

POLICY: BULLYING PREVENTION

PURPOSE:

Brentwood Park 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 community
- make clear that no form of bullying will be tolerated
- outline the strategies and programs in place at the school to build a positive school culture and prevent bullying behaviour
- ask that everyone in the 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.

When responding to bullying behaviour, the 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.

Brentwood Park 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.

AIMS:

The school aims to prevent, address and respond to student bullying behaviour. The school recognises that there are many other types of inappropriate student behaviours that do not meet the definition of bullying. These are also unacceptable at our school and are incidents, which will be managed in accordance with the school's Student Code of Conduct.

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

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 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:

- 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 example, via a mobile device, computers, chat rooms, email, social media, etc. It can be verbal or written and can include images, video and/or audio content.

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 who will follow the 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 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 and may have serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour.

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 the school and may have serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour.

IMPLEMENTATION:

Bullying Prevention

Brentwood Park 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 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:

- 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 to encourage all members to work together to ensure the safety of students.
- Teachers are encouraged to incorporate classroom management strategies that discourage bullying and promote positive behaviour through our *Learning and Growing Together* Program.
- In the classroom, our social and emotional learning program, *You Can Do It!*, teaches students what constitutes bullying and how to respond to bullying behaviour assertively. This promotes resilience, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.
- The Peer Mediation program 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.

Incident Response

- 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.
- The 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 are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.
- We encourage students to speak to their teacher or principal class officer. However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any staff member.
- Parents or carers who develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour, should contact Jenny Reid, Assistant Principal, 9702 2022.

Investigations

- When notified of alleged bullying behaviour, school staff are required to:
 - 1) inform an assistant principal or principal: and
 - 2) the details of the allegations will be recorded in the student's file
- The assistant principal or principal is responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, the assistant principal/principal may:
 - speak to 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.

Responses to bullying behaviours

- 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, the 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 demonstrate insight or remorse for their behaviour
 - the alleged motive of the behaviour, including any element of provocation.
- The assistant principal/principal may implement all, or some of the following responses to bullying behaviours:
 - offer counselling support to the target student or students.
 - offer counselling support to the students engaging in bullying behaviour.
- 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.
- Prepare a plan restricting contact between target and students engaging in bullying behaviour.
- 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 and /or suspension.
- Monitor and follow up on the progress of students who have been involved in or affected by bullying behaviour and provide parents and carers with updates on the management of bullying incidents.
- Maintain up to date records of the investigation of and responses to bullying behaviour.

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

- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Parent Complaints policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy

REVIEW:

Approved by School Council 25/6/2019

To be reviewed in 2021