



## **Bullying / Harassment Prevention Policy and Student Grievance Procedures**

First Developed: 1999

Minor updates: Annually  
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Next formal review: Following DfE  
review

### **OUR VALUES AND VISION**

Our school is a safe, supportive, inclusive and respectful teaching and learning community that promotes learning success and student and staff wellbeing.

We aim to establish a community in which everybody upholds our school values of respect, quality, commitment and diversity; and where individual differences are appreciated, understood and accepted. Everybody has a right to learn and work in an environment which is free from bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence.

Our school culture encourages positive social interaction, fosters healthy and respectful relationships and we model behaviours that demonstrate our school values.

Bullying, including cyber bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence, is not acceptable in this school and will be dealt with seriously and expediently.

For the purposes of this document we will use the term bullying/harassment to refer to any form of bullying, harassment, discrimination or violence.

### **OUR APPROACH TO BULLYING / HARASSMENT PREVENTION**

At the School of Languages we will plan, implement and review our bullying / harassment prevention strategies. We will do this with our staff, students, families and local community.

We will model and promote positive behaviour by:

- creating a welcoming and inclusive school
- making sure staff understand their role to create a safe school.

We will intervene in specific incidents of bullying or observed bullying / harassing behaviour by:

- taking bullying seriously and responding to reports of bullying or observed bullying behaviours.
- using fair and consistent responses to bullying or suspected bullying / harassment.
- documenting all bullying / harassment incidents and checking in with students while bullying / harassment incidents are being resolved.

We will work with families, service providers and the community to address bullying / harassment by working with the department staff and the local community to design local strategies to prevent and reduce bullying / harassment.

We will provide visible and consistent responses to bullying / harassment that foster trust and confidence in the school community by:

- sharing information on how to prevent and respond to bullying / harassment
- reviewing our strategies and actions to prevent and respond to bullying / harassment to ensure that student needs are being met
- setting up safe ways for students to report bullying / harassment and let students know how to do this
- making information about the complaints resolution process available.

We will repair and restore relationships that have been harmed by bullying / harassment by:

- developing solutions to bullying / harassment incidents with students, staff, parents and carers.

We will establish safety and wellbeing by:

- taking action against bullying/harassment and reporting criminal actions to South Australia Police
- providing targeted social and emotional support for students who need more help after bullying / harassment incidents.

## **DEFINITIONS OF BULLYING, HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION AND VIOLENCE**

Bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence all create or add to a negative environment. This can make students feel unsafe and unable to reach their full potential.

Bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence may be based on gender, race, sexuality, culture, religion, disability and care status. Bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence for any reason are not acceptable in South Australian public schools.

Responses will depend on the:

- behaviours
- needs of the students
- rights of all students to be safely included in learning.

Please find the following definitions as used by the Department for Education.

### **Bullying**

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**

#### **1 It involves a misuse of power in a relationship**

Conflict or fights between equals are not defined as bullying. Bullying occurs where there is a power imbalance.

This might come from:

- the context. For example, a number of children acting against one child
- personal characteristics. For example, different physical, emotional or social development.

#### **2 It is ongoing and repeated**

One incident of misbehaviour is not defined as bullying. Schools will respond to all incidents of misbehavior.

One act by a single person might be bullying if:

- the behaviour adds to a series of other people's behaviours that misuse power and result in harm
- it can be shared online or through technology to a wide audience, or repeated with multiple views.

#### **3 It involves behaviours that can cause harm**

Bullying can cause physical and psychological harm.

Physical harm can include injury. It can also include theft or damage to belongings.

Psychological harm can include:

- anxiety
- not wanting to go to school
- lack of interest in school

- isolation and depression.

Psychological harm can last some time. It will depend on a student's situation and the support available to them. Support might come from family, school and friends.

A fear of being bullied can create psychological harm.

