

SURFSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL

BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY



1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to support the promotion of a safe and respectful school environment and to prevent and address all forms of bullying, cyber bullying and other unacceptable behaviours at Surfside Primary School. This policy operates under our guiding school values of: Respect, Honesty, Teamwork and Achievement.

At Surfside Primary school we believe everyone is important therefore everyone has the right to feel safe, included and treated with respect all the time.

Surfside 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 Surfside School community
- make clear that no form of bullying at Surfside School will be tolerated
- outline the strategies and programs in place at Surfside 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 Surfside School.

- When responding to bullying behaviour, Surfside 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.

Surfside 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.

2. SCOPE

This policy addresses how Surfside School aims to prevent, address and respond to student bullying behaviour. Surfside 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 Code of Conduct* and *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy*. This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

- This policy will be explained to all parents, teachers, and students to ensure the whole school community is aware of the school's position on bullying.

- Teachers will be regularly reminded of their duty of care regarding the protection of students from all forms of bullying.

3. 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 Surfside, 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 Surfside 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.

- *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. Surfside 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. Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated at Surfside School and may have serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour. Surfside 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.

4. BULLYING PREVENTION

Surfside 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 Surfside 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:

- Our school is a School Wide Positive Behaviour school and is implementing all aspect of the framework.
- 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.
- 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 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.
- We participate in the National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence.
- All classrooms develop class learning agreements and expectations for behaviour at the beginning of the year

- Restorative practices – We use this approach to assist students to solve minor issues arising in the classroom and the playground, and hold restorative circles as required.
- School Wellbeing officer – employed fulltime
- School Values are integrated into all areas of the school
- Circle time- Weekly classroom community circle to build positive relationships and teach social and emotional skills.
- Respectful Relationships program is taught.
- Assertiveness training- children are given opportunity to plan and practice responses to unacceptable behaviour and encouraged to speak for themselves when minor issues arise.
- All children are responsible for their actions and reactions.
- Our playground motto is “Safe, Fair and Friendly.”
- Buddies and young leaders mentor program throughout the school.
- Active Yard duty supervision- Teachers wear fluorescent jackets so they can be seen easily and chronicle on Compass incidents that occur
- Staff have a consistent approach to addressing student behaviour.
- Lunchtime clubs in operation.
- Sports equipment available daily.
- Trained first aid teachers attend to accidents or injuries.
- School assembly celebrations and awards- weekly.
- Student behaviour records are collated weekly by the Wellbeing coordinator to ensure issues have been followed up and to monitor student behaviour.
- Supports are put in place for students in need of assistance in the playground.
- Students who misuse our school property, refuse to follow a staff member’s instruction, are hurtful to others, unsafe, swear or bully are removed from the playground and sent inside for immediate time out.
- Bullying audit conducted twice a year. (This audit is examined by the Principal and students are followed up.)
- Acceptable use of i-Pads and ICT equipment agreement signed by all students and parents at the commencement of the school year.

5. INCIDENT RESPONSE

5.1 Reporting concerns to Surfside 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 Surfside School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

5.2 Reporting bullying issues:

- Teachers monitor student behaviour in the yard and record incidents of unacceptable behaviour on Compass Chronicles which are reviewed by the leadership team on a weekly basis.
- Children are encouraged to report incidents to their class teacher or yard duty teacher.
- Parents are encouraged to contact the child's class teacher, principal or assistant principal if they become aware of a problem.
- Children who witness bullying incidents are encouraged to behave in a manner that supports the victim, such as seeking help, or telling an adult.
- A regular class circle time is held to allow students to voice issues or concerns.

5.3 Investigation

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

1. record the details of the allegations as a Compass Chronicle
2. inform a member of the Leadership team

A member of the leadership team is responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, the team member may:

- speak 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 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 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](#).

5.4 Responses to bullying behaviours

When sufficient information has been obtained 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.

