

BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Sunshine Harvester Primary School on 9311-1234 or email:

sunshine.harvester.ps@education.vic.gov.au

PURPOSE

Sunshine Harvester 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 Sunshine Harvester Primary School community
- make clear that no form of bullying at Sunshine Harvester Primary School will be tolerated
- outline the strategies and programs in place at Sunshine Harvester 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 understand the importance of reporting 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, witnesses and students engaging in bullying behaviour)
- seek parental and peer group support in addressing and preventing bullying behaviour at Sunshine Harvester Primary School.

When responding to bullying behaviour, Sunshine Harvester Primary School aims to:

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

Sunshine Harvester 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 Sunshine Harvester Primary School aims to prevent, address and respond to student bullying behaviour. Sunshine Harvester 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:

- SWPBS handbook – Distributed to staff
- Restorative approaches if appropriate, such as a “No Blame Conference” (eg refer [Bullying intervention tool: the No Blame Approach – Joining forces to Combat Cyberbullying in Schools](#)) or [Restorative Practices](#).

- [SWPBS Behaviour Continuum](#)
- [Student Wellbeing and Engagement 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:

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

There are four main types of bullying behaviour:

- Physical – examples include hitting, pushing, shoving or intimidating or otherwise physically hurting another person, damaging or stealing their belongings. It includes threats of violence.
- Verbal/written – examples include name-calling or insulting someone about an attribute, quality or personal characteristic.
- 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.
- 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) 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 the Sunshine Harvester Primary School Student Wellbeing and Engagement 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. Sunshine Harvester Primary School will use its School 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

Sunshine Harvester Primary School has a number of programs and strategies in place to build a positive and inclusive school culture and relationships that 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 Sunshine Harvester 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 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 have a positive school environment that provides safety, security and support for students and promotes positive relationships and wellbeing
- Create a positive school environment through our whole school commitment to PBS Tier 1 strategies. See PBS handbook – [SWPBS HANDBOOK – Tier 1 – 2023-2024](#)
- 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
- We celebrate the diverse backgrounds of members of our school community and teach multicultural education, including Aboriginal 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 curriculum 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.
- 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 Sunshine Harvester Primary School

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 Sunshine Harvester Primary School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

We encourage students to speak to their POD teachers, the welfare team or their chosen trusted adults.

Parents or carers who develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Sunshine Harvester Primary School should contact the Principal, Polly Hansen, or any member of the welfare team on 9311-1234 or by email to sunshine.harvester.ps@education.vic.gov.au.

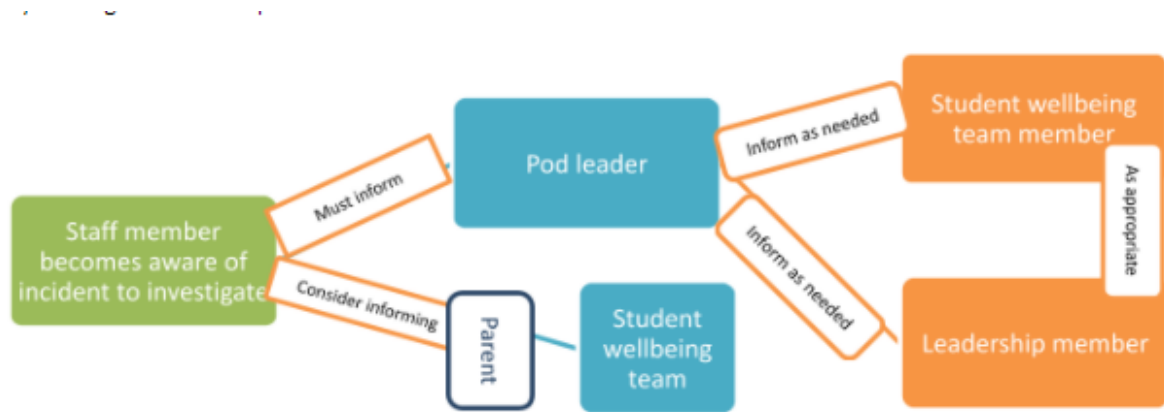
Investigations

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

1. *record the details of the allegations in Sentral (our student management system)*
2. *inform relevant staff including classroom teachers and SHPS Wellbeing Leaders*

