

# BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY

## PURPOSE

Murrumbeena 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
- Make clear that all forms of bullying at Murrumbeena Primary School will not be tolerated
- Provide clear examples of signs of bullying, so that the school community can identify and 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 victims, bystanders and perpetrators)
- Encourage parental and peer support in identifying, addressing and preventing bullying behaviours at Murrumbeena Primary School.

### **When responding to bullying behaviour, Murrumbeena Primary School aims to:**

- Be proportionate, consistent and responsive
- Find a constructive, realistic and positive solution for all involved parties
- Prevent the bullying from recurring
- Restore the relationships between the students involved.

## **SCOPE**

This policy applies to all school events and 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.

## **WHAT IS BULLYING?**

### **Definitions**

*Bullying* occurs when someone, or a group of people, deliberately and repeatedly upset, harass, intimidate, threaten 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.

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.

*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. Harassment, nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different people is not the same as bullying. However, single episodes of harassment, nastiness or physical aggression are not acceptable behaviours at our school.

Many distressing behaviours may not constitute bullying even though they are unpleasant. Students who are involved in or who witness any distressing behaviours of concern are encouraged to report their concerns to school staff.

### **What is cyber bullying?**

A cyber bully will torment, threaten, harass, humiliate, embarrass or target to cause hurt and distress, using digital technologies. These include, but are not limited to digital technologies such as computers, laptops, storage devices, projection devices, touch screens, video and audio players, the internet and other forms of social media, as well as the use of smartphones and other mobile devices.

### **Examples of cyberbullying include:**

- Sending comments, photographs or videos of a hateful or threatening nature
- Using modern technologies to engage in the social exclusion of someone
- Posting rude, explicit or embarrassing messages, photographs or videos on the internet
- Stealing someone's identity, including accessing their user accounts online
- Engaging in cyber-stalking or invasion of your privacy online.

## **HOW DOES THE SCHOOL PREVENT BULLYING AND PROMOTE POSITIVE BEHAVIOURS?**

Bullying is against the values of Murrumbeena Primary School. This School is committed to providing an educational environment in which students feel valued and secure. To achieve this, the school creates a desired culture that:

- Allows students to flourish free from discrimination or any form of bullying
- Does not tolerate bullying behaviours
- Is aware of what constitutes bullying behaviour
- Provides students with programs specific to bullying – awareness, action and prevention
- Provides support to students who have suffered bullying behaviours
- Provides support and further education to students who have displayed bullying behaviours so they understand the impact of the behaviour on others.

### **Programs and Actions to Prevent Bullying and Support Positive Behaviour**

Staff and students will participate in a range of activities to prevent bullying and to promote positive behaviours.

### **The School will:**

- Review the policy and procedures on an annual basis with staff
- Provide staff with education and training to detect and respond to bullying behaviours
- Adopt a consistent school wide behaviour management approach
- Ensure students understand the school rules and encourage students to abide by them

- Developing the ‘Personal and Social Capabilities’ of students (as identified in the Victorian Curriculum) by providing specific lessons that are integrated within the relevant PYP transdisciplinary units of inquiry
- Publish the school’s anti-bullying policy on the website for parent information
- Review the policy (through the Education Sub committee of School Council) on a cyclical basis to ensure it remains relevant and effective
- Encourage staff to be observant and active when on yard supervision so there is a pervasive sense of staff presence when on duty
- Display signage around the school that outlines the school rules and promotes the expected positive behaviours
- Register annually as an ‘NDA’ school and participate in the ‘National Day of Action’ against bullying
- Use a ‘Restorative Practices’ approach in discussions with students.

**Students will participate in:**

- Explicit lessons that review the school rules and how the behaviour management system works
- Age appropriate lessons to understand what bullying is, what it isn’t and how to report bullying
- The ‘Peer Support’ Program (run by year 6 students who work with multi age groups to develop the key skills in resilience, assertiveness, decision making, problem solving and leadership)
- A termly confidential survey related to student well-being and bullying behaviour
- Lessons to develop their ‘Personal and Social’ capabilities (integrated within the units of inquiry)
- Establishing a classroom ‘Essential Agreement’ (which outlines the actions to be displayed to promote a positive classroom learning environment)
- The Peer Mediation Program.

**Please note:** the specific programs run by the school will vary from time to time, with new initiatives being introduced when deemed appropriate.