## EXAMPLES OF TYPES OF BULLYING

**Physical:** hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching, pushing or damaging or stealing belongings.

**Verbal:** verbal abuse, name calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, or threats.

**Social:** social exclusion, lying, spreading rumours, unkind facial expressions or body language, mean and condescending looks, playing jokes to embarrass and humiliate, mimicking and damaging someone's reputation or social relationships.

**Cyber:** Cyberbullying is online bullying. It uses technology, including social media platforms. Verbal and social bullying can be cyberbullying when they occur online.

Cyberbullying includes:

- abusive texts and emails
- hurtful messages, videos and images, including images that have been changed
- sharing personal images and videos without consent
- pretending to be someone else online to be hurtful.

### Harassment

Harassment is behaviour that targets an individual or group. This can be because of their identity, race, culture or ethnic origin; religion; physical characteristics; gender; sexual orientation; age or ability.

It offends, humiliates, intimidates or creates an unsafe environment. It might be a pattern of behaviour or a single act. It might be on purpose or unintended.

### Discrimination

Discrimination happens when people are treated differently to others. This can be because of their identity, race, culture or ethnic origin; religion; physical characteristics; gender; sexual orientation; age or ability. Discrimination interferes with people's right to fair treatment and equal opportunities.

### Violence

Violence is the intentional use of physical force or power. It can be threatened or actual, against another person. It might result in psychological harm, injury or in some cases death. It might involve provoked or unprovoked acts. It can be one incident, a random act or can happen over time.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS

- Model behaviours that are safe, respectful and inclusive, both face-to-face and online.
- Build skills, knowledge and confidence to recognise, respond to and manage bullying / harassment.
- Take a stand when bullying / harassment is observed. Step in, if it's safe. Seek help from adults.
- Support friends and peers get help from trusted adults if they experience bullying / harassment.
- Support friends to behave in safe, respectful and inclusive ways if their friends engage in bullying / harassment.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS/CARERS

- Model and promote safe, respectful and inclusive behaviours.
- Help children to be safe online at home. This includes checking children's use of technology and social media.
- Make sure children know how to identify and report bullying / harassment. Work with the school to help children be safe from bullying / harassment.
- Talk to children about safety issues. This includes bullying and harassment. Help them understand what it is, why it is harmful and how to respond. Use the same messages the school uses.

- Report concerns about bullying / harassment to school staff.
- If a bullying / harassment incident happens, work with the school.
- Support children to go to school while a bullying / harassment issue is being worked on.
- Get external professional support, if needed.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF

- Model and promote positive behaviour. Value diversity, demonstrate respect, and include all students and their families.
- Provide and take part in professional development to build skills, knowledge and confidence about preventing bullying / harassment. Including how to recognise, respond and manage it.
- Collect data on bullying regularly. Use the data to plan how you will prevent and respond to bullying.
- Work with students to come up with solutions to bullying / harassment. Include them in decisions that affect their safety and wellbeing.
- Support all students to be included, in particular students at higher risk of being bullied / harassed.
- Take action when bullying / harassment has been reported. This includes incidents that happen out of school hours or off school grounds when it relates to school relationships.
- Report criminal matters to the South Australian Police.
- Help parents and carers to recognise bullying / harassment. Include information about what to do when their child is engaging in or affected by bullying / harassment.
- Work with families, service providers and the community to support students affected by bullying / harassment.
- Support students to repair and restore relationships that have been harmed by bullying / harassment.
- Have planned responses to bullying / harassment. Make them visible and consistent. Responses should foster trust and confidence.
- Help students to be physically and psychologically safe from bullying / harassment.

## HOW TO RECOGNISE A STUDENT IS BEING BULLIED/HARASSED

Students who are being bullied or harassed may not talk about it with their teachers, friends or families. They may be afraid that it will make things worse or that they are “dobbing”. A change in behaviour in students may be a signal that they are being bullied or have some other concern.