The Principal (or Principal's delegate) is responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, the Principal (or Principal's delegate) may:

- *speak separately 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.*



*NB: if the bullying is discovered to be more severe, or not responsive to intervention, parents **will** be informed.*

All communications with the Principal or the Principal's delegate 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 or the Principal's delegate 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, Department of Education, specialist staff, 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, Sunshine Harvester Primary School will consider:

- the age, maturity and individual circumstances of the students involved
- the severity and frequency of the bullying, and the impact it has had on the target student/s
- 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.

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

- Offer wellbeing support, including referral to Student Wellbeing Team, SSS, external providers to:
 - the target student or students
 - the students engaging in the bullying behaviour
 - affected students, including witnesses and/or friends of the target student.

- 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.
- 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).
- Implement a Method of Shared Concern process with all students involved in the bullying.
- 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 target and students engaging in bullying behaviour.
- Provide discussion and/or mentoring for different social and emotional learning competencies of the students involved, including social groups
- Monitor the behaviour of the students involved for an appropriate time and take follow up action if necessary.
- Implement cohort, year group, or whole school targeted strategies to reinforce positive behaviours.
- Implement proportionate 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.
- Log the incident on Sentral (can be confidential or shared)
- Ensure the relevant POD Leaders are aware of the incident, and together check who will follow up the incident, the 'incident responder'. The follow up can be passed on to the Student Wellbeing team who may have more time to follow up
- Incident responder undertakes further investigation as required
- If more concerning, or not the first time, parents must be contacted as per this policy but also as per Behaviour Response Continuum
- Incident responder prepares to run a Pikas Shared Concern meeting as a first method of handling. However the table below shows a wide variety of response options to select from, and if the incident is deemed more severe, or is not the first incident, the table provides further appropriate responses to consider
- Notes to be kept from Shared Concern conference or alternative follow up
- If the bullying persists, or if it is deemed severe, the Student Wellbeing Team must be involved and Leadership should be notified
- Leadership and the Student Wellbeing Team will continue to select from the table below to find the best supports and responses to the situation and to support all students involved. If a person perpetrating bullying fails to appropriately modify their behaviour, network or regional support staff will be contacted to help guide the school's response
- Counselling is available to all parties at all stages of the process
- Our PBS culture means that staff will actively look for and acknowledge positive gains in student efforts to change their behaviour.

Descriptors of the bullying incident	Possible appropriate responses	Resources
Lower 'severity and frequency' First reported incident. One or small group doing the bullying.	Pikas Method of Shared Concern The value of this approach is it does not make anyone wrong per se, and so can help to settle incidences of bullying quite effectively. It can build some empathy and makes those bullying accountable in a kind way. Requires check ins to see if those who were bullying have stuck to their plan. This is a Tier 2 intervention within our PBS framework, as it is an intervention which increases adult attention and acknowledgement, and teaches what behaviour we expect to see.	https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/bullystoppers/krsharedconcern.pdf
Lower severity and frequency – generally just for verbal bullying and where it is perceived that this may resolve the problem	Strengthening the target This is considered a good strategy when simply redressing the power balance may be enough. For example, by building the self-esteem of a child, the situation might be effectively dealt with, or by giving the student some better management strategies when feeling bullied, the situation resolves. Strengthening strategies may include: assertiveness training, friendship making skills, problem solving skills, 'Rational Emotive Education'.	https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/methodstrengtheningtarget.aspx
Considered a good way of solving an underlying problem that may be the cause of bullying	Mediation Both sides have to be willing to participate for this to go ahead. Concerns need to be clarified and communicated beforehand. Not about apportioning blame but solving the underlying issues. A shared solution is reached and agreed to, and then monitored. Either party has the right to walk away at any point.	https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/methodmediation.aspx Not commonly used in schools but still worth knowing about
Considered as a way of bolstering anyone targeted and helping those who bullied to empathise	Support Group method Staff approach the child/ren victimised and offer them a chance to talk about the impact of the incident/s on them. A meeting is then convened with those who distressed them, plus supportive friends, where no one is going to be blamed but rather to listen to the impact on the child targeted, and then work out supportive things they can do to improve the situation. Shared with the target separately. Monitor.	https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/methodsupportgroup.aspx
Lower severity and frequency In cases where the student/s who did the bullying can understand the damage done without becoming defensive	Restorative Practice In this method, the target and those who bullied are brought together in a formal and scripted meeting. It asks the target to explain the impact to them, and for those who bullied to experience remorse and to plan out together some ways that repair can be achieved.	https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/methodrestorative.aspx
Higher severity and/or higher frequency	Behaviour Support plans Consider environmental changes as well as individual behaviour support plans for students who seem to continue with bullying behaviour. This must take account of the function of behaviour as we do for all individualised supports at Sunshine Harvester Primary School. Student Support Group Planning support for a student can be further formalised by creating a Student Support Group. This could include mentoring, resilience programs and further development of SEL competencies.	https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/teachstrat.aspx

