



BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY

PURPOSE

Prahran High School is committed to creating and maintaining a positive, safe, respectful and caring environment and culture. We have a responsibility to foster an educational environment where every attempt is made to remove barriers to learning and where all students feel safe and valued. Prahran High School does not tolerate any form of bullying or harassment and makes a commitment to the eradication of these behaviours from the school community through education and by the modelling of positive, constructive relationships.

Prahran High 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 Prahran High School will not be tolerated
- ask that everyone in our school community be alert to signs and evidence of bullying behaviour and to accept responsibility for reporting 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 Prahran High School.

When responding to bullying behaviour, Prahran High School aims to:

- 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.

Prahran High 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.

Guiding Principles

- In our community, there is a shared understanding that no form of bullying is acceptable.
- Everyone in our community has a right to a cooperative environment free from disruption and harassment.
- Positive and respectful relationships, between students and between students and staff, help establish a learning community with multiple and diverse opportunities for students to experience success.
- We promote a school community in which everybody feels valued, respected and safe, and where individual differences are appreciated, understood, and accepted.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions and should be read in conjunction with our school's *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy*, [Child Safe Policy](#) and [Code of Conduct](#), *Duty of Care Policy* and [Statement of School Values and Philosophy](#).

POLICY

Definitions

Bullying

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.

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

Cyberbullying involves direct or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technology. For example, via a mobile phone, tablets, computers, chat rooms, email, social media, etc. Cyberbullying can be verbal, written or include use of images, video and/or audio.

Mutual conflict

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

Social rejection or dislike is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

Single episodes

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. However, single episodes of harassment, nastiness or physical aggression are not acceptable behaviours at our school.

Many distressing behaviours may not constitute bullying even though they are unpleasant. Students who are involved in, or who witness any distressing behaviours of concern are encouraged to report their concerns to school staff.

BULLYING PREVENTION

We promote a bully-free school through a school culture that encourages acceptance, kindness and respect. There is a clear expectation that there is no tolerance for bullying at Prahran High School. This is reinforced through our mission and values – our proactive way of working together. Bullying prevention at Prahran High School is supported by research that indicates that a whole-school, multifaceted approach is the most effective way to prevent and address bullying.

The prevention of bullying at Prahran High School actively occurs across a range of settings through the school through our focus on respectful relationships, an engaging curriculum, incursions, guest speakers and special programs. Our approach encapsulates the following principles:

- Prahran High School is a positive school environment that provides safety, security and support for students and promotes positive relationships and wellbeing. Together we work from the belief that “happy kids learn more”.
- There is a strong partnership 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 behaviour management that is applied consistently and which is non-hostile and non-punitive.
- Teachers know to report any incident of bullying immediately and to actively supervise students in the schoolyard.
- In the classroom, our Healthy Body, Healthy Mind program teaches students about what constitutes bullying and how to respond assertively. These programs promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving. This work is underpinned by Positive Psychology.
- The Peer Support Program and the Peer Mediation program encourage positive relationships between students and 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.
- A summary of this policy will be included with other information when students enrol at the school. In addition, the Student Leadership Team and school leaders will inform all current students of the new policy.

INCIDENT RESPONSE

Reporting Concerns to Prahran High 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.

In most circumstances, we encourage students to speak to a trusted teacher, learning mentor, Student Wellbeing Leader or Assistant Principal. However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff.

Parents or carers who may develop concerns that their child is involved in or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Prahran High School should contact the Prahran High School Assistant Principal.

Investigations

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

1. record the details of the allegations in the Compass Chronicle
2. inform the Year Level Coordinator, Head of Sub-School or Assistant Principal

The Heads of Sub-School are initially responsible for investigating serious allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, she/he may:

- speak to the students involved in the allegations, including the victim/s, the alleged perpetrator/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 while 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](#).

Responses to Bullying Behaviours

When the Head of Sub-School and/or 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 Principal, Student Wellbeing and Engagement Team, Student Support Services (SSS) and other staff as required.

There are several factors that will be considered when determining the most appropriate response to the behaviour. When deciding about how to respond to bullying behaviour, Prahran High 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 victim student
- whether the perpetrator student or students have displayed similar behaviour before
- whether the bullying took place in a group or one-to-one context
- whether the perpetrator demonstrates insight or remorse for their behaviour
- the alleged motive for the behaviour, including any element of provocation.

The Assistant Principal may implement all, or some of the following responses to bullying behaviours:

- offer counselling support to the victim student or students, including referral to the Mental Health Practitioner, SSS team and/or external providers, such as Stonnington Youth Services
- offer counselling support to affected students, including witnesses and/or friends of the victim student, including referral to the Mental Health Practitioner SSS team and/or external providers, such as Stonnington Youth 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 of, or all, the students involved to help encourage students to take responsibility for their behaviour and to explore underlying reasons for conflict or grievance
- implement disciplinary consequences for the perpetrator students, which may include removal of privileges, detention, suspension and/or expulsion consistent with our *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy*, *Ministerial Order 1125* on Suspensions and Expulsions and any other relevant Department policy
- 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 victim and perpetrator students
- provide discussion and/or mentoring for different social and emotional learning competencies
- 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 such as class-points system rewards, student-of-the-week celebrations, living our values celebrations.

The Heads of Sub-School and relevant Assistant Principal are responsible for maintaining up-to-date records of the investigation and responses to bullying behaviour.

Prahran High School understands the importance of monitoring the progress of students who have been involved in or affected by bullying behaviour. Our ability to effectively reduce and eliminate bullying behaviour is greatly affected by students reporting concerning behaviour as soon as possible so that the responses implemented by Prahran High School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Prahran High School [Child Safe Policy](#) and [Code of Conduct](#); [Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy](#), [Duty of Care Policy](#); [Statement of School Values and Philosophy](#).

EVALUATION

This will be reviewed on an annual basis following analysis of school data on reported incidents of, and responses to, bullying to ensure that this policy remains up to date, practical and effective.

Data will be collected through:

- Student Attitudes to School surveys
- Prahran High School specific student bullying surveys
- Discussion with students
- Regular staff surveys
- Assessment of school-based data, including the number of reported incidents of bullying in each year group and the effectiveness of the responses implemented.

Proposed amendments to this policy will be discussed with the school staff, Student Leadership Team and School Council.

REVIEW PERIOD

This policy was re-endorsed in 2020 during the school review. While this does not need to be ratified by Council, this policy will be reviewed annually by the community. It will be discussed and uploaded into the school policy areas of Compass and our website.