



MALVERN VALLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY

RATIONALE

Our school is committed to providing a safe and caring environment and culture that enables positive relationships to be formed amongst all students and staff and which fosters confidence, cooperation, respect, resilience and a positive attitude to teaching and learning. The school's Bullying Prevention Policy, in conjunction with the Cyber Safety and Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policies, inform the community that bullying in any of its forms will not be tolerated and that all students have the right to learn.

AIMS

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure our school community are informed about 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 victims, bystanders and perpetrators)
- To provide clear advice on the roles and responsibilities of the whole school community in the prevention and response to bullying behaviour.

When responding to bullying behaviour, Malvern Valley Primary School aims to:

- Be proportionate, consistent and responsive
- Find a constructive and positive solution, aligned with Restorative Practices Philosophy that enacts long-term behaviour change
- Restore the relationships between the students and/or staff involved.

Malvern Valley 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.

DEFINITION

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 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. In this policy any reference to 'bullying' includes all forms of bullying including cyberbullying.

Bullying can be:

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* – 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.

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.

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.

Other Distressing Behaviours

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, Cyber Safety Policy or other related policies.

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 harassment, nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If someone is verbally abused or pushed 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. Despite them not being examples of bullying, such single episodes of harassment, nastiness or physical aggression are not acceptable behaviours at our school.

IMPLEMENTATION

1. ORGANISATION

- 1.1 The Bullying Prevention Policy will be widely available to the school community on the school’s website and in the Policy Book at the Main Office.
- 1.2 New staff will receive detailed information and adequate training during the staff induction process to ensure a thorough and consistent understanding of this policy.
- 1.3 Professional development opportunities will be made available for staff, particularly in the area of Restorative Practices, to ensure all staff are able to implement this policy fully.

2. PREVENTION

Malvern Valley Primary School has a number of programs and strategies in place to build a positive and inclusive school culture and align to our school values and our Positive Education approach. We strive to foster a school culture that prevents bullying behaviour by modelling, teaching and recognising behaviour that reflects our values Respect, Cooperation, Confidence and Resilience.

Bullying prevention at Malvern Valley Primary School is proactive and is supported by research that indicates that a whole school, multifaceted approach is the most effect way to prevent and address bullying. At our school:

- 2.1 The Cyber Smart and Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policies will complement the Bullying Prevention Policy and provide additional detail on cyber safe practices and engagement strategies.

- 2.2 Each teacher will reflect the school's Bullying Prevention Policy, school values and Positive Wellbeing approaches in their class Essential Agreement.
- 2.3 Through an explicit whole-school wellbeing program, which incorporates the Personal Social Capabilities area of the Victorian Curriculum, the school will provide students with learning experiences that support them in having positive relationships, being emotionally literate and empathetic.
- 2.4 Each class will engage in 90 minutes of explicit teaching each week on various aspects of wellbeing as well as daily practice of wellbeing exercises.
- 2.5 Each student is required to sign the Digital Technologies Acceptable Use Agreement, which promotes safe and responsible online behaviours before they are able to use technology at school.
- 2.6 All students in Grades 4 - 6 will participate in the DET's Student Attitudes to School Survey. Data from this survey will be analysed to identify priorities for school leadership.
- 2.7 Staff are required to document any incidences of bullying into the Sentral database. Details of the incident and affected/involved students must also be noted.
- 2.8 Staff on Yard Duty are required to document any incidences deemed 'serious' or determined to be of a bullying nature into the Sentral database. Such incidences are also to be communicated in person to the classroom teachers of any students involved in incidences that are uploaded to Sentral.
- 2.9 Should incidences occur on school grounds when no staff are on scheduled yard duty (outside the hours of 8:45am – 3:45pm), parents are encouraged to prevent any imminent danger to any involved students and then to contact a staff member from the school to follow up at an appropriate time.
- 2.10 All Foundation students will receive a Grade 5/6 Buddy to assist them at the start of the year with finding friends and safe and responsible play and providing them with support throughout the year should they need it.

3. INTERVENTION

Reporting Concerns

- 3.1 Students who may be experiencing or have witnessed bullying behaviour are encouraged to report their concerns to school staff as soon as possible.
- 3.2 In most circumstances, we encourage students to speak to their classroom teacher. However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff.
- 3.3 Parents or carers who may develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour should contact their child's classroom teacher, if their concern is not resolved they should raise their concerns with the Principal or Assistant Principal. The 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 are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.
- 3.4 When notified of alleged bullying behaviour, school staff are required to begin the investigation in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying to enable an informed response, the staff member whom it has been reported to may:
 - 3.4.1 Speak to the students involved in the allegations, including the victim/s, the alleged perpetrator/s and any witnesses to the incidents
 - 3.4.2 Speak to the parents of the students involved
 - 3.4.3 Speak to the teachers of the students involved
 - 3.4.4 Take detailed notes of all discussions for future reference
 - 3.4.5 Obtain written statements from all or any of the above.
- 3.5 Intervention will follow the Restorative Practices approach and guiding principles which are:
 - 3.5.1 Inclusion of all people affected (stakeholders)
 - 3.5.2 Respect for everyone involved
 - 3.5.3 Consensus based decision-making focused on how to repair the harm and prevent future harm

