

BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the school office.

Phone: 03 9429 2950

Email: richmond.west.ps@education.vic.gov.au

PURPOSE

Richmond West 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
- make clear that all forms of bullying at Richmond West Primary School will not be tolerated
- 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 victims, bystanders and perpetrators)
- seek parental and peer group support in addressing and preventing bullying behaviour at Richmond West Primary School

When responding to bullying behaviour, Richmond West 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.

Richmond West 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 Richmond West Primary School aims to prevent, address and respond to student bullying behaviour. Richmond West 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 *Engagement and Wellbeing Policy*, *Duty of Care Policy*, *Yard Duty and Supervision Policy* and *Statement of Values and School Philosophy*. Bullying complaints will be taken seriously and responded to sensitively at our school.

This policy applies to all school activities both face-to-face and online, 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.

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DEFINITIONS

Bullying

Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological aggressive behaviour by a person or group directed towards a less powerful person or group that is intended to cause harm, distress or fear. 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 Wellbeing and Engagement Policy and Child Safe Code of Conduct.

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

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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. Richmond West Primary 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. Further information about these two forms of harassment, including definitions, is set out in our *Inclusion and Diversity Policy*. Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated at Richmond West Primary School and may have serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour. Richmond West Primary 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.

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*.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Richmond West Primary School is committed to providing a safe and respectful learning environment where bullying will not be tolerated.

Bullying Prevention

Richmond West Primary School has a number of programs and strategies in place to build a positive and inclusive school culture and relationships to 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 Richmond West 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](#), our Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programs such as School Wide Positive

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Behaviours (SWPBS) and Respectful Relationships (RR) and any other programs that are relevant to preventing and addressing bullying, and help us to build a positive and inclusive school climate.

- 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 use SEL, RR and SWPBS programs 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 school 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.
- We encourage positive relationships between students in different year levels. 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.
- For further information about our engagement and wellbeing initiatives, please see our *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy*.

When responding to bullying behaviour, Richmond West Primary School aims to:

- To create a culture of inclusion.
- To reinforce within the school community what bullying is, and the fact that it is unacceptable.
- To articulate the signs and evidence of bullying and to ensure bullying is reported whether a person is an observer or a victim.
- To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are responded to consistently and effectively.
- To seek parental and peer-group support and co-operation at all times.
- be proportionate, consistent and responsive.
- find a constructive and positive solution for everyone
- stop the bullying from happening again.
- restore the relationships between the students involved.

Richmond West 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 acceptance, kindness and respect.

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Bullying prevention at Richmond West 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.

The Richmond West Primary School *Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy* outlines our School Wide Positive Behaviour Supports (SWPBS) and Respectful Relationships (RR) framework that explicitly defines, teaches and reinforces positive behaviours at Richmond West Primary School. The SWPBS data collection system allows for the identification of patterns of bullying in the school.

Positive behaviours are reinforced through Richmond West Primary School's SWPBS and RR acknowledgement systems. Strategies that promote student resilience are also explicitly taught through the RR program.

At our school:

- 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.
- The SWPBS and RRR frameworks encourages positive relationships between students in different year levels. 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.

Developing shared understandings:

Students will develop a consistent understanding of what constitutes bullying behaviour through the SWPBS and RR. The types of bullying and roles people can play in bullying will also be addressed, as will the process for students to report all incidents of bullying.

INCIDENT RESPONSE

Reporting concerns to Richmond West 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.

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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 Richmond West Primary School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

We encourage students to speak to their teacher or the principal. However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff including other teachers, Education Support (ES) and/or wellbeing staff.

Parents or carers who develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Richmond West Primary School should contact the principal by phone on 03 9429 2950 or by email directed to: richmond.west.ps@education.vic.gov.au

Investigations

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

1. record the details of the allegations on the incident register, through COMPASS and/or student file; and
2. inform the child safety officer (principal).

The child safety officer (principal) is responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, the child safety officer (principal) 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 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.

All communications with the child safety officer (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 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 child safety officer (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 child safety officer (principal) and/or Department of Education and Training specialist staff.

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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, Richmond West 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
- 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.

The child safety officer (principal) may implement all, or some of the following responses to bullying behaviours:

Offer wellbeing support, including referral to external providers as applicable to:

- the target student or students
- the students engaging in the bullying behaviour
- affected students, including witnesses and/or friends of the target student/s.
- 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).
- prepare an Individual Management Plan (as needed) 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 connecting affected students with an older student mentor, and through our SWPBS, RR and SEL programs
- monitor the behaviour of the students involved for an appropriate time and take follow up action if necessary.
- implement cohort 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.

Richmond West 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,

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school staff will also endeavour to provide parents and carers with updates on the management of bullying incidents.

The child safety officer (principal) 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 and communication platform
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included in our staff handbook/manual
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- Discussed at parent information sessions
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Included as a regular reference in school newsletter
- Discussed at student forums and through SWPBS and RR
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Related School Policies/Documents:

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

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Digital Learning Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Parent Complaints Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Yard Duty and Supervision Policy

Related Department of Education and Training policies

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:

- [Bully Stoppers](#)
- [Report racism or religious discrimination in schools](#)

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- [Kids Helpline](#)
- [ReachOut Australia](#)
- [Lifeline](#)
- [Bullying. No way!](#)
- [Student Wellbeing Hub](#)
- [eSafety Commissioner](#)
- [Australian Student Wellbeing Framework](#)

REVIEW AND APPROVAL

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or earlier as required following an incident or analysis of new research or school data relating to bullying.

Data to inform this review 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 students, staff and parents and at School Council.

Policy last reviewed	August 2022
Approved by	Principal
Consultation (Mandatory)	Consultation with School staff/School Council August 2022
Next scheduled review date	August 2024