

Rowville Primary School Bullying Prevention Policy

PURPOSE

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

When responding to bullying behaviour, Rowville 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.

Rowville 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.

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 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.

GUIDELINES

- All students are acknowledged and valued as individuals regardless of gender, racial, cultural, religious, physical or intellectual differences.
- All students are informed that if they are bullied, teachers are available to support them and prevent it from happening. Students will be encouraged to report incidents to a teacher, be it the class teacher or yard duty teacher or another teacher within the school.
- The Principal and staff have a responsibility to fairly, reasonably and consistently implement the Student Safety, Engagement and Well-Being Policy.
- All parents are informed that if they believe that their child is being bullied, they should contact the school. This could include the classroom teacher, the Principal or Assistant Principal.
- All members of staff are informed that if they feel bullied by any member of the school community they are to report this to the Principal.
- All teachers are informed of the procedures that are to be followed if an incident of bullying is reported to them.
- All teachers have a responsibility to respond to, investigate, follow up and monitor incidents of bullying.
- All forms of bullying, whether it be physical, verbal or cyber are not tolerated at any level.
- All students will sign a Digital Technologies Agreement and students in Years 5 & 6 will sign a One-to-One digital Device Agreement as a way of promoting safe use of technology.

IMPLEMENTATION

- As a school we will develop a values driven culture as per the values in our Student Safety Engagement and Well-Being Policy.
- Teachers actively promote the positive resolution of conflicts and appropriate responses to bullying behaviour through the provision of classroom programs, such as restorative conversations, circle time, the perspective scale and the four rooms of change.
- The staff member investigating a bullying incident will use a restorative conference to establish the facts; discuss the impact of the incident; and develop a solution. A period of monitoring will be part of the solution. A record will be kept of the conference.
- In a case where it is confirmed that the incident is bullying, the school will provide support and opportunity for counselling for the recipient and the student who bullied.
- If the bullying persists the school will undertake action as per the Student Safety Engagement and Well-Being Policy.

Responding to Bullying Incidents

The school has clear guidelines to responding to bullying incidents. Should repeated incidences (bullying or cyberbullying) occur, the following actions will be taken:

- the Principal and Assistant Principal will be informed
- parents of all students involved will be informed
- a restorative framework will be used to investigate what is happening and to develop a plan moving forward
- in serious cases, an Individual Behaviour Management Plan will be created.

- Ongoing monitoring will occur.

Refer to the Student Safety, Engagement and Well-being Policy.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- Student Safety, Engagement and Well-Being Policy
- Digital Technologies Policy

EVALUATION

The policy will be reviewed every two years or 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.

This policy was ratified on 25 th November 2020 and is due to be reviewed in November 2022.
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