



BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the school.

PURPOSE

At Keelonith Primary School we are committed to providing a safe and respectful learning environment where bullying is not tolerated. School staff owe a duty of care to students to take all reasonable steps to reduce inappropriate behaviour and the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm, which can include harm that may be caused by bullying behaviour.

This policy is in place to:

- clarify the definition of bullying so there is a shared understanding amongst all members of the Keelonith Primary School community
- make it clear that all forms of bullying will not be tolerated
- convey the expectation 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
- outline the strategies and program in place at Keelonith Primary School to build a positive school culture and prevent bullying behaviour
- provide a guide for the investigation and management of bullying incidents so that 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 Keelonith Primary School.

When responding to bullying behaviour, we aim to:

- be responsive, proportionate and consistent
- find a constructive and positive solution for everyone
- stop the bullying from happening again
- provide support for all those involved
- restore the relationship between the student's involved.

SCOPE

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

We recognise 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* and *Inclusion and Diversity policy*.

COMMUNICATION

Students will be informed of relevant aspects of this policy at the commencement of each school year, and content will be part of the regular school curriculum.

Parents will be provided with a copy of this policy on enrolment and the policy will be available on the school website. Newsletter items throughout the year will refer to aspects of the policy as deemed necessary.

Staff will be referred to this policy during induction and at the start of each school year. A copy of this policy will be available on the COMPASS Student Management System for staff access.

CRTs, volunteers, and contractors will be provided with a copy of this policy on induction.

Following review and any changes to this policy, all those with a vested interest will be informed through appropriate avenues such as the newsletter, COMPASS Student Management System, staff forums and class activities.

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 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 \(education.vic.gov.au\)](http://BullyStoppers.education.vic.gov.au) and the Department's [Bullying Prevention and Response](#) policy on the Policy and Advisory Library.

Bullying occurs when someone, or a group of people deliberately and repeatedly upset, harass, intimidate 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 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.
- Cyber – 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 use images, videos 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 who will follow our Child Safety, Student Engagement and Wellbeing 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. Keelonith Primary School staff will use the Child Safety and Student 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.

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 Inclusion and Diversity Policy.

POLICY

1. PREVENTION

At Keelonith Primary School we have a number of programs and strategies in place to build a positive and inclusive school culture. Our focus is on the development of strong relationships and the wellbeing of all our students. We strive to foster a school culture that prevents bullying behaviour by modelling, encouraging and teaching behaviour that demonstrates acceptance, kindness and respect. At Keelonith we CHEER for each other through our school values of COMPASSION, HONESTY, EQUITY, ENCOURAGEMENT AND RESPECT.

Bullying prevention at Keelonith Primary School is proactive and is supported by research that indicates a whole school, multifaceted approach is the most effective way to prevent and address bullying.

a) We identify and implement evidence-based programs and initiatives from the [Schools Mental Health Menu](#) that are relevant to preventing and addressing bullying and help us to build a positive and inclusive school climate. Our social and emotional learning curriculum teaches students what constitutes bullying and how to respond to bullying behaviour assertively. This promotes resilience, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.

Socially acceptable behaviours, skills and attitudes are taught formally and informally at all year levels with formal teaching based on the Respectful Relationships materials provided by the Department of Education and Training. This includes regular reference to what is and what is not appropriate behaviour, what is considered bullying and the actions to take if bullied or witness to bullying.

In addition, we participate in the:

- Respectful Relationships initiative, which aims to embed a culture of respect and equality across our school.
- National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence.

We use School Wide Positive Behaviour Matrixes developed in collaboration with students, staff and families to guide student behaviour and remind students of our expectations.

b) We strive to build strong partnerships between the school, families and the broader community that promote all members working together to ensure the safety of students. We celebrate the diverse backgrounds of members of our school community and teach multicultural education, including Aboriginal History, to promote mutual respect and social cohesion.

c) We use classroom management strategies that discourage bullying and promote positive behaviour.

- d) We provide a range of year level incursions and programs for each year to raise awareness about bullying and its impacts.
- e) We promote upstander behaviour as a way of empowering our students to positively and safely take appropriate action when they see or hear of a peer being bullied.
- f) We administer a school-based survey to students in years 3 to 6 in terms 1, 3 and 4 (with term 2 omitted due to the administration of the Attitudes to School Survey). Data from this survey is analysed on a school-wide, cohort and class level and appropriate follow up actions taken with individual students, groups (friendship, class, cohort) and teachers to address issues.
- g) We monitor student behaviour and take all reasonably practical steps to prevent bullying.

For further information about our engagement and wellbeing initiatives, please see our Student Wellbeing and Engagement policy.

2. REPORTING BULLYING

- a) Students are encouraged to report any incidents of concerning behaviour (directed at them or witnessed occurring to others) to a staff member as soon as possible. Immediate, considered and proactive action to address the bullying is important and can prevent situations from escalating. Students are informed that if they don't feel they can talk to an adult at school about an issue, they should talk to a trusted adult at home and have this adult contact the school.
- b) Parents/carers with concerns should, in most cases, contact their child's classroom teacher. However, depending on the concern and circumstances they may contact the Principal or Assistant Principal directly and/or approach a trusted adult in the school.
- c) All reports regarding bullying will be taken seriously and responded to in a timely manner.

