

## BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY

### RATIONALE

Ashby Primary School is committed to providing a whole school approach in providing a safe and respectful learning environment where bullying will not be tolerated by any member of our school community including students, parents and staff.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- explain the definition of bullying
- make clear that bullying will not be tolerated at Ashby Primary School
- 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).

When responding to bullying behaviour, Ashby Primary School aims to:

- be proportionate, consistent, timely and responsive
- find a constructive and positive solution for everyone
- stop the bullying from happening again
- restore the relationships between the everyone affected by the incident.

Ashby Primary School acknowledges that school staff owe a duty of care to students, parents and community members to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm, which can include harm that may be caused by bullying behaviour.

### Definitions

*Bullying* occurs when an individual, or a group of people, **deliberately and repeatedly** upset, harass, intimidate, threaten, belittle or hurt another individual, 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. continual hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.
2. *direct verbal bullying* – e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, discrimination, verbal abuse.
3. *indirect bullying* – e.g. spreading rumours, playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate, mimicking, encouraging others to socially exclude an individual and/or damaging their social reputation or social acceptance.

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

*Mutual conflict* involves an argument or disagreement between individuals 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.

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

*Single-episode acts* of harassment, nastiness or physical aggression, towards an individual or multiple individuals, are not the same as bullying. If someone is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion, they are not being bullied. However, single episodes of harassment, nastiness or physical aggression are not acceptable behaviours at our school and will be addressed in a timely and responsive manner.

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

## IMPLEMENTATION

At Ashby Primary School we implement the Bounce Back program, explicitly teaching students the skills required to support us in building a positive and inclusive school culture. We incorporate this with our TERRI values (Thinking, Enjoyment, Respect, Resilience and Inclusion). We strive to foster a school culture that prevents bullying behaviour by modelling and encouraging behaviour that demonstrates acceptance, kindness and respect.

In addition to, and through the implementation of our Bounce Back program:-

- We have a positive school environment that provides safety, security and support for students and empowers positive relationships and wellbeing.
- All classes collaboratively establish expectations to adhere to throughout each year, and regularly check in on these each term.
- 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.
- All Teachers and staff incorporate classroom management strategies that discourage bullying, and promote respectful and positive behaviour.
- Students are encouraged to look out for each other and to talk to staff, parents and/ or older peers about any concerns they have experienced or witnessed.

### 1. Reporting concerns

Concerns raised 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, or been informed about it, are encouraged to report their concerns to school staff as soon as possible.

In most circumstances, we encourage students to speak to classroom teachers. However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any member of staff.

Parents or carers who may develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Ashby Primary School should contact classroom teachers currently teaching their child.

Students and parents/caregivers are strongly encouraged to contact their classroom teacher as soon as possible regarding any incident. Ashby are to ensure that all incidents are recorded with specific details of each and every incident captured.

All members of the school community are to respect the privacy of those involved in any incident, including bullying, and to avoid mentions of such on social media.

## 2. Investigations

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

1. record the details of the allegations on the Chronicle component (staff) of Compass
2. inform relevant staff (if required).

Through consultation, classroom teachers will:-

- speak to those involved in the allegations, via a restorative conference process, including the victim/s, the alleged perpetrator/s and any witnesses to the incidents
- speak to the parents/caregivers of all students involved.

All communications with people in the course of investigating an allegation of such behaviour will be managed sensitively. This process is consistently implemented to ensure everyone is clear of expectations regarding exhibited behaviours, reporting processes, follow up and monitoring of each individual situation.

The objective of completing a thorough investigation into the circumstances of alleged behaviour is to determine the nature of the conduct and the people involved. A thorough understanding of the alleged bullying will inform staff about how to most effectively implement an appropriate response to that behaviour.

Investigations will be completed as quickly as possible to allow for the behaviours to be addressed in a timely manner.

Serious bullying, including serious cyberbullying, is a criminal offence and may be referred to Victoria Police. For more information, see: [Brodie's Law](#).

## 3. Responses to exhibited behaviours

When the classroom teacher has sufficient information to understand the circumstances of the alleged bullying and those involved, a number of strategies may be implemented to address the behaviour and support those affected in consultation with the Principal Class Team.

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 this exhibited behaviour, Ashby Primary School will consider:

- the age and maturity of those involved
- the severity and frequency of the bullying, and the impact it has had
- whether the perpetrator has displayed similar behaviour before
- whether the bullying took place in a group or one-to-one context
- whether the individual demonstrates insight or remorse for their behaviour
- the alleged motive of the behaviour, including any element of provocation.

At Ashby Primary School, we may implement all, or some of the following responses to bullying behaviours:

- Relevant teacher facilitate a restorative conference with all involved. The objective of restorative conference is to repair relationships that have been damaged and endeavour to develop a sense of remorse and restorative action on the part of the individual who has bullied someone and forgiveness by the person who has been bullied.
- Principal Class Team member (Meg Bone or Corrie Barclay) facilitate a mediation between those involved to help to encourage taking responsibility for their behaviour and explore underlying reasons for conflict or grievance.
- Principal Class Team member (Meg Bone or Corrie Barclay) implement disciplinary consequences for the perpetrator, which may include removal of privileges, suspension and/or expulsion consistent with our

Engagement and Wellbeing policy, the Ministerial Order on Suspensions and Expulsions and any other relevant Department policy.

- Principal Class Team member (Meg Bone or Corrie Barclay) facilitate a Student Support Group meeting and/or Behaviour Support Plan for those affected.
- Principal Class Team member (Meg Bone or Corrie Barclay) prepare a Student Safety Plan restricting contact between victim and perpetrator/s.
- Provide discussion and/or mentoring for different social and emotional learning competencies of those involved.
- Monitor the behaviour of those involved for an appropriate time and take follow up action if necessary.
- Implement year group targeted strategies to reinforce positive behaviours.
- Offer support to the victim/s including referral to relevant services including counselling.
- Offer counselling support to the perpetrator/s including referral to relevant services including counselling.
- Offer counselling support to those affected, including witnesses and/or friends of the victim and perpetrator, including referral to relevant services.

Ashby Primary School understands the importance of monitoring the progress of those who have been involved in or affected by particular behaviour. Our ability to effectively reduce and eliminate these exhibited behaviours is greatly affected by those reporting concerning behaviour as soon as possible, so that the responses implemented by Ashby Primary School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

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

For incidents that occur out of school hours between current Ashby Primary School students, Ashby will take appropriate measure to support all students and families involved.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our school's Wellbeing and Engagement Policy, *Inclusion and Diversity Policy*, *Duty of Care Policy* and *Statement of Values and School Philosophy*.

*Engagement and Wellbeing Policy* \*\*

*Cyber Safety Policy* \*\*

#### **EVALUATION**

This will be reviewed on a two-year 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:

- discussion with students
- regular student surveys through Attitudes to School Survey and Ashby Google Forms
- Staff Opinion Survey
- assessment of school based data, including the number of reported incidents of bullying in each year group and the effectiveness of the responses implemented recorded on Chronicle component (Staff) on COMPASS.

#### **REVIEW CYCLE**

This policy was last updated on 14<sup>th</sup> November, 2018 and is scheduled for review in November 2020.