- 3.5.4 Addresses obligations resulting from those harms
 - 3.5.5 Using inclusive, collaborative processes
 - 3.5.6 Expanding the capacity of the community to create a just and fair response
 - 3.5.7 Seeking to put right the wrongs
- 3.6 The goals of any Restorative Practices intervention will be to:
- 3.6.1 Understand the harm and develop empathy
 - 3.6.2 Listen and respond to the needs of everyone
 - 3.6.3 Encourage accountability and responsibility through personal reflection
 - 3.6.4 Reintegrate the wrongdoer into the community
 - 3.6.5 Create a caring climate where we promote the school values
- 3.7 The process will follow the appropriate Restorative Practices structure (Appendix 1) given the level of the involved students.
- 3.8 Staff will utilise some or all of the Restorative Practices script (Appendix 1), WARRM conversation structure (What happened, Who was affected, reflecting, repairing and moving on), templates such as the Think Sheet (Appendix 2) and Apology Framework Template (Appendix 3) to facilitate the Restorative Process.
- 3.9 Consequences for repeated incidences of bullying may involve the Principal or Assistant Principal. They may include exclusion from areas or activities, loss of relevant privileges, or ongoing meetings/counselling.
- 3.10 For repeat incidences, parents may be requested to attend a meeting with the Principal and other relevant staff (eg. Assistant Principal, classroom teacher) where a Behaviour Management Plan will be implemented, clearly stating the strategies in place to prevent further indiscretions and the related consequences for further indiscretions.
- 3.11 In incidences of an extreme nature, a student may be suspended in accordance with the DET's 'Grounds for Suspension' conditions.
- 3.12 Serious bullying, including serious cyberbullying, is a criminal offence and may be referred to Victoria Police. For more information, see: Brodie's Law.
- 3.13 All communication and intervention strategies implemented throughout dealing with an incidence of bullying will be documented into the Sentral database using the appropriate templates.

4. POST INCIDENT

Responses to bullying behaviours

- 4.1 When the staff member 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, at times in consultation with the Assistant Principal, Principal or Department of Education and Training specialist staff.
- 4.2 When identifying appropriate actions and response as part of the Restorative Practices process, there are a number of factors that will be considered, including:
- 4.2.1 The age and maturity of the students involved
 - 4.2.2 The severity and frequency of the bullying, and the impact it has had on the victim student
 - 4.2.3 Whether the perpetrator student or students have displayed similar behaviour before
 - 4.2.4 The alleged motive of the behaviour, including any element of provocation.
- 4.3 In circumstances where it is warranted, the staff member dealing with the incident may implement all, or some of the following responses to bullying behaviours:
- 4.3.1 Facilitate a Restorative Practice meeting following the correct structure (Appendix 1) with all or some of the students involved, utilising the Restorative Practices Think Sheet, Apology Sheet and elicit appropriate actions / consequences that aim to repair the harm caused between affected students. Such information should be communicated to students' parents at the earliest possible time, without compromising confidentiality.

- 4.3.2 Where an appropriate agreement cannot be reached through the Restorative Process, implement consequences for the perpetrator students, which may include removal of privileges, 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.
- 4.3.3 Monitor the behaviour ongoing of the students involved for an appropriate time and take follow up action if necessary.
- 4.3.4 Implement targeted strategies such as those outlined in the Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy.
- 4.3.5 Facilitate a Student Support Group meeting and/or Behaviour Management Plan for affected students.
- 4.3.6 Offer counselling support to the victims, bystanders and/or perpetrators, including referral to SSS (Student Support Staff)
- 4.3.7 Details of all incidences and follow up actions are to be documented on Sentral by the staff member dealing with the incident.

REFERENCES

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

- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Cyber Safety Policy
- Raising Concerns and Complaints Policy
- Duty of Care 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](https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/PreventingBullying/Planning/Pages/School-policy.aspx) - Accessed at: <https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/PreventingBullying/Planning/Pages/School-policy.aspx>
- [Kids Helpline](https://kidshelpline.com.au/) - Accessed at: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/>
- [Lifeline](https://www.lifeline.org.au/) - Accessed at: <https://www.lifeline.org.au/>
- Australian Student Wellbeing Hub. Accessed at: <http://www.safeschoolshub.edu.au>
- Suspension Process by DET - Accessed at: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/studentmanagement/Pages/inschoolsuspension.aspx>

APPENDICES

1. Restorative Practices Processes
2. Student Reflection Template
3. Apology Framework Template
4. Suspension Process Flowchart

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed on an three-year basis in line with other school policy review cycles, or earlier as required, following analysis of school data on reported incidents of, and responses to bullying to ensure that the policy remains up to date, practical and effective.

RATIFIED BY SCHOOL COUNCIL: 2018

TO BE REVIEWED: 2021

APPENDIX 1 Restorative Practices Processes

STRUCTURE

Foundation – Grade 2

Understand: The teacher gathers information to gain an understanding of the problem.

