

# ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

## Rationale

Every member of the Malvern Central School (the School) community has the right to feel safe from bullying at school and in digital learning environments. The School promotes positive behaviour that encourages respect, empathy and cooperation. The School strongly discourages anti-social and disrespectful behavior.

## Aims

1. To provide a clear well-defined definition of bullying, allowing all members of the school community to have a shared understanding of unacceptable conduct.
2. To support the School community in building and maintaining a safe and respectful school environment and minimising all types of bullying through a clear understanding of the School Values.
3. To provide a clear understanding of how the School manages incidents of bullying.

## Definition

Bullying is when a person or persons deliberately upsets or hurts another person or damages their social acceptance, reputation or property in an ongoing or repeated manner.

There are four identified types of bullying:

1. **Direct physical bullying:** includes hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching, pushing, damaging property, or threatening or obscene gestures or looks.
2. **Direct verbal bullying:** includes name-calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse, demanding money, food or possessions or withdrawing or threatening to withdraw friendship.
3. **Indirect bullying:** is often harder to recognize and can be carried out behind the bullied person's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Indirect bullying includes:
  - lying and spreading rumours
  - playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
  - mimicking
  - encouraging others to socially exclude someone
  - damaging someone's social reputation or social acceptance.
4. **Cyberbullying:** is direct verbal or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technologies. This includes:
  - abusive texts and emails
  - hurtful messages, images or videos
  - imitating others online
  - excluding others online
  - humiliating others online

- nasty online gossip and chat.

There is some behaviours which, although unpleasant or distressing, **is not** bullying:

- **mutual conflict** - which involves a disagreement, but not an imbalance of power. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.
- **single-episode acts** of nastiness or physical aggression, or aggression directed towards many different people, is not bullying
- **social rejection or dislike** is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

## Implementation

1. Responding to bullying can be challenging – for students, teachers, school leaders and also for parents/carers. When a member of the school's community becomes aware of a specific type of bullying behaviour, they are obliged to bring it to the attention of the school so an investigation can be made and appropriate action to resolve the situation can occur. The best outcomes are likely to occur when all parties work together to identify, address and manage the situation.
2. The role of **students** is to:
  - 2.1 Understand the definition and examples of bullying and that bullying, including cyber-bullying, is unacceptable and when necessary, sanctions will be put in place.
  - 2.2 Report potential bullying and other inappropriate behaviours to a teacher. Speaking up is not "dobbing". Not speaking up promotes bullying behaviour and undermines the School Values.
  - 2.3 Not do things which enable exclusion.
  - 2.4 Refuse to be part of a bullying situation.
  - 2.5 Promote and support safe and respectful learning environments where bullying is not tolerated
  - 2.6 Respect the rights of others and demonstrate behaviours and attitudes that promote and support the wellbeing of all members of the school community
3. The role of the **teachers** and **school leadership** is to:
  - 3.1 Actively monitor student activities which might enable exclusion.
  - 3.2 Respond to behaviours that may constitute bullying; this may include involving relevant staff, contacting parents/carers, involving other students
  - 3.3 Work in partnership with parents/carers to effectively manage incidents of bullying
  - 3.4 Promote and support safe and respectful learning environments where bullying is not tolerated
  - 3.5 Explicitly teach strategies through curriculum content such as Personal and Social Capabilities, Positive Education and Respectful Relationships which build resilience and promote positive relationships.
  - 3.6 Respect the rights of others and model behaviours, language and attitudes that promote and support the wellbeing of all members of the school community.

- 3.7 Establish and build a collegiate atmosphere with all staff and share strategies to support each other as well as reflect on one's own behaviour, interactions and approaches in this process.
- 3.8 Document all incidents on Compass Chronical
- 3.9 Establish a culture of inclusion and respect that welcomes all students.
- 3.10 Reward students when they show thoughtfulness and respect for each other, adults and the school.

4. The role of **parents/carers** is to:

- 4.1 Model behaviours, language and attitudes that promote respectful behaviour and discourage their child from bullying behaviour
- 4.2 Report any concerns of bullying behaviours against themselves or their child to a homeroom teacher or School Leadership
- 4.3 Engage in timely and constructive communication with the school regarding their child's behaviour and/or behaviours toward other students
- 4.4 Work co-operatively and actively with the school in responses designed to address incidents of bullying to promote behaviours that are more positive.
- 4.5 Communicate constructively and respectfully with the school and use expected processes and protocols when raising concerns
- 4.6 Understand the definition and examples of bullying and that bullying, including cyber-bullying, is unacceptable and when necessary, sanctions will be put in place.

## Management

Bullying occurs to some extent in all schools. The effects of bullying on both the student being bullied and the student engaging in the bullying behaviour, show a need for intervention in social skills development in young children and the need for the creation of safe environments. At Malvern Central School we have a strong commitment to prevent and minimise bullying in the school.

**Restorative Practice** is a non-punitive strategy used with groups of students who have engaged in bullying someone. Once identified by the target, the 'bullies' meet with the practitioner and other students who have been selected because they are expected to be supportive of the victim (who is not present). Knowledge of the distress experienced by the victim is shared with the group and each member is required to accept responsibility and say how he or she will help that person. The outcome is monitored.

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/methodrestorative.aspx>

We are also committed to the use of a staged approach for behaviour management and consequences for inappropriate or unacceptable behaviours. Depending on the severity of the behaviour, the process may commence at any of the following six stages. In some cases, the process may be sequential.

Incident of bullying behaviours brought to the attention of homeroom teacher or School Leadership.



Restorative Chat with students involved and Student Wellbeing Team member to ensure all parties have been spoken with and it is agreed that the situation has been resolved satisfactorily and all parties feel reassured and safe. Parents are informed, students are monitored and incident recorded on Compass Chronical.



Meeting with Principal/Assistant Principal, parents and DET Student Support Officer to arrange appropriate support depending on severity of incident.  
*e.g. Mediation*  
*Counselling*  
*Positive Behaviour Plan*  
*Suspension*

Behaviour will be recorded on Compass Chronical and management will include a Positive Behaviour Plan and ongoing monitoring of agreed processes.



Extreme bullying behaviours will result in immediate suspension, and possible involvement of relevant external authorities.

If after repeated suspensions within Department of Education and Training guidelines, behavioural problems of a serious nature continue, the Principal and Assistant Principal will meet with student and parents leading to alternative schooling arrangements.

**The Education Training and Reform Act (2006) prohibits the use of corporal punishment in any Victorian Government school.**

## Resources

- DET Website - Bully Stoppers

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/default.aspx>

- DET Website – Respectful Relationships

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/Pages/respectfulrelabout.aspx>

- School Policy and Advisory Guide

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/bullying.aspx>

## Other School Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies found on our website, such as:

- **Acceptable Use of Digital Technology Policy**
- **Student Engagement Policy**
- **Duty of Care Policy**

## Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

Next Review Date: 2020

This policy was last ratified by School Council in: **November 2017**