Ashby Primary School Est. 1875
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BULLYING PREVENTION

PURPOSE

Ashby 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 a shared understanding amongst all members of the Ashby Primary School Community
- make clear that no form of bullying will not be tolerated at Ashby Primary School
- outline the strategies and programs in place at Ashby 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 understands the importance of 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 Ashby Primary School

When responding to bullying behaviour, Ashby Primary 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 everyone affected by the incident.

Ashby 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 Ashby Primary School aims to prevent, address and respond to student bullying behaviour. Ashby 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 APS Code of Conduct, APS Wellbeing and Engagement Policy and APS Inclusion and Diversity policy.

This policy applies to all school activities, 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.

POLICY

Definitions
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.

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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.

There are four main types of bullying behaviour:

- *Physical* – examples include hitting, pushing, shoving or intimidating or otherwise physically hurting another person, damaging or stealing their belongings. It includes threats of violence.
- *Verbal/written* – examples include name-calling or insulting someone about an attribute, quality or personal characteristic.
- *Social* (sometimes called relational or emotional bullying) – examples include deliberately excluding someone, spreading rumours, sharing information that will have a harmful effect on the other person and/or damaging a person's social reputation or social acceptance.
- *Cyberbullying* – any form of bullying behaviour that occurs online or via a mobile device. It can be verbal or written, and can include threats of violence as well as images, videos and/or audio.

Bullying can be a form of racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia or other type of social prejudice when the behaviour is targeted at an individual or group because of a personal characteristic, such as race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability.

For further information about bullying, refer to: Bully Stoppers (education.vic.gov.au) and the Department's Bullying Prevention and Response policy on the Policy and Advisory Library.

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 our APS Engagement and Wellbeing Policy and/or this Bullying Prevention Policy where the behaviour constitutes bullying.

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. Ashby Primary School will use its APS Engagement and Wellbeing 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.

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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 APS Inclusion and Diversity Policy.

IMPLEMENTATION
Ashby 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 Ashby 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.
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.
- 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 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.

Reporting concerns
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.
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 Ashby Primary School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.
We encourage students to speak to their Classroom Teachers. However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff including Teachers, Education Support Staff etc.
Parents or carers who develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour atAshby Primary School should contact their child's Classroom Teacher or a member of the Leadership Team.

Investigations
When notified of alleged exhibited behaviour, school staff are required to:
1. record the details of the allegations on Compass
2. inform the other relevant classroom teacher (if required)

The Classroom Teacher is responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, the Classroom Teacher may:

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- speak to those involved in the allegations, including the victim/s, the alleged perpetrator/s and any witnesses to the incidents
- speak to the parents of all 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 people in the course of investigating an allegation of such behaviour 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 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.

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 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/s 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 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:
- Facilitate a restorative practice meeting with all involved. The objective of restorative practice is to repair relationships that have been damaged and we endeavour to develop 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 those involved to help to encourage taking responsibility for their behaviour and explore underlying reasons for conflict or grievance.
- Implement disciplinary consequences for the perpetrator, which may include removal of privileges, 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.
- Facilitate a Student Support Group meeting and/or Behaviour Support Plan for those affected.
- Prepare a Safety Plan restricting contact between victim and perpetrator/s.
- Provide discussion and/or mentoring for different social and emotional learning competencies of those involved.

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- 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 relevant services including counselling.
- Offer counselling support to those affected, including witnesses and/or friends of the victim student, including referral relevant services including counselling.

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.
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.*
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
Kids Helpline
ReachOut Australia
Lifeline
Bullying. No way!
Student Wellbeing Hub
eSafety Commissioner
Australian Student Wellbeing Framework

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years, or earlier as required following an incident or analysis of new research or school data relating to bullying, to ensure that the policy remains up to date, practical and effective.

Data will be collected through:
- discussion with students
- regular student surveys
- 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

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POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	15/06/2022
Consultation	School Council
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	15/06/2024