

Bullying Prevention Policy

Purpose

Davis Creek Primary School is committed to providing a safe and respectful learning environment, where bullying will not be tolerated. Davis Creek Primary School will emphasise equally the importance of a balanced curriculum that emphasises equally the art and science of teaching. We recognise the development of the whole child and this includes supporting them to build strong social networks, feel confident as learners and manage the challenging and difficult emotions that will certainly arise when faced with the unknown. A strength-based approach is the focus of our curriculum.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- explain the definition of bullying to all stakeholders so that there is shared understanding amongst all members of the Davis Creek Primary School community
- make clear that no form of bullying at Davis Creek Primary School will be tolerated. Our school values of **C**uriosity, **A**gency, **R**espect and **E**xcellence will be taught explicitly and guide how we behave and act in order to have a safe and orderly school environment. We have zero tolerance to any form of bullying
- outline the strategies and programs in place at Davis Creek Primary School to build a positive school culture and prevent bullying behaviour including the Primary Years Program supported by the Berry Street Education Model
- promote the school's motto *stronger together* and therefore emphasise that everyone in our school community must be alert to signs and evidence of bullying behaviour, and accept responsibility to report bullying behaviour to school staff so that everyone feels safe
- ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are appropriately investigated, addressed and recorded in a timely manner.
- 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 Davis Creek Primary School.

When responding to bullying behaviour, Davis Creek 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.

School staff at Davis Creek Primary School owe a duty of care to students. We seek to educate all children around the development of positive relationships in order to reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm, which can include harm that may be caused by bullying behaviour. We are stronger together when everyone is respectful, kind and empathetic.

Scope

This policy addresses how Davis Creek Primary School aims to prevent, address and respond to student bullying behaviour in a timely manner. Davis Creek 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 Engagement, Behaviour Management and Wellbeing Policy.

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

Policy

Definitions

What is 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.

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.

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 Engagement, Behaviour Management and Wellbeing 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.

School will use its Student Engagement, Behaviour Management and Wellbeing 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, *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.

Bullying Prevention

Davis Creek 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 positive and respectful relationships.

Bullying prevention at Davis Creek 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:

- Our school's curriculum framework is purposefully designed to support the sequential development of students' physical, psychological, social and emotional capabilities. All staff will also be trained to implement the Berry Street Education Model which emphasises five domains (Body, Relationships, Stamina, Engagement and Character).

The Berry Street Education model provides schools with training, curriculum and strategies to understand the academic, social and emotional needs of children. It is a positive education framework that supports teachers to address the daily challenges students encounter that can impact their success at school.

- In the classroom, our social and emotional learning curriculum teaches students what constitutes bullying and how to respond to bullying behaviour assertively. Strong lines of inquiry will be developed to support deep learning around the transdisciplinary theme 'Who we are'.



- We create a positive school environment that provides safety, security and support for students and promotes positive relationships and wellbeing. This includes developing Classroom Essential Agreements and explicitly teaching the school expectations that are outlined in the Student Engagement, Safe Behaviour and Wellbeing Policy. These agreements are developed and aligned to the school values **C**uriosity, **A**gency, **R**espect and **E**xcellence. The overarching value of our school is C.A.R.E. displayed in each learning space will be the school's values and expectations of behaviour so we can live our values and also have consistent expectations at Davis Creek Primary School.
- The school will have a wellbeing team consisting of the Principal and Assistant Principal and the P.L.C leaders of each area. At each P.L.C meeting time will be set aside to discuss the following questions: Where are we at right now? (What are students' current needs? How can I best support them?) Where do we want to go? (What are our students' needs for growth?) Teachers will use each of the five areas of the Berry Street Education Model to identify strategies and recommendations to inform classroom practice.

- 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. Our partnerships are supported by Codes of Conduct for all stakeholders that are designed around our core school values and based on the acronym of C.A.R.E.
- Each year as part of the incursions and program an experience will be planned to educate and support students to understand and raise awareness about bullying and its impacts.
- The School Buddy Program and the explicit teaching of social and emotional learning skills encourage positive relationships between students in different year levels.
- As part of the school's values system we promote and celebrate a culture of care through encouraging students to look out for each other and to talk to teachers and older peers about any bullying they have experienced or witnessed. We have a Student Support Space where children can go if they are feeling unsafe during lunch and recess times. A member of the school's leadership team will staff this space during break times. This supports our building of relationships with students at the school.
- We participate and celebrate cultural days, National Day of Action against Bullying, Reconciliation Week and Harmony Day to promote an understanding of culture and build global awareness. We hold assemblies to promote whole school awareness and understanding of these days. The school will also develop a Reconciliation Action Plan.

For further information about our engagement and wellbeing initiatives, please see our Student Engagement, Safe Behaviours and Wellbeing Policy.

How will the school respond to an alleged incident of bullying?

Bullying complaints will be taken seriously and responded to sensitively at our school. Please report any concerns you have to your child's teacher.

1. 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 (promoted through assemblies and newsletters).
2. 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 Davis Creek Primary School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances (promoted through assemblies and newsletters).
3. We encourage students to speak to their classroom teacher. However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff. This will be emphasised through the classroom essential agreements.
4. Parents or carers who develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Davis Creek Primary School should contact their classroom teacher or a member of the school's leadership team.

Investigations

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

1. record the details of the allegations in Sentral; and
2. inform the Assistant Principal supporting the classroom teacher.

The classroom teacher supported by the Assistant Principal is responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, the 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 with the classroom teacher supported by the Assistant Principal 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](#).

We are stronger together. How will the school respond?

When classroom teacher supported by the Assistant Principal 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. This includes the Principal.

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

The Student Wellbeing Team (initially consisting of Principal, Assistant Principal and P.L.C leaders) and the classroom teacher may implement all, or some of the following responses to bullying behaviours:

- Offer counselling support to the target student or students, including referral to Student Wellbeing Team, Student Support Services (SSS) or an external provider.
- Offer counselling support to the students engaging in bullying behaviour, including referral to the Student Wellbeing Team, SSS or/and external provider.
- Offer counselling support to affected students, including witnesses and/or friends of the target student, including referral to the Student Wellbeing Team, SSS or/and external provider.
- 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 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.
- 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 Introducing Conflict Resolution skills.
- 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.

Davis Creek 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 classroom teacher in consultation with the Student Wellbeing team are responsible for maintaining up to date records of the investigation of and responses to bullying behaviour.

Further Information and Resources

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

- Complaints Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Student Wellbeing, Safe Behaviours and Engagement 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 on a 2 year basis, 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.

Data will be collected through:

- discussion and consultation with students and parent/carers
- 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
- Attitudes to School Survey conducted by the Student Wellbeing Team

- [Parent Opinion Survey](#)

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

Review Cycle

This policy will be reviewed as part of the three-year review cycle or if guidelines change.

Ratification Date	Review Date	Policy Number	Version Number	Date Produced
June 2020	2022	8	2	July 2019