**WHAT YOU SHOULD DO IF YOU ARE BEING BULLIED**

At Murrumbeena Primary School we aim to be able to support all students with bullying concerns appropriately.

If students are being bullied, it is important that they talk to an adult who is in a position to help. Teachers remind students regularly of the need to speak to yard duty or classroom teachers about problems they are having, as soon as the problem becomes uncomfortable, so that immediate action can be taken.

**At MPS if you are being bullied, you are encouraged to do the RITER thing:**

**R= RECOGNISE**

Recognise the unwanted behaviour

**I= INFORM**

Tell the person you would like them to stop. Do this in a polite way

**T= TELL**

If the behaviour continues tell a responsible adult (teacher/trusted adult)

**E= EVALUATE**

Evaluate and acknowledge if the unwanted behaviours have stopped

## R= REPORT

If there is not an improvement, report again




*When experiencing unwanted behaviours that are targeted, it is important to try not to get angry and/or copy the behaviour.*

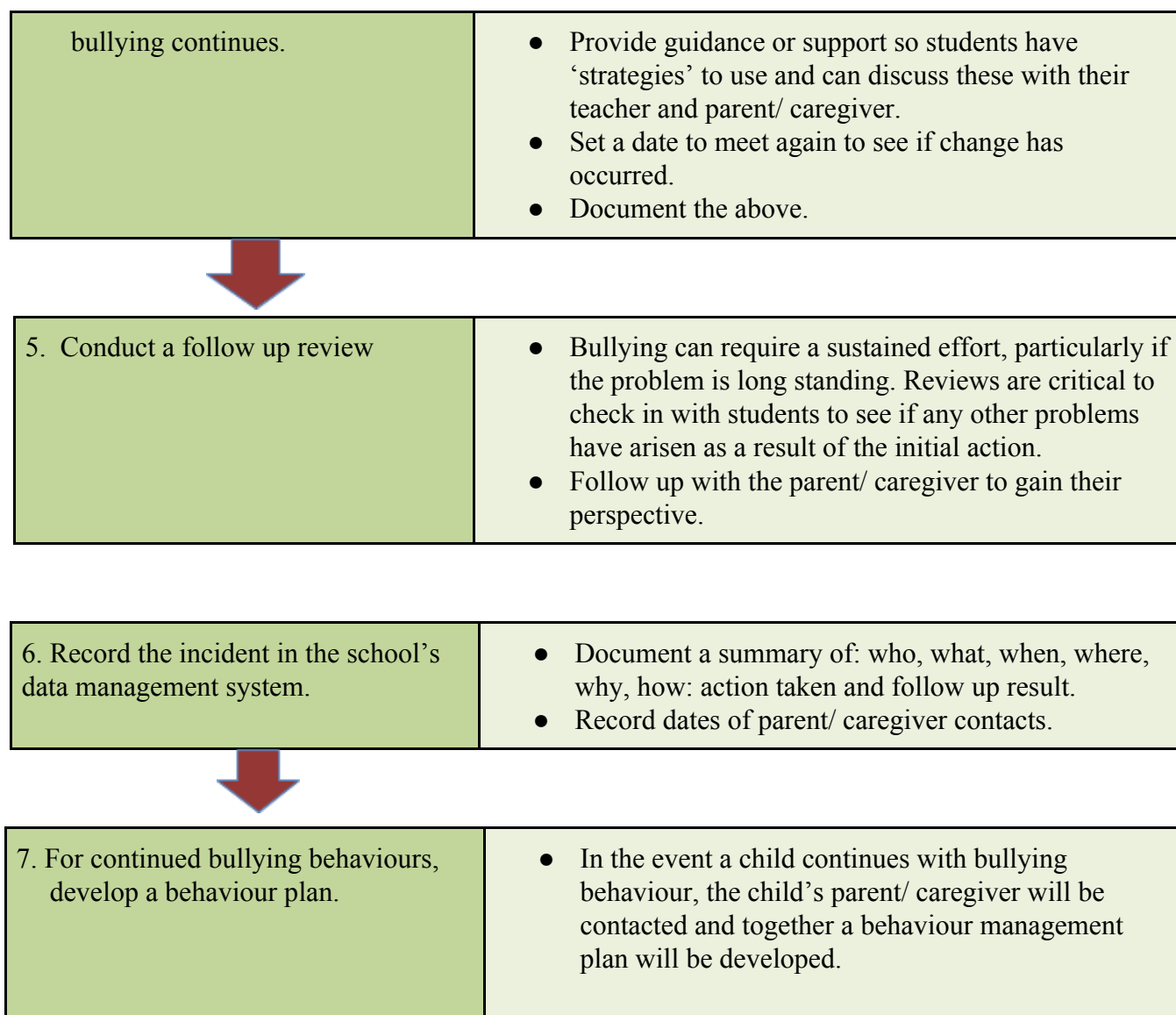
### Termly 'Bullying Surveys'