Teach: The teacher gives a simple telling without judgement, focusing on the one social value or behaviour the child needs to understand.

Fix: Repairing the harm with teacher support, involving a relevant, fair and agreed upon consequence.

Grade 3 – 4: Introducing the Restorative Script, facilitator role and transfer from telling to talking.

Understand: Information gathering and understanding the problem.

Teach: The choices that were made and the affect these choices have on others.

Fix: Outcomes needed for the harm to be repaired including an appropriate, fair and agreed upon consequence and future preventative strategies put in place.

Grade 5 – 6

Understand: Information gathering so that all those involved understand the motivation and background and who has obligations and liabilities.

Teach: The choices that were made and the affect these choices have on the school community and on self.

Fix: Identify what needs to happen for the harm to be repaired including an appropriate, fair and agreed upon consequence, and plan future prevention and support.

SCRIPT

When challenging behaviour:	To help those affected:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What happened? <i>Tell the story</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were you thinking of at the time? • What have you thought about since? • What did you have control over? 2. Who do you think has been affected? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who else has been affected? • In what ways? • Was this fair or unfair? • Was this the right or wrong thing to do? 3. What do you think you need to do to make things right? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What else might need to happen? • How will this help? • When can this happen? • What exactly are you saying sorry for? 4. How can we make sure this doesn't happen again? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you need to stop / stay / start doing? • What are your goals to help move forward? • What are you going to do to reach the goals? • What other support do you need? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What did you think when you realized what had happened? 2. What impact has this incident had on you and others? 3. What has been the hardest thing for you? 4. What do you think needs to happen to make things right?



Think Sheet

Name: _____

Date: _____

<i>What happened?</i>	
<i>What was I thinking?</i>	
<i>Who was affected?</i>	<i>How?</i>
<i>How can I fix it?</i>	

Teacher: _____

Student: _____



My Restorative Apology

To begin to make things right I would like to offer this apology to...

This is what I was responsible for (what I did or said to you)...

This is how it made you feel...

This is how I feel about what I did/said...

This is what I won't do again...

This is what I promise I will do so this doesn't happen again...

Signed: _____

APPENDIX 4 Suspension Process Flow Chart

THE SUSPENSION PROCESS

ESTABLISHING THE GROUNDS FOR SUSPENSION

- The principal must first establish whether a suspension is an available option:
 - Did the behaviour occur whilst at school, travelling to or from school or at a school approved activity?
 - Does the behaviour meet one or more of the grounds for suspension?
- The principal must take into account whether a suspension is appropriate to the behaviour, the student's education needs and any other relevant circumstances.
- Before implementing a suspension, the principal must ensure that:
 - The student has had the opportunity to be heard
 - That any information or documentation provided by the student or their relevant person has been taken into account in making the decision regarding the suspension
 - Other forms of action to address the behaviour for which the student is being suspended have been considered and implemented.
- The principal must decide on the duration of the suspension bearing in mind that:
 - A student cannot be suspended for more than five consecutive school days and written approval from the Regional Director is required if the total number of days the student has been suspended in the year is more than 15 days
 - If the period of the suspension is longer than the days left in the term, the principal should consider the likely disruption to the student's learning before imposing a suspension that will continue into the following term.

SUSPENSION WITH AN IMMEDIATE EFFECT

- In some instances, the principal may consider that due to the severity of the situation and the possibility of immediate threat to another person, they may need to implement immediate action.
- Under these circumstances, the school must provide supervision until the student can be collected or until the end of the school day.
- When a suspension with an immediate effect is implemented on school camp or excursion and the student is unable to be collected, then they will need to be supervised until the end of the activity.

NOTIFICATION

- As soon as is practical, the principal must:
 - Give verbal notification to the student and their relevant person of the intention to suspend the student, the reason/s for the suspension, the schools days on which it will occur and where it will occur
 - Provide the student and their relevant person with the *Notice of Suspension* and the *Procedures for Suspension* brochure prior to the day on which the suspension occurs (or on the day a suspension is implemented, if it is a suspension with immediate effect)
 - Provide contact details for additional support services to the student and their relevant person.
- Where appropriate, or if requested, a Student Support Group or another meeting with the student and their relevant person can be convened.

DURING SUSPENSION

- Prior to the day on which the suspension occurs, or on the day a suspension is implemented with immediate effect:
 - If the student is suspended for three days or less, the school must arrange for appropriate school work to be supplied
 - If a student is being suspended for more than three days, a *Student Absence Learning Plan* and a *Return to School Plan* must be developed and provided to the student and their relevant person.

SUPPORT AND FOLLOW-UP

- Following the suspension, it may be appropriate to convene a meeting with the student and their relevant person to discuss the behaviour that led to the suspension. A relevant person can also request a meeting at any time during the suspension process.
- For students that have been suspended for five days or where they have received three or more suspensions in a year, then it is recommended that the school convene a Student Support Group meeting with the student, their relevant person and other personnel to discuss the behaviour that led to the suspension/s and the range of strategies to address the concerns.