3. INVESTIGATIONS

- a) When notified of alleged bullying behaviour, school staff are required to:
- take immediate action to ensure the safety of students
 - listen to the person reporting the incident and ask clarifying questions to gain a thorough understanding
 - further clarify the incident by talking to all those involved, including witnesses
 - obtain written accounts of events from those involved and/or witnesses if developmentally appropriate
 - record details of the incident on COMPASS (including an alert to the principal and assistant principal)
 - speak to the teachers of those involved
 - contact the parents/carers of students involved and affected
 - refer more serious matters to the principal or assistant principal who may report to the Incident Support and Operations Centre).
 - complete investigations as soon as possible.
- b) All documentation and communication around allegations of bullying will be managed sensitively.
- c) Serious bullying, including serious cyberbullying, is a criminal offence and may be referred to Victoria Police. For more information, see: [Brodie's Law](#).

4. RESPONSES TO BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

When a teacher has sufficient information to understand the circumstances of the alleged bullying and the students involved, strategies will be implemented to address the behaviour and support affected students in consultation with mentor teachers, principal, assistant principal, School Support Services, or Department of Education and Training specialist staff.

When considering actions to address incidents the following factors will be taken into consideration:

- the age, maturity and individual needs of the students involved
- the severity and frequency of the bullying, and the impact on the victim
- whether previous bullying behaviour has been reported
- 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.

Actions may include:

For the victim/s (including witnesses/friends)	For the perpetrator/s
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ counselling (referral to Student Support Services or external provider) ▪ development of a safety plan ▪ identification of support people ▪ monitoring of wellbeing ▪ inclusion in wellbeing programs ▪ year group targeted social learning programs ▪ supported involvement in restorative discussions/mediation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ counselling (referral to Student Support Services or external provider) ▪ disciplinary consequences (removal of privileges, suspension and /or expulsion) ▪ support to repair damage caused ▪ monitoring of behaviour ▪ development of support plan ▪ inclusion in wellbeing programs ▪ year group targeted social learning programs ▪ supported involvement in restorative discussions/mediation <p>Serious bullying, including cyberbullying, is a criminal offence and may be referred to Victoria Police.</p>

3. STAFF ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THIS POLICY

Staff will act to support this policy by:

- completing appropriate contemporary professional learning
- being familiar with the school Bullying Prevention, Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Inclusion and Diversity Policies so they are familiar with what is expected of them
- providing a comprehensive personal and social capacity curriculum based on Respectful Relationships resources that is age-appropriate
- being explicit in informing students of behaviours that constitute bullying and the actions to take if they feel they have been bullied, witnessed bullying or are informed of bullying
- promoting the importance of ‘speaking up’ and explaining that those who ‘speak up’ will be protected
- being alert to behaviours that may indicate bullying in the classroom, the playground and on excursions and camps
- being proactive in their support of students with special needs through the monitoring of behaviour and responses, assisting communication and facilitating understanding
- ensuring due diligence in the investigation of bullying, documentation of events and clear reporting of incidents to parents/carers
- providing parents with information on bullying, including this policy and support that can be provided at home to promote positive social behaviour
- contacting parents/carers if their child is bullied, is distressed from witnessing bullying or perpetrates bullying
- encouraging students to provide feedback regarding their feelings of safety through avenues such as the Attitudes to School Survey
- recording incidents of bullying on COMPASS
- informing the principal/assistant principal of all incidents of bullying
- referring students to support services for additional assistance as needed.

Depending on the nature of the incident contact may also be made with the DET Incident Support and Operations Centre (ISOC) and Victoria Police. For more information, see: [Brodie’s Law](#).

4. PARENT/CARER ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THIS POLICY

Parents and Carers are expected to support this policy by:

- providing opportunities for their child/ren to develop socially acceptable behaviours
- reinforcing the message of what bullying is, the effects of bullying on victims, and the responsibilities of those who have been bullied and witnesses to report incidents
- contacting the school as soon as possible when they are aware of any incidents of bullying.

FURTHER INFORMATION

School Policies

- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy

- Parent Complaints Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy

Department Documents

- [Bullying Prevention and Response](#)
- [Cybersafety and Responsible Use of Digital Technologies](#)
- [Equal Opportunity and Human Rights – Students](#)
- [LGBTIQ Student Support Policy](#)

RESOURCES

- [Bully Stoppers](#)
- [Report Racism or Religious Discrimination in Schools](#)
- [Kids Helpline](#)
- [ReachOut Australia](#)
- [Lifeline](#)
- [Bullying- No Way](#)
- [HeadSpace](#)
- [Student Wellbeing Hub](#)
- [Office of the eSafety Commissioner Australian Student Wellbeing Framework](#)
- [Australian Student Wellbeing Framework](#)

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

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

- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Parent Complaints policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy

REVIEW

Department guidelines mandate that this policy is updated every two years.

Policy last reviewed	June 2022
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	May 2024

This policy will also be updated in extenuating circumstances.

Data will be collected through:

- discussion and consultation with students and families
- Sentral Student Management System incident reports
- Attitudes to School Survey
- Parent Opinion Survey
- Staff Survey
- school based survey for students in years 3 to 6, conducted in terms 1, 3 and 4) which will be analysed on a whole school, cohort and class basis and followed up with students and teachers.