BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY

PURPOSE

Keelonith Primary is committed to providing a safe and respectful learning environment where bullying will not be 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
- illustrate that all forms of bullying at Keelonith Primary 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 to build a positive school culture and prevent bullying behaviour
- provide a guide for the investigation and management of bullying incidents
- ensure that support is provided to students who may be affected by bullying behaviour (including victims, bystanders and perpetrators).

When responding to bullying behaviour, we aim to;
- be responsive, fair and consistent
- act in a timely manner
- find a constructive and positive solution for everyone
- stop the bullying from happening again
- provide support for all those involved.

SCOPE

This policy addresses how Keelonith Primary aims to prevent, address and respond to student bullying behaviour. This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

Keelonith Primary 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* and *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* and *Inclusion and Diversity policy*.

COMMUNICATION

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

Direct physical bullying - assault (hitting, tripping, pushing), intimidating or aggressive body language, damage to property.

Direct verbal bullying – offensive language, name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks.

Indirect bullying – encouraging others to socially exclude a person and/or damaging a person's social reputation or social acceptance in any way including spreading rumours.

Cyberbullying is direct or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technology, for example via a mobile phone, tablet, computer, chat room, email, social media. It can be verbal, written or include images, video and/or audio.

Other distressing and inappropriate behaviours

Mutual conflict involves an argument of 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 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. Keelonith 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 can also constitute bullying if it amounts to a pattern of behaviour or course of conduct towards another person that is demeaning, offensive or intimidating.

Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated at Keelonith Primary and may have serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour. Keelonith Primary 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.

POLICY

1. PREVENTION
Bullying prevention at Keelonith Primary 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. At our school:

a) We have a positive school environment that provides safety, security and support for students and promotes positive relationships and wellbeing.

b) Use School Wide Positive Behaviour Matrixes developed in collaboration with students, staff and families.

c) 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.

d) A range of year level incursions and programs are planned for each year to raise awareness about bullying and its impacts. These will include:
- explicit teaching of what bullying is and how to respond to bullying
- visiting speakers
- performances to deliver strong messages around bullying
- Respectful Relationships curriculum
- Bully Stoppers.

e) A school-based bullying survey will be administered 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 will be 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.

f) Leaders and staff will monitor student behaviour and will take all reasonably practical steps to prevent bullying.

g) Our Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Inclusion Policy provides more information in relation to school expectations and the development of a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment.

H,) 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.

2. RESPONDING TO BULLYING
a) Reporting bullying as soon as possible is important as immediate action to address the behaviour is vital. 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.

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.

c) Reports regarding bullying will be taken seriously and responded to in a timely manner.

d) Investigating Incidents
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
- record details of the incident on Compass (including an alert to Principal and Assistant Principal)
- contact the parents/carers of students affected
- refer more serious matters to the Principal or Assistant Principal who may report to the Incident Support and Operations Centre)

e) Actions to Address Incidents

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

- the age, maturity and special 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
■ 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	■ 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 ■ inclusion in wellbeing programs ■ year group targeted social learning programs ■ supported involvement in restorative discussions/mediation

f) Serious bullying, including cyberbullying, is a criminal offence and may be referred to Victoria Police.

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 Policy and the Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Inclusion Policy so they are familiar with what is expected of them
- providing a comprehensive personal and social capacity curriculum based on Respectful Relationships resources
- being explicit in informing students of behaviours that constitute bullying and the actions to take if they feel they have been bullied, witness bullying or are informed of bullying
- promoting the importance of 'speaking' up and explaining that those who 'speak up' will be protected
- providing age appropriate information and skills training to students each year
- 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, Wellbeing and Inclusion Policy
- Parent Complaints Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy

RESOURCES
- Bully Stoppers
- Kids Helpline
- Lifeline
- Bullying- No Way
- HeadSpace
- Student Wellbeing Hub
- Office of the eSafety Commissioner 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

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed on an 2-3 yr basis, 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 families
- Compass Student Management System incident reports
- Attitudes to School Survey
- Parent Opinion Survey
- Staff surveys
- school based bullying 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.

Proposed amendments to this policy will be discussed with staff, Junior School Council (as appropriate) and School Council.

REVIEW CYCLE

Department guidelines recommend this policy is reviewed every two to three years.

APPROVAL

Statement last reviewed	28th Oct 2025
Consultation	Consultation with School Council
Endorsed by	Principal
Endorsed on	28th Oct 2025
Next review date	Before Oct 2027

This policy was last updated in March 2025 and is scheduled for review in March 2028.