



BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY

PURPOSE

Orchard Grove 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 so that there is shared understanding amongst all members of the Orchard Grove Primary School community
- make clear that no form of bullying at Orchard Grove Primary School will be tolerated
- outline the strategies and programs in place at Orchard Grove Primary School to build a positive school culture and prevent bullying behaviour
- 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 targets, bystanders and students engaging in bullying behaviour)
- seek parental and peer group support in addressing and preventing bullying behaviour at Orchard Grove Primary School.

When responding to bullying behaviour, Orchard Grove 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.

All members of the school community are committed to ensuring a safe and caring environment which promotes personal growth, achievement and positive relationships for all. We are also committed to ensuring that put-downs, both verbal and non-verbal (including online), are not accepted or tolerated.

Our School's Mission is:

To embrace the diversity of our community by providing a safe and rich learning environment, where quality programs enable students to achieve their potential.

Our School Values:

- Respect
- Valuing Diversity
- Integrity
- Working Together
- Fostering Growth

Orchard Grove 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.

Rights and Responsibilities

At Orchard Grove Primary School:

- We all have the right to feel safe and respected;
- We all have the right to learn;
- We are all responsible for our behaviour, and being the best we can be;
- It is the responsibility of every person to **not** take part in bullying in any way;
- It is the responsibility of all community members to let teachers, Leadership or the Principal know about bullying situations of which they are aware.

Bullying at school is everyone's problem, not a personal predicament:

- The student who is bullied and their family suffer emotional and physical distress;
- Students who are aware of bullying but do nothing about it often feel guilty and ashamed;
- Students who take part in bullying become desensitised to cruelty and injustice, fail to develop social responsibility and, in some cases, this behaviour can lead to anti-social behaviour later in life;
- No-one is safe whilst bullying is happening, because it creates a climate of intimidation and fear in which effective learning cannot take place.

SCOPE

This policy addresses how Orchard Grove Primary School aims to prevent, and respond to, bullying behaviour. Orchard Grove 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 Code of Conduct](#), [Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy](#), [Community Code of Conduct](#) and [Inclusion and Diversity Policy](#).

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions, and is to be read in conjunction with Orchard Grove Primary School's [Child Safe Standards](#).

POLICY

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:

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 Code of Conduct](#), [Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy](#), [Community Code of Conduct](#) and [Inclusion and Diversity 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.

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. Orchard Grove 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 Orchard Grove Primary School and may have serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour. Orchard Grove 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.

BULLYING PREVENTION

Orchard Grove 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.

Bullying prevention at Orchard Grove 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.

For further information about our engagement and wellbeing initiatives, please see our [Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy](#).

What to do?

Students:

- If you show your fear or anger you make the bully happy. Did you know that bullies are very fragile people inside? When you show that you are scared or angry by fighting back, calling them nasty names, doing nothing or looking upset, then you remind them of how they are feeling inside and they don't like that, so they will repeat their behaviour. Instead, get rid of your anger and fear by releasing it verbally, talking to someone about it or doing some physical activity to release your feelings and remain cool.
- When you fight back, you give your power to the bully. Do something different and don't lose your cool; make a joke, move away. If the bully can't fight you and make you look powerless, they will feel powerless and embarrassed instead.
- Report any physical bullying to the school or to the police.
- If you are being excluded then it's time to find better friends, tell your teacher and learn some good communication skills so that everyone will want you in their group.

What can you do about cyberbullying?

If you are being cyberbullied, you can:

- avoid retaliating or responding;
- collect the evidence—this needs to be age-appropriate. Students are encouraged to minimise the screen and tell the teacher or parent;
- block the bully and change your privacy settings;
- report the abuse to the social media service and ask others to as well;
- talk to someone you trust straight away, like a parent, teacher or friend.

Parents:

- Encourage your child to report any bullying to the school. If the situation does not improve, then make an appointment to see the school.
- In some more serious cases, parents may wish to seek counselling for their child. Make sure that the psychologist is used to working with children who have been bullied. Generally, treatment is brief, about 4-8 sessions with a skilled therapist. They should be treating your child for any psychological damage, teaching the child how to protect themselves from the bullying and teaching them social skills to develop true friends who can protect them in the future.
- Display appropriate assertive skills as an example to children.
- If bullying does occur, even though it is not your child's fault, they need to be supported to learn assertive skills. Coach them to improve their social survival skills.

