Bullying Prevention Policy

PURPOSE

Ormond 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 shared understanding amongst all members of the Ormond Primary School community
- make clear that no form of bullying at Ormond Primary School will be tolerated
- outline the strategies and programs in place at Ormond 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 accept responsibility to report 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 targets, bystanders and students engaging in bullying behaviour)
- seek parental and peer group support in addressing and preventing bullying behaviour at Ormond Primary School.

When responding to bullying behaviour, Ormond Primary School aims to:
- be proportionate, consistent and responsive
- find a constructive solution for everyone
- stop the bullying from happening again
- restore the relationships between the students involved.

Ormond 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 Ormond Primary School aims to prevent, address and respond to student bullying behaviour. Ormond 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 *Student Code of Conduct*, the *Student Wellbeing and Engagement* Policy, the *Inclusion and Diversity* policy and the *Digital Learning 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

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.

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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.

Bullying can be:

- **Direct physical bullying** includes – hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching and pushing or damaging property.
- **Direct verbal/written bullying** includes – name calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, homophobic or racist remarks, or verbal abuse.
- **Indirect (Social) bullying** includes – lying and spreading rumours, planning nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate, mimicking, encouraging others to socially exclude someone, damaging someone's social reputation or social acceptance.

Cyber-bullying is direct or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technology. For example, via a mobile device, computers, chat rooms, email, social media, etc. It can be verbal, written and include images, video 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)](https://education.vic.gov.au) and the Department's [Bullying Prevention and Response](https://education.vic.gov.au) 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 the *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy*, *Code of Conduct* 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. Ormond Primary School will use its *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* to guide a response to single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression.

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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 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.

BULLYING PREVENTION

Ormond 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 Ormond Primary School is proactive and is supported by research that indicates that a whole school, multifaceted approach is the most effect way to prevent and address bullying.

At our school:
● We identify and implement evidence based programs and initiatives from DET's School's Mental Health Menu that are relevant to preventing and addressing bullying and help us to build a positive and inclusive school climate.
● 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.
● We participate in the Respectful Relationships initiative which aims to embed a culture of respect and equity across our school.
● 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.
● We participate in the Safe School's program to help us foster a safe environment that is supportive and inclusive of LGBTIQ+ students.
● Teachers are encouraged to incorporate classroom management strategies that discourage bullying and promote positive behaviour.
● A range of year level incursions and programs are planned for each year to raise awareness about bullying and its impacts.
● In the classroom, 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.
● We promote upstander behaviour as a way of empowering our students to positively and safely take appropriate action when they see or hear a peer being bullied.
● The Student Leadership program, Buddy program and the Peer Mediation program encourage positive relationships between students in different year levels. We seek to empower students to be confident communicators and to resolve conflict in a non-aggressive and constructive way.
● Students are encouraged to look out for each other and to talk to school staff about any bullying they have experienced or witnessed.
● Each class will engage in 90 minutes of explicit teaching each week on various aspects of wellbeing as well as daily practice of wellbeing exercises.

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- Each student is required to sign the Digital Technologies Acceptable Use Agreement, which promotes safe and responsible online behaviours before they are able to use technology at school.
- All students in Years 4 - 6 will participate in the DET's Student Attitudes to School Survey. Data from this survey will be analysed to identify priorities for school leadership.
- Staff are required to document any incidences of bullying into the COMPASS database. Details of the incident and affected/involved students must also be noted.
- Staff on Yard Duty are required to document any incidences deemed 'serious' or determined to be of a bullying nature into the COMPASS database. Such incidences are also to be communicated in person to the classroom teachers of any students involved in incidences that are uploaded to COMPASS.

INCIDENT RESPONSE

Reporting concerns to Ormond Primary School

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 Ormond Primary School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

We encourage students to speak to their classroom teacher. However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff including other teachers, education support staff, the Principal or Assistant Principal.

Parents or carers who develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Ormond Primary School should contact their child's classroom teacher in the first instance and if their concern is not resolved they should raise their concerns with the Principal or Assistant Principal.

Investigations

When notified of alleged bullying behaviour, school staff are required to begin the investigation in a timely and sensitive manner.

To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying to enable an informed response, the staff member whom it has been reported to may:

- Speak to those involved in the allegations, including the target/s, the students allegedly engaging in bullying behaviour/s and any witnesses to the incidents

- Speak to the parents of the students involved

- Inform the teachers of the students involved and the Principal and Assistant Principal

- Take detailed notes of all discussions for future reference

- Obtain written statements from all or any of the above

- Record incidents on COMPASS

The objective of completing a thorough investigation into the circumstances of alleged bullying behaviour is to determine the nature of the conduct and the students involved. A

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thorough understanding of the alleged bullying will inform staff about how to most effectively implement an appropriate response to that behaviour.

Responses to bullying behaviours

When the staff member investigating the incident has sufficient information to understand the circumstances of the alleged bullying and the students involved, a number of strategies may be implemented to address the behaviour and support affected students in consultation at times in consultation with the Assistant Principal, Principal or Department of Education and Training specialist staff.

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 bullying behaviour, Ormond Primary School will consider:

● the age, maturity and individual circumstances of the students involved
● the severity and frequency of the bullying, and the impact it has had on the target student
● whether the student/s engaging in bullying behaviour have displayed similar behaviour before
● whether the bullying took place in a group or one-to-one context
● whether the students engaging in bullying behaviour demonstrates insight or remorse for their behaviour
● the alleged motive of the behaviour.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

Related Policies

Duty of Care

Inclusion and Diversity

Complaints

Statement of Values and School Philosophy

Student Wellbeing and Engagement

Resources

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](#)

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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
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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 to inform this review will be collected through:
- discussion and consultation with students and parent/carers
- regular student bullying surveys
- regular staff surveys
- assessment of other school-based data, including the number of reported incidents of bullying in each year group and the effectiveness of the responses implemented
- Attitudes to School Survey
- Parent Opinion Survey

Proposed amendments to this policy will be discussed with consultation amongst student representative groups, parents groups and School Council.

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	August 2020
Consultation	OPS Wellbeing PLAT Education Subcommittee School Council
Approved by	Principal School Council September 2022
Next scheduled review date	2024

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APPENDIX 1   **Restorative Practices Process**

SCRIPT

When Challenging behaviour	To help those affected
1. What happened? *Tell the story* ● What were you thinking of at the time? ● What have you thought about since? ● What did you have control over? 2. Who do you think has been affected? ● Who else has been affected? ● In what ways? ● Was this fair or unfair? ● Was this the right or wrong thing to do? 3. What do you think you need to do to make things right? ● What else might need to happen? ● How will this help? ● When can this happen? ● What exactly are you saying sorry for? 4. How can we make sure this doesn't happen again? ● What do you need to stop / stay / start doing? ● What are your goals to help move forward? ● What are you going to do to reach the goals? ● What other support do you need?	1. What did you think when you realized what had happened? 2. What impact has this incident had on you and others? How did that make you feel? 3. What has been the hardest thing for you? 4. What do you think needs to happen to make things right? What would you like 'x' to do to fix this problem?

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