



## BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY

### Purpose

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Manchester 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 Manchester Primary School community
- make clear that no form of bullying at Manchester Primary School will be tolerated
- outline the strategies and programs in place at Manchester 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 Manchester Primary School.

When responding to bullying behaviour, Manchester 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.

Manchester Primary School acknowledges that school staff owes 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

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This policy addresses how Manchester Primary School aims to prevent, address and respond to student bullying behaviour. Manchester 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 Wellbeing and Engagement Policy, Inclusion and Diversity Policy.

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



## 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.*

*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:

1. **direct physical bullying** – e.g. hitting, tripping and pushing or damaging property.
2. **direct verbal bullying** – e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.
3. **indirect bullying** – e.g. spreading rumours, playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate, mimicking, encouraging others to socially exclude a person and/or damaging a person's social reputation or social acceptance.

*Cyberbullying* 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.



## ***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.

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

## ***Bullying Prevention***

Manchester Primary School has a number of programs and strategies in place to build a positive and inclusive school culture. By embracing our school motto of ***Inspire, Engage, Achieve***, we aim to create positive relationships at home and within our school. We strive to foster a school culture that prevents bullying behaviour by modelling and encouraging behaviour that demonstrates acceptance, kindness and respect. The following two school values in particular reflect that.

***Respect Yourself*** - having regard for self in terms of physical, social and emotional health

***Respect Others*** – Mutual Respect and acceptance of others, their property and their differences. ***Demonstrating Attentive Listening*** and empathy for each person's Right to Participate or their Right to Pass.

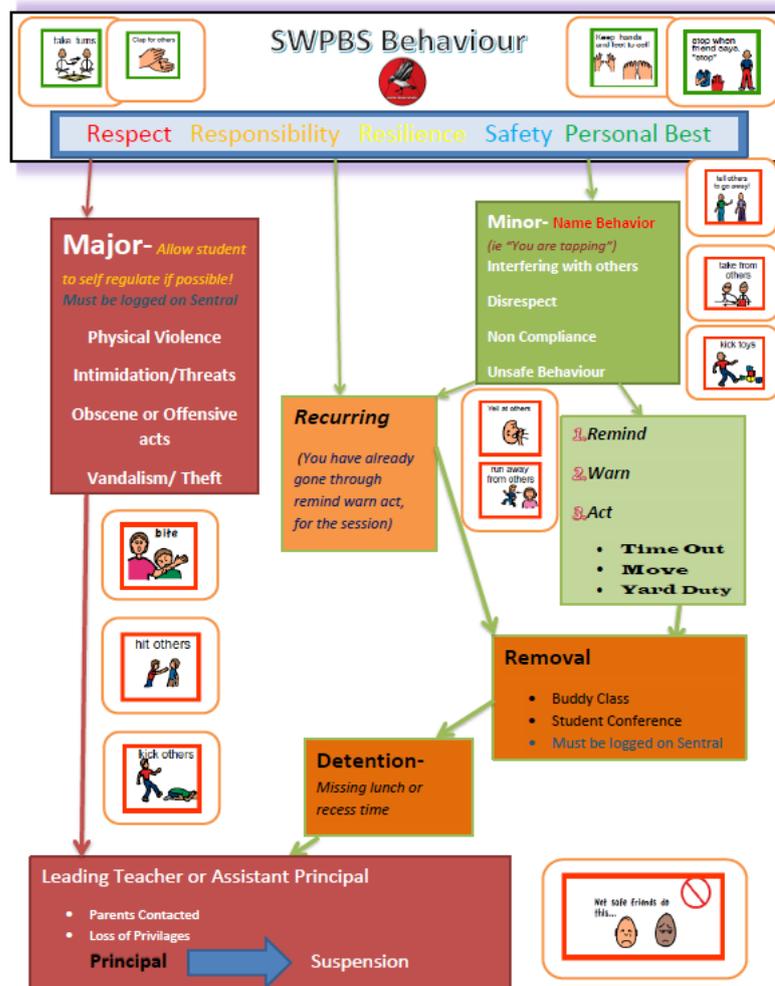


Bullying prevention at Manchester Primary School is proactive and is supported by research that indicates that a whole school, multifaceted approach is the most effective way to prevent and address bullying. At our school:

- We have a positive school environment that provides safety, security and support for students and promotes 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 positive behaviour.
- Staff will be expected to be role models in words and actions and to actively promote the **SWPBS - School Wide Positive Behaviour Support** practices in building a learning community. **SWPBS** is a broad range of systemic and individualised strategies for achieving important social and learning outcomes in schools while preventing problem behaviour. The key attributes of **SWPBS** include preventive activities, data-based decision making, and a problem solving orientation. Using this framework, it is the role of the teachers and school community members to explicitly teach children appropriate behaviours and to set explicit behaviour expectations
- Teaching staff have the opportunity to implement one of the **SWPBS** program initiatives by sending a student to a *Buddy Class* if necessary. This has the opportunity to de-escalate their behaviour in a less stimulating environment. The supervising teacher in the *Buddy Class* will have a designated area away from the rest of the class for the student to work. The choice of a *Buddy Class* needs to be one where the student will not have the opportunity to continue to escalate their behaviour
- Staff are expected to be on time and actively be patrolling during yard duty and be observant of signs of distress or suspected bullying incidents.
- 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.
- The Buddy Program encourages 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 teachers and older peers about any bullying they have experienced or witnessed.
- Students are expected to not retaliate. Students being bullied or harassed will be expected to make it clear that they don't like the behaviour by:
  - a) using an "I" statement
  - b) walking away
  - c) telling a teacher
- Students will be informed of suitable preventative strategies to use and will be expected to be assertive and to refuse to be involved in situations involving bullying or harassment, even as onlookers.



- Manchester Primary will use initiatives from the **SWPBS - School Wide Positive Behaviour Support** program such as:-
  - TAKE A BREAK** - When used calmly, consistently, and respectfully, a responsive calm down space can be a valuable option for helping students develop self-control while keeping the classroom calm, safe, and orderly.
  - BUDDY CLASS** - The *Buddy Class* system is a strategy for continued Level 1 Inappropriate Behaviours and is designed to give the student some reflection and respite withdrawal from current stimulus and to provide some respite for the classmates or teacher of the student.
- Parents will be encouraged to watch for signs of distress in their children such as unwillingness to attend school, a pattern of headaches, missing belongings, damaged clothing or bruising.
- Parents will be expected to advise children to report bullying or harassment incidents to a teacher, encouraging the child to address this responsibility themselves. Repeats may require the parent to personally report the problem
- Parents will be encouraged to take an active interest in their children’s social life and acquaintances.



For further information about our engagement and wellbeing initiatives, please see our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy and **SWPBS** School Wide Positive Behaviour Support Handbook.



## ***Incident Response***

### ***Reporting concerns to Manchester Primary School***

Bullying complaints will be taken seriously and responded to sensitively at our school.

Students who may be experiencing bullying behaviour, or students who have witnessed bullying behaviour, are encouraged to report their concerns to school staff 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 Manchester Primary School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

We encourage students to speak to their teacher and friends. However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff including the Assistant Principal or Principal.

Parents or carers who develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Manchester Primary School should contact their child's teacher.

### ***Investigations***

When notified of alleged bullying behaviour, school staff are required to:

1. record the details of the allegations on *Sentral* against the student file and
2. inform the Assistant Principal or Principal.

