



School Bullying Prevention Policy

Created:
September 2024
Review Date:
September 2026

1. POLICY STATEMENT

Macedon Primary School is committed to providing a safe and respectful teaching and learning environment where bullying and harassment is not tolerated. Macedon Primary School believes that all students have the right to learn in a school environment in which they feel safe and secure.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- explain what bullying and harassment is, and the fact that it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
- encourage everyone in the school community to be alert to signs and evidence of bullying and have a responsibility to report it to staff whether as observer or target.
- 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 perpetrators).
- seek parental and peer-group support and co-operation in addressing and preventing bullying behaviour at Macedon Primary School.

When responding to bullying behaviour, Macedon Primary School aims to:

- be proportionate, consistent and responsive
- find a constructive and positive solution for everyone
- stop the bullying from happening again
- restore the relationships between the students involved.

Macedon 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.

3. SCOPE

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

This policy should be read in conjunction with our school's *Student Welfare Policy/Procedures*, *Student Behaviour Management Policy/Procedures*, *ICT/Internet Policy/Procedures*, *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy (once finalised)*, *Inclusion and Diversity Policy*, *Duty of Care Policy* and *Statement of Values and School*.

4. POLICY

4.1 DEFINITIONS

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, transphobic 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. Macedon 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 Macedon Primary School and may have serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour. Macedon 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.

5. GUIDELINES

5.1 Macedon Primary School will not tolerate bullying (including cyberbullying) or harassment.

5.2 Macedon 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.

Bullying prevention at Macedon 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.

A school-wide approach exists to deal with bullying and harassment in a consistent and systematic way, with a focus on student safety and wellbeing including:

- We have a positive school environment that provides safety, security and support for students and promotes positive relationships and wellbeing. The buddy program supports the positive and safe school environment.
- In the classroom, our social and emotional learning curriculum (including Kids Matter and respectful Relationships) teaches students what constitutes bullying and how to respond to bullying behaviour assertively. This promotes resilience, acceptance of difference, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving and is linked to the school values of respect, responsibility, creativity, integrity and teamwork.
- An annual unit of work that raises student awareness about bullying and harassment, provides a forum for discussion and aids development of attitudes. Our curriculum includes anti-bullying messages and strategies in line with DET materials e.g. Bully Stoppers: Make a Stand, Lend a Hand and 'No Blame Approach to Bullying'.
- Teachers are encouraged to incorporate classroom management strategies that discourage bullying and promote positive behaviour.
- Staff professional development programs occur regularly to keep teachers informed of current issues/strategies for dealing with bullying and/or harassment issues.
- 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.
- A confidential bullying survey of the student body is conducted annually and de-identified information is used to evaluate the school's programs, policies and procedures.

5.3 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.

5.4 Disciplinary measures will apply to students in breach of the behaviour expectations, in conjunction with student support programs for the targets and perpetrators with the aim to change their behaviours (this may include educating bystanders).

5.5 This policy will be clearly communicated to students, parents and staff on the school's website and through newsletters.

6. INCIDENT RESPONSE

6.1 Reporting concerns to Macedon Primary School

All complaints of bullying or harassment will be taken seriously and treated 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 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 Macedon 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 teachers and educational staff.

Parents or carers who may develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Macedon Primary School should contact the Principal (and in their absence the Leading Teacher) by phone on (03) 5426 1518 or by email directed to macedon.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au.

6.2 Investigations and Student Support

If any staff member feels a student is at risk from bullying and harassing behaviours they should discuss their concerns with the classroom teacher who will inform both the team leader and the Principal. This will ensure further action is considered to provide appropriate support for the student.

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

1. Record the details of the allegations and any actions taken in response to student bullying and/or harassment in accordance with the reporting requirements in Appendix A, with completed documents to be filed in the Bullying and Harassment Reporting Folder located on the secure administration server.
2. Inform the classroom teacher, Leading Teacher and the Principal.

The Principal (and in their absence the Leading Teacher) is responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, Principal (and in their absence the Leading Teacher):

- will speak to the students involved in the allegations, including the target/s, the alleged perpetrator/s and any witnesses to the incidents
- will speak to the parents of the students involved
- will speak to the teachers of the students involved
- will take detailed notes of all relevant discussions for future reference
- may obtain written statements from all or any of the above.

