incidents

When considering actions to address incidents the following factors will be taken into consideration;

- the age, maturity and special needs of the students involved
- the severity and frequency of the bullying, and the impact on the victim
- whether previous bullying behaviour has been reported
- 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.

Actions may include;

For the victim/s (including witnesses/friends)	For the perpetrator/s
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ counselling (referral to Student Support Services or external provider)▪ development of a safety plan▪ identification of support people▪ monitoring of wellbeing▪ inclusion in wellbeing programs▪ year group targeted social learning programs▪ supported involvement in restorative discussions/mediation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ counselling (referral to Student Support Services or external provider)▪ disciplinary consequences (removal of privileges, suspension and /or expulsion)▪ support to repair damage caused▪ monitoring of behaviour▪ inclusion in wellbeing programs▪ year group targeted social learning programs▪ supported involvement in restorative discussions/mediation

Serious bullying, including cyberbullying, is a criminal offence and may be referred to Victoria Police.

STAFF ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THIS POLICY:

Staff will act to support this policy by:

- completing appropriate contemporary professional learning
- being familiar with the school Bullying Prevention Policy and the Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Inclusion Policy so they are familiar with what is expected of them
- providing a comprehensive personal and social capacity curriculum based on Respectful Relationships resources
- regularly reinforcing the right for everyone to feel safe and comfortable

All school policies are reviewed every three years, or earlier in response to incidents or DET instructions.

- being explicit in informing students of behaviours that constitute bullying and the actions to take if they feel they have been bullied, witness bullying or are informed of bullying
- promoting the importance of 'speaking' up and explaining that those who 'speak up' will be protected
- providing age appropriate information and skills training to students each year
- being alert to behaviours that may indicate bullying in the classroom, the playground and on excursions and camps
- being proactive in their support of students with special needs through the monitoring of behaviour and responses, assisting communication and facilitating understanding
- ensuring due diligence in the investigation of bullying, documentation of events and clear reporting of incidents to parents/carers
- providing parents with information on bullying, including this policy and support that can be provided at home to promote positive social behaviour
- contacting parents/carers if their child is bullied, is distressed from witnessing bullying or perpetrates bullying
- encouraging students to provide feedback regarding their feelings of safety through avenues such as the Attitudes to School Survey
- recording incidents of bullying on COMPASS
- informing the Principal/Assistant Principal of all incidents of bullying
- referring students to support services for additional assistance as needed.

Depending on the nature of the incident contact may also be made with the DET Incident Support and Operations Centre (ISOC) and Victoria Police.

PARENT/CARER ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THIS POLICY:

Parents and Carers are expected to support this policy by:

- providing opportunities for their child/ren to develop socially acceptable behaviours
- reinforcing the message of what bullying is, the effects of bullying on victims, and the responsibilities of those who have been bullied and witnesses to report incidents
- contacting the school as soon as possible when they are aware of any incidents of bullying.

FURTHER INFORMATION

- Statement of Values and School Philosophy (*currently under review*)
- Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Inclusion Policy (*currently under review*)
- Parent Complaints Policy
- Duty of Care Policy

RESOURCES:

- Bully Stoppers
- Kids Helpline
- Lifeline
- Bullying- No Way
- HeadSpace