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, Surfside 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 students engaging in bullying behaviour demonstrates insight or remorse for their behaviour
- the alleged motive of the behaviour, including any element of provocation.

Level 1: Minor or isolated incidents: (Yellow Compass Chronicle)

In the first instance teachers who confront an incident of bullying (observed or reported) have the initial responsibility for taking positive action to address the issue;

- The staff member will listen to the nature of the issue and document all information regarding the incident.
- The victim, the alleged bully and witnesses will be spoken with individually.
- Once the true nature of the incident is established, the issue will be resolved, where possible, using the restorative approach. A restorative meeting will be held with all parties to address the issue and restore wellbeing
- The perpetrator may be given a consequence for their behaviour. (see below)
- 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.
- Provide discussion and/or mentoring for different social and emotional learning competencies of the students involved

Level 2: When the instance of bullying is severe, repeated, or targeted or for students who present with significant mental health problems or bullying behaviour: (Red Compass Chronicle)

- These incidents must be referred to the Principal, Assistant Principal or Wellbeing Coordinator. The victim, the alleged bully and any witnesses will be spoken with individually.
- Individual support will be provided to the victim and a designated safe place arranged for them to attend if needed. Counselling may also be offered if appropriate.
- All parents will be informed.

The member of the leadership team may implement all, or some of the following responses to bullying behaviours:

- Serious bullying issues will be logged with Regional Office, Emergency and Security Management and police as appropriate to the nature of the issue.
- Offer counselling support to the target student or students, including referral to Student Wellbeing Coordinator, SSS or external services
- Offer counselling support to the students engaging in bullying behaviour, including referral to Student Wellbeing Coordinator, SSS or external services
- 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).
- Facilitate a Student Support Group meeting and/or Behaviour Support Plan for affected students.
- Prepare a Safety 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,
- 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.
- Implement disciplinary consequences for the students engaging in bullying behaviour, which may include
 - removal of privileges,
 - detention
 - Participation in a social skills program
 - Contributing time and resources to 'fix' the problem
 - In school or at home suspension and/or expulsion
 - Suspension & Expulsion: For serious disciplinary measures the DET Engaging Schools are Effective Schools: Student Engagement Policy Guidelines 2009 are followed
 - Suspension is a serious disciplinary measure and principals must consider alternative interventions and supports for students before proceeding to suspension as the appropriate action.
 - Only principals have authority to make the decision to suspend a student. This authority cannot be delegated.
 - Detailed requirements exist for the suspension process and it is essential that principals refer to the full mandatory [Suspension Guidelines and Procedures](#) in the Guidance tab when they are considering suspending a student.
 - This policy is underpinned by Ministerial Order 1125.
 - <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/teachers/studentmanagement/MinisterialOrder1125SIGNED.PDF>

Further Action:

- Students will be monitored and followed up on a regular basis.
- A data base of all bullying incidents will be updated weekly.

- The Principal will review all bullying incidents and maintain communication with all parties until appropriately resolved.

Surfside 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 is responsible for maintaining up to date records of the investigation of and responses to bullying behaviour.

6. RESOURCES

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

- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Parent 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:

- [Kids Helpline](#)
- [Lifeline](#)
- [Student Wellbeing Hub](#)
- [Office of the eSafety Commissioner](#)
- [Australian Student Wellbeing Framework](#)
- [Bully Stoppers](#)
- [Safe Schools](#)
- [Respectful Relationships](#)
- [Bullying, No Way!](#)
- [Evidence gathering and school audits](#)
- [STEPS decision making tool](#)
- [School Wide Positive Behaviour Support](#)
- [Bully Stoppers Data Collection](#) tool

7. 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 will be collected through:

- discussion and consultation with students and parent/carers
- regular student bullying surveys
- regular 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
- Attitudes to School Survey
- [Parent Opinion Survey](#)

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

This Surfside Primary School Policy is to be reviewed annually by School Council and staff.

This policy was last updated and ratified at School Council on June 15th 2021.