All communications with the Principal (and in their absence the Leading Teacher) 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. Some strategies that may be used to assist the students involved include: assertiveness training, resilience, problem solving, social skills, behaviour modification and/or shared discussions.

Serious bullying, including serious cyberbullying, is a criminal offence and may be referred to Victoria Police. For more information, see: Brodie's Law.

6.3 Responses to bullying behaviours

When the Principal (and in their absence the Leading Teacher) 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 the Principal, Leading Teacher, Classroom Teacher/s and DET Student Support 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, Macedon 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 perpetrator student or students have displayed similar behaviour before
- whether the bullying took place in a group or one-to-one context
- whether the perpetrator demonstrates insight or remorse for their behaviour
- the alleged motive of the behaviour, including any element of provocation.

The Principal (and in their absence the Leading Teacher) may implement all, or some of the following responses to bullying behaviours:

- Offer counselling support to the target student or students, including referral to DET Student Support Staff or external providers where appropriate.
- Offer counselling support to the perpetrator student or students, including referral to DET Student Support Staff or external providers where appropriate.
- Offer counselling support to affected students, including witnesses and/or friends of the target student, including referral to DET Student Support Staff or external providers where appropriate.
- 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.
- Implement disciplinary consequences for the perpetrator students, 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.
- Facilitate a Student Support Group meeting and/or Behaviour Support Plan for affected students.
- Prepare a Student Safety Plan restricting contact between target and perpetrator students.

- Provide discussion and/or mentoring for different social and emotional learning competencies of the students involved, as guided by DET Student Support Staff.
- 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 facilitate class discussions and activities about positive school yard behaviours.

The Principal (and in their absence the Leading Teacher) is responsible for maintaining up to date records of the investigation of and responses to bullying behaviour and these records are to be filed in the Bullying and Harassment Reporting Folder on the secure administration server.

Macedon 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 our school are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

7. FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Links which are connected to this policy are:

- DET's Student Engagement Guidance
- Macedon Primary School Student Behaviour Policy and Procedures
- Macedon Primary School's Internet/ICT Use Policy and Procedures (re: cyber bullying)
- Macedon Primary School's Student Welfare Policy and Procedures
- DET's Bully Stoppers: Make a Stand, Lend a Hand
- DET's Vulnerable Students

Other supporting links:

- Bully Free World: Special Needs Anti-bullying Toolkit
- Australian Human Rights Commission - Human rights in the school classroom
- Safe Schools Coalition Victoria
- Racism. No way! anti-racism education for Australian schools
- Macedon Primary School's Kimochi's and Friendology- SEL Program

Appendices which are connected with this policy are:

- **Appendix A:** Reporting on Incident of Bullying / Harassment – Template

8. EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed on a three year basis following analysis of school data on reported incidents of, and responses to, bullying to ensure that this policy remains up to date, practical and effective.

School based data (including the number of reported incidents of bullying in each year group and the effectiveness of the responses implemented) will be collected and assessed.

The school will respond to negative trends in the data by facilitating:

- discussion with students;
- student bullying surveys;
- staff surveys.

9. REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated in September 2024 and is scheduled for review in September 2026

Version History

Date	Old wording	New wording
July 2024	Macedon Primary School's KidsMatter- SEL Program (re: Bullying Scope and Sequence)	Macedon Primary School's Kimochi's and Friendology-SEL Program

Appendix A
Reporting on Incident of Bullying / Harassment

Staff member recording incident: _____ Date: _____

Name and grade/s of student(s) who appears to have instigated bullying / harassment

Name(s) and grade/s of target(s) _____

Name(s) and grade/s of witnesses

Did you observe the incident? YES NO

If 'NO' who reported the incident to you? _____

Brief description of incident (what was allegedly said or done to the student who was bullied/ harassed)

What form(s) of bullying/harassment took place?

Verbal Physical Indirect Cyber

Other Please detail: _____ **Where / when / time incident took**

place:

Location: _____

When: before school recess lunch in class after school

Responses and Actions

Describe how you responded (Did you use a school anti-bullying practice?)

Describe how students responded to your intervention

Perpetrator/s _____

Target/s _____

Additional comments:

Parent Notification:

Name of parent of perpetrator notified: _____ Date/time: _____

Phone In person

Comments: _____

Name of parent of targeted student notified: _____ Date/time: _____

Phone In person

Comments: _____