Teachers:

- Manage classes in ways that enhance peer relations and demonstrate respect and valuing of all students within a supportive environment.
- Integrate supportive, inclusive problem-solving strategies into all curriculum activities.
- Incorporate teaching practices that support students in identifying, analysing and resolving

immediate and long-term challenges to their own and others' safety and rights.

- Deliver curriculum that encourages and supports responsible digital citizenship.
- Model behaviours of acceptance, fairness and problem solving. Also model appropriate uses of technology.

All staff:

- Take responsibility for establishing close relationships between school staff and the full diversity of carers and students.
- Build a community of learners responsible for student learning outcomes.
- Modify and monitor practices to achieve social justice.
- Encourage students to develop values and ethics in their relationships with others.
- Identify and recommended improvements to student/staff and student/student relations.
- Include young people in decision making about policies and programs designed to assist them.
- Regularly review class and playground cultures to improve peer relations and reduce bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence through early intervention responses involving teachers, administrators and/or specialist staff.
- Identify and address signs of discriminatory behaviour. Never turn a blind eye.
- Know how to respond effectively to bullying incidents.
- Work proactively in a team to assist students at risk.
- Maintain a duty of care in class, the playground and between classes.
- Maintain appropriate and supportive supervision of iPad use.
- Provide a roster of teachers on yard duty throughout recess, lunchtime and wet/sweat days.
- Provide a 'lunch club' for those students who prefer an inside environment during recess and lunchtimes.
- Run a Peer Mediators program whereby student leaders assist yard duty teachers with resolving minor issues in the playground. These students will undergo formal training for this role.
- Participate in a school-wide Buddy program.

INCIDENT RESPONSE

Reporting Concerns to Orchard Grove Primary 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.

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 Orchard Grove Primary School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

We encourage students to speak to their class teacher. However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff including the Principal, Assistant Principals or Year Level Coordinators.

Parents or carers who develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed, bullying behaviour at Orchard Grove Primary School should contact the class teacher first, then, if the issue is ongoing, Leanne King, Assistant Principal and Student Wellbeing Coordinator by phone on 9894 3400.

Parents or carers who develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Orchard Grove Primary School should contact **Leanne King, Assistant Principal and Student Wellbeing Coordinator by phone on 9894 3400.**

INVESTIGATIONS

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

1. Record the details of the allegations in the [eSmart Incident Register](#) (on OGPS' Google Drive) and
2. Inform (class teacher, relevant Year Level Coordinator, Assistant Principal, Principal).

The teacher involved is responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, the Principal or Assistant Principals 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 with the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, 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](#).

RESPONSES TO BULLYING BEHAVIOURS

When the Student Wellbeing Coordinator 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 classroom teacher, Year level Coordinator, Assistant Principal, Principal, Department of Education and Training specialist staff etc).

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, Orchard Grove Primary School will consider:

- the age and maturity of the students involved;
- the severity and frequency of 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 Student Wellbeing Coordinator may implement all, or some, of the following responses to bullying behaviours:

- Offer counselling support to the target student or students, including referral to the School Counsellor or an external provider;
- Offer counselling support to the students engaging in bullying behaviour, including referral to the School Counsellor or an external provider;
- Offer counselling support to affected students, including witnesses and/or friends of the target student, including referral to the School Counsellor or an 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 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);
- Facilitate a Student Support Group meeting and/or Behaviour Support Plan for affected students;
- Prepare a Safety Plan or Individual Behaviour 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, including a stronger classroom- and cohort-level focus during weekly student wellbeing activities;
- Monitor the behaviour of the students involved for an appropriate time and take follow up action if necessary;
- 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.

Orchard Grove 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 Student Wellbeing Coordinator, Principal and Assistant Principals 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 Department policies and guidelines:

DET Policy and Advisory Library:

[Bullying Prevention and Response](#)

The following school policies are also relevant to this Bullying Prevention Policy:

Statement of Values and School Philosophy

Student Wellbeing and Engagement

Complaints

Duty of Care

Inclusion and Diversity

[OGPS Parent Code of Conduct](#)

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](#)

Review Cycle And Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed every two years, 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;

- eSmart Incident Register;
- assessment of other school-based data, including the number of reported incidents of bullying in each year level and the effectiveness of the responses implemented;
- Attitudes to School Survey;
- [Parent Opinion Survey](#)
- Proposed amendments to this policy will be discussed with school council.

Ratified by School Council - 2021

Review - 2023