Higher severity and frequency of bullying by student/s, or not responsive to previous supports put in place	Traditional ‘discipline’ based response This may include verbal reprimands, loss of privileges, detention, internal/external suspension, contact with police. It is presumed that parents/carers and advocates are aware of the reasons for any consequences, and further, if suspension etc is being considered, a student support group must be set up. The student should be aware that it is the <i>behaviour</i> that is being dealt with rather than them being seen as bad.	https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullyingstoppers/Pages/methodsadditional.aspx
Counselling support can be offered to the target student/s, but also to the student/s engaging in bullying behaviour	Student counselling Make access to support from school social worker, Key Contact psychologist or SSSO team member, or relevant allied health professional simple for student/s, and also for parents. Counselling can also be offered to any students affected by the incident, such as witnesses.	https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullyingstoppers/Pages/teachstrat.aspx
Higher frequency	Safety Plan If necessary, plans can be devised and implemented that will restrict contact between target/s and students engaging in bullying behaviour.	

Sunshine Harvester 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.

The Principal or Principal’s delegate 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 handbook/manual
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

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

- [Statement-of-values-and-school-philosophy-policy-july-2021.docx](#)
- [Student-wellbeing-engagement-july-2021.docx](#)
- [Complaints-policy-July-2021.docx](#)
- [Inclusion-diversity-policy-july-2021.docx](#)
- [Duty-of-care-policy-july-2021.docx](#)
- [2021 Behaviour Response Continuum mk5.3.pptx](#)

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](#)
- [LGBTIQ+ 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:

- <https://www.standforcourage.org/>
- [*Bully Stoppers*](#)
- [*Report Racism or Religious Discrimination in Schools*](#)
- [*Kids Helpline*](#)
- [*Lifeline*](#)
- [*Bullying. No way!*](#)
- [*Student Wellbeing Hub*](#)
- [*Office of the eSafety Commissioner*](#)
- [*Australian Student Wellbeing Framework*](#)
- <https://www.pbis.org/topics/bullying-prevention>
- <https://www.pbisworld.com/behavior-descriptions/aggressive-bullying/>
- <https://www.pbisworld.com/tier-1/interventions-by-behavior/aggressive-bullying/>
- <https://au.reachout.com/articles/how-to-be-an-upstander>
- <https://antibullying.nsw.gov.au/educators/resources/catalogue-pink/bystander-to-upstander-activity-booklet>

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
- student surveys e.g. Attitudes to School
- 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
- Parent Opinion Survey

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

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	This policy was last updated in February 2024
Consultation	Consultation on this policy is mandatory. It was consulted with staff on 21 st February 2024 through the leadership minutes, and school council on 28 th February 2024.
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	February 2026