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

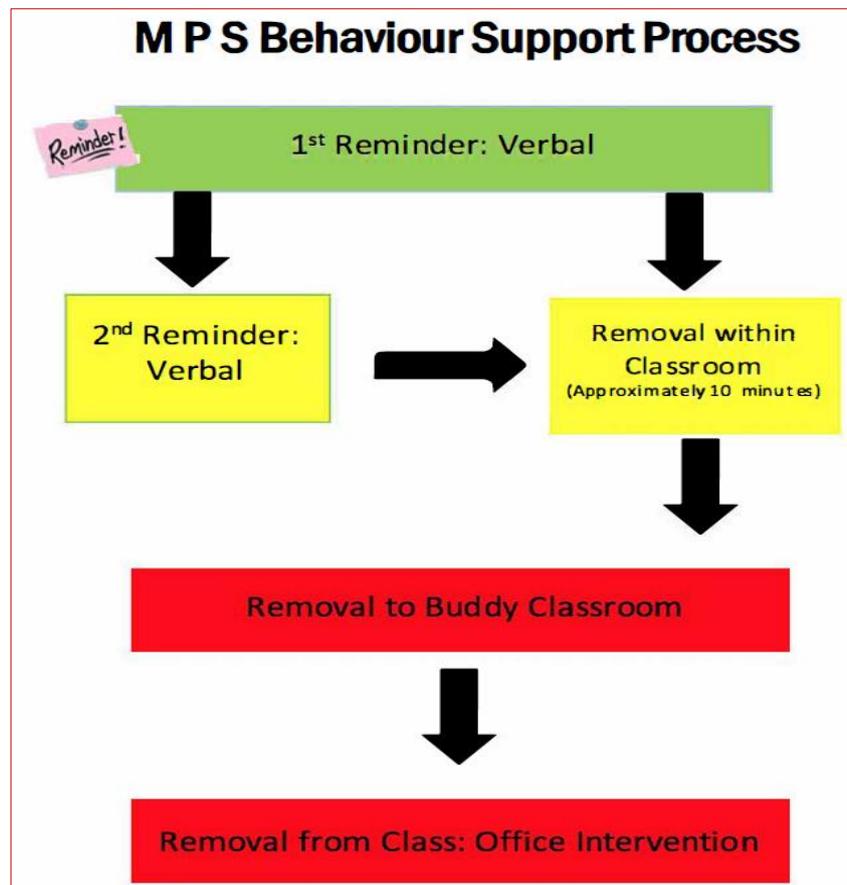
- speak to the those involved in the allegations, including the target/s, the students allegedly engaging in bullying behaviour/s and any witnesses to the incidents
- speak to the parents of the students involved
- speak to the teachers of the students involved
- take detailed notes of all discussions for future reference
- obtain written statements from all or any of the above.

All communications with the teacher, Assistant Principal or Principal in the course of investigating an allegation of bullying 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 bullying behaviour is to determine the nature of the conduct and the students 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 bullying behaviours***

When staff have 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 with their teacher, Assistant Principal, Principal, family, external student Counsellors and DET.

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, Manchester Primary School will consider:

- the age and maturity 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, including any element of provocation.
- Offer counselling support to the target student or students, including a referral to an external provider.
- Offer counselling support to the students engaging in bullying behaviour, including a referral to an external provider.
- Offer counselling support to affected students, including witnesses and/or friends of the target student, including a referral to external provider.
- Facilitate a restorative practice meeting with all or some of the students involved. The objective of restorative practice is to repair relationships that have been damaged by bringing about 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 mediation between some or all of the students involved to help to encourage students to take responsibility for their behaviour and explore underlying reasons for conflict or grievance. Mediation is only suitable if all students are involved voluntarily and demonstrate a willingness to engage in the mediation process.
- Facilitate a Student Support Group meeting and/or Behaviour Support Plan for affected students.
- Prepare an Individual Management Plan restricting contact between target and students engaging in bullying behaviour.
- Provide discussion and/or mentoring for different social and emotional learning competencies of the students involved, including the Buddy Program.
- Monitor the behaviour of the students involved for an appropriate time and take follow up action if necessary.
- Implement year group targeted strategies to reinforce positive behaviours.
- Implement disciplinary consequences for the students engaging in bullying behaviour, which may include removal of privileges, detention, suspension and/or expulsion consistent with our Student Wellbeing and Engagement policy, the Ministerial Order on Suspensions and Expulsions and any other relevant DET Policy.

Manchester Primary School understands the importance of monitoring and following up on the progress of students who have been involved in or affected by bullying behaviour. Where appropriate, school staff will also endeavour to provide parents and carers with updates on the management of bullying incidents.

Staff are responsible for maintaining up to date records of the investigation of and responses to bullying behaviour.



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## Further Information and Resources

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

- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- **SWPBS School Wide Positive Behaviour Support Handbook**

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](#)
- [Kids Helpline](#)
- [Lifeline](#)
- [Bullying. No way!](#)
- [Student Wellbeing Hub](#)
- [Office of the eSafety Commissioner](#)
- [Australian Student Wellbeing Framework](#)

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## Review Cycle and Evaluation

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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 and consultation with students and parent/carers
- regular student bullying surveys
- regular staff surveys
- Bully Stoppers Data Collection tool
- 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 parents groups & school council.

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## Bullying Prevention Policy Review

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This policy was updated on:

**Date:** May 21

**Evaluation and Review:** May 2023

**Consultation with School Council:**

**Meeting # 495**