There is a reluctance to report bullying due to the fear of being labelled a 'dobber'. The fear of not wanting to report bullying because it can make matters worse, is also an understandable fear held by many. For this reason, students from years 3 to 6 will be asked to complete a 'Bullying Survey' each term. This allows students the opportunity to confidentially report issues that have been causing worry and reporting the name/ s of students causing the problems. It also lets the child with bullying behaviours know that the behaviour will be reported.

### **HOW THE SCHOOL WILL RESPOND TO REPORTS OF BULLYING**

*This process applies to both the child being bullied and the perpetrator.*

<p>1. Listen carefully and calmly and document what the student tells you.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Ensure a private place to talk.</li><li>● Listen to the full account and ask clarifying questions.</li><li>● Avoid the terms 'bully' or 'victim' and instead focus on the unwanted behaviours.</li><li>● Clarify if there are immediate safety risks and let the child know you will address these concerns.</li><li>● Document key points of conversation.</li></ul>
<p>2. Collect additional information</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Ask for any evidence (if available).</li><li>● Speak with all students including bystanders and gain further information from teachers.</li><li>● Gain information about: who, what, when, where, why, how.</li><li>● Student views on WHY bullying is happening often suggests ways the school can respond.</li></ul>
<p>3. Discuss a plan of action with the students</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● When a clear picture of the situation is obtained, discuss a plan of action with the student(s) involved and their teachers.</li><li>● Inform all students involved of the school's intention to contact parents/caregivers.</li><li>● Involve parents/caregivers in developing the plan of action.</li></ul>
<p>4. Inform the students what you intend to do and what to do if the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Let the student(s) know what the short term and longer term actions will be.</li></ul>



### **Factors to consider in responding to bullying.**

There are a number of factors to consider when determining the most appropriate response to the behaviour.

Factors include:

- The age and maturity of the student
- The severity and frequency of the incident(s)
- Whether this behaviour has happened previously
- Whether the incident(s) happened in a group or one-to-one context
- Whether insight or remorse are demonstrated by the perpetrator.

### **Responses can include:**

- Counselling support for victim(s), including witnesses or friends of the victim
- Counselling support for perpetrator(s)
- Facilitate a restorative practice discussion
- Removal of privileges, timeout, suspension, detention or expulsion
- Restricting contact between the parties
- Provide discussion and mentoring; resilience and emotional learning discussion and focus on future relationships and behaviours.

## **PARENTS: HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD IF THEY ARE INVOLVED IN BULLYING**

The most important thing a parent can do to help their child, is to provide reassurance and support them in the process of solving the problem.

### **Encourage your child to:**

- Speak openly about bullying behaviours at home
- Be aware of what does constitute bullying and what is not bullying
- Practice the RITER method (recognise, inform, tell, evaluate, report)
- Report the behaviour to teachers at school
- Remember not to share personal details, passwords, security or access information to online portals, even with their close friends
- Be aware of the processes of reporting bullying, especially how to report cyberbullying (saving or screenshotting information and how to provide this evidence to the relevant people).

## **HOW DOES THE SCHOOL KNOW IF THEY ARE REDUCING INCIDENTS OF BULLYING?**

Murrumbena regularly reviews policies, procedures and data related to student behaviour.

*The following information is collected and analysed:*

- The 'Attitudes to School' survey
- Student behaviour surveys
- Yard duty incidents
- Positive behaviour throughout the school.

## **RESOURCES AND REFERENCES**

- National Centre against Bullying <https://www.ncab.org.au/>
- Bullying, No Way! <https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/>
- Office of the eSafety Commissioner (Cyber Safety) <https://www.esafety.gov.au/>
- Dr. Ken Rigby (prominent researcher on Bullying with strategies) <http://www.kenrigby.net/Home>
- Mind Matters : Bullying <https://www.mindmatters.edu.au/>
- National Day of Action (registration and resources) <https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/NationalDay>

## **POLICY EVALUATION**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the staff and the Education subcommittee of School Council.