

# BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY

## 2022



### Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact our school on 9775 7533

## PURPOSE

Langwarrin Park 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 Langwarrin Park Primary School community
- make clear that all forms of bullying at Langwarrin Park Primary School will not be tolerated
- outline the strategies and programs in place at Langwarrin Park 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 Langwarrin Park Primary School.

When responding to bullying behaviour, Langwarrin Park 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.

Langwarrin Park 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 Langwarrin Park Primary School aims to prevent, address and respond to student bullying behaviour. Langwarrin Park 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 other policies (as listed below).

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

This policy should be read in conjunction with our school's:

- *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy*
- *Duty of Care Policy* and
- *Statement of Values and School Philosophy*
- *Inclusion and Diversity policy*
- *Student Code of Conduct*

## 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 phone, tablets, computers, chat rooms, email, social media, etc. It can be verbal, written or include use of 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/Code of Conduct/Whole School Behaviour Management Plan.

*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 harassment, nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If someone is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion, they are not being bullied. 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. Langwarrin Park 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 Langwarrin Park Primary School and may have serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour. Langwarrin Park 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**

Langwarrin Park Primary School has a number of programs and strategies in place to build a positive and inclusive school culture. We strive to foster a school culture that prevents bullying behaviour by modelling and encouraging behaviour that demonstrates acceptance, kindness and respect. We are proactive with teaching Positive Behaviour values and behaviours through our THRIVE program, including our Positive Behaviour Matrix.

Bullying prevention at Langwarrin Park 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 provided with professional development on supporting children to build respectful relationships and addressing any bullying concerns.
- Information on bullying and effective counter measures is provided to our school community.

- Teachers are encouraged to incorporate classroom management strategies that discourage bullying and promote positive behaviour.
- A range of programs and events are planned for each year to raise awareness about bullying and its impacts.
- The THRIVE social and emotional curriculum teaches students what constitutes bullying and how to respond to bullying behaviour assertively. This promotes resilience, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.
- The Respectful Relationships curriculum is embedded in our THRIVE curriculum, but we also have designated wellbeing leaders to attend professional development in the area, and then relay the learning to staff.
- Peer support programs 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 teachers and older peers about any bullying they have experienced or witnessed.
- All students are supported to be safe and respectful online and are provided with individual logins and passwords when using electronic devices at school
- Student online activity is monitored and tracked
- Firewalls are installed to prevent outside traffic into the school's network.

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

## INCIDENT RESPONSE

### Reporting concerns to Langwarrin Park 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 Langwarrin Park Primary School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

In most 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 teachers, welfare staff, and Principals.

Parents or carers who may develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Langwarrin Park Primary School should contact our Assistant Principal (Wellbeing Coordinator) on 9775 7533 or by email at [langwarrin.park.ps@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:langwarrin.park.ps@education.vic.gov.au)

### Investigations

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

1. record the details of the allegations in Sentral
2. inform the relevant Year Level Coordinator, Student Welfare Coordinator or Assistant Principal.

The related Year Level Coordinator, Student Welfare Coordinator or Assistant Principal 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 students involved in the allegations, including the target/s, the alleged student/s 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 relevant Year Level Coordinator, Student Welfare Coordinator or Assistant 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 the relevant Year Level Coordinator, Student Welfare Coordinator or Assistant Principal 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 with Student Welfare Coordinator, teachers, Student Support Services (SSS), Assistant Principal as required.

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, Langwarrin Park 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 student or students 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.

All, or some of the following responses to bullying behaviours may be implemented:

- Offer counselling support to the target student or students, including referral to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, SSS or an external provider.
- Offer counselling support to the students engaging in bullying behaviour, including referral to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, SSS or an external provider.
- Offer counselling support to affected students, including witnesses and/or friends of the target student, including referral to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, SSS or an 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 a 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.
- Implement Langwarrin Park Whole School Behaviour Management Model and show a Method of Shared Concern process with all students involved in the bullying. (The Method of Shared Concern is a **non-punitive multi-stage strategy that addresses group bullying**. It facilitates the emergence of a solution to a bully/target problem through the use of a series of interviews and discussions with the parties involved.)
- Facilitate a Student Support Group meeting and/or Behaviour Support Plan for affected students.
- Prepare a Safety 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 social skills groups, peer mentoring, differentiating the THRIVE curriculum.
- 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, for example class activities designed as part of the THRIVE program, THRIVE awards and positive postcards.
- 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 Department policy.

The Student Welfare Coordinator and the Assistant Principal in conjunction with teachers are responsible for maintaining up to date records and recording on Sentral of the investigation of and responses to bullying behaviour.

Langwarrin Park Primary School understands the importance of monitoring the progress of students who have been involved in or affected by bullying behaviour. Our ability to effectively reduce and eliminate bullying behaviour is greatly affected by students reporting concerning behaviour as soon as possible, so that the responses implemented by Langwarrin Park Primary School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances. Where appropriate, school staff will also endeavour to provide parents and carers with updates on the management of bullying incidents.

## 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
- Included in our staff handbook/manual
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- Included in student diaries so that it is easily accessible to parents, carers and students
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Discussed at student forums/through communication tools
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

## 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

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](#)

School Wide Positive Behaviour Support

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/management/improvement/Pages/swpbs.aspx>

THRIVE <http://www.langwarrinparkps.vic.edu.au/page/173/Positive-Education>

Restorative Practice

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/bullystoppers/krrestorative.pdf>

## EVALUATION

This will be reviewed every 2 years, or earlier as required following an incident or analysis of new research or school data to ensure that this policy remains up to date, practical and effective.

Data will be collected through:

- discussion with students and parents/carers
- KidsMatter surveys
- Attitudes to school survey
- Parent Opinion Survey
- regular staff surveys
- assessment of school-based data, including the number of reported incidents of bullying in each year group and the effectiveness of the responses implemented.

We welcome feedback on this policy from our school community.

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	[Nov 21
Consultation	[Consultation on this policy is mandatory. Nov 2021 School Council Nov 2021 Wellbeing Team
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	2023