### **Some signs that a student is being bullied may be:**

- Unexplained cuts, bruises or scratches
- Damaged or ripped clothing
- Vague headaches or stomach aches
- Refusal to attend classes
- Asking for extra money or food
- Tearfulness, anxiety or difficulty sleeping
- ‘Hiding’ information on mobile phones, emails or social networking sites.

## **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

Grievance procedures provide guidelines for what to do about bullying / harassment, and how, when and to whom to report it.

Grievance procedures are designed to enable someone who feels uncomfortable in a situation to communicate that to the other person or persons involved, to receive support from the School in doing so and to end the situation which has caused the discomfort. At all times, conciliation is the desirable outcome and the use of the grievance procedures should be seen in terms of this primary objective. Counselling is seen to be an essential part of this process of conciliation.

However, should someone continue with such an action once he or she has been made aware that it causes discomfort and/or distress to another person then the issue is more serious and more serious action, as described in the grievance procedures, may be taken.

In DfE, bullying / harassment is unacceptable and all complaints of such conduct will be considered seriously. Any act of victimisation against a person lodging a complaint will not be tolerated and could result in disciplinary action.

### **PROCEDURES FOR A STUDENT GRIEVANCE**

#### **BULLYING/HARASSMENT OF STUDENTS BY STUDENTS**

Students should report bullying to a trusted adult as soon as it occurs. Do not ignore it. When bullying / harassment is ignored, it may get worse.

Students can take any of the following courses of action whenever they believe they are being bullied or harassed by other students:

- attempt a peaceful reconciliation, speak to the person bothering them. They may ask a friend to support them when they do this, e.g. by quietly but firmly telling the bully / harasser(s) what they do not like and that they want it to stop
- seek advice, support or appropriate action on their behalf from any member of staff at the school e.g. language teacher, Admin Support Person, Coordinator, Assistant Principal or Principal
- discuss the matter with a parent/carer for advice and support
- ask their parent/carer to act on their behalf by reporting the matter to any member of staff at the school

Teachers are to explain to students that they must act in good faith and not make false allegations of bullying / harassment against other students. They are to make it clear that the law and school policy afford protection from victimisation to any student who has just cause to use any of the above grievance procedures.

Teachers must report the following to their Line Manager and the Assistant Principal: Student and Staff Services:

- Serious, explicit cases of bullying / harassment of students by students, eg sexual assault, explicit sexual behaviour, coerced sexual activity, racial taunts, etc.
- Cases where bullying / harassment of a student by students persists despite teacher counselling and sanctions.

The Assistant Principal will decide upon an appropriate course of action in consultation with the Principal.

Teachers are advised to consult with their Line Manager and the Assistant Principal to ensure that they have adequate support for actions they take on behalf of parents/carers or students alleging bullying / harassment against other students.

#### **BULLYING/HARASSMENT OF STUDENTS BY STAFF MEMBERS**

All complaints and allegations of bullying / harassment of students by a staff member must be reported to the Assistant Principal: Student and Staff Services for investigation and appropriate action.

Students can take any of the following courses of action whenever they believe they are being bullied/harassed by a member of staff:

- discuss the matter with a parent or parents/carers for advice and support
- ask their parents/carers to act on their behalf by reporting the matter to the Assistant Principal or any other member of staff at the school
- seek advice, support or action on their behalf from a Coordinator, Assistant Principals, the Principal or any other member of staff at the school

The Assistant Principal will:

- advise the staff member of the nature of any complaints or allegations of bullying / harassment of students made against them
- ensure confidentiality
- ensure that the rights of the complainant and the alleged offender are adequately protected
- take appropriate action according to the wishes of the complainant and the seriousness of the complaint
- advise DfE whenever the case is of such seriousness that disciplinary action is necessary.

The Assistant Principal will decide upon an appropriate course of action in consultation with the Principal.

## **PROCEDURES FOR PARENT/CARER GRIEVANCES**

Refer to the DfE Complaint Management Procedure on the school website.