



## 2.10 BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY (STUDENTS)

### POLICY STATEMENT

Our school is committed to providing a safe and caring environment and culture that enables positive relationships to be formed amongst all students and staff and encourages self-esteem, cooperation, personal growth and a positive attitude to learning and teaching. A clear policy on bullying (including cyber bullying) will inform the community that **bullying in any of its forms will not be tolerated.**

Roberts McCubbin 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 Roberts McCubbin Primary School will not be tolerated
- 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 victims, bystanders and perpetrators)
- seek parental and peer group support in addressing and preventing bullying behaviour

When responding to bullying behaviour, Roberts McCubbin Primary School aims to:

- be proportionate, consistent and responsive
- find a constructive and positive solution for everyone
- minimise the bullying from happening again
- repair the harm and restore the relationships between the students/teachers/parents/carers involved

Roberts McCubbin 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.

### GUIDELINES

This policy addresses how Roberts McCubbin Primary School aims to prevent and respond to student bullying behaviour. Roberts McCubbin 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 *Safe and Happy Book* and *Student Engagement & Wellbeing Policy*. These policies apply to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

## **POLICY**

### **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. In this policy any reference to 'bullying' includes all forms of bullying.

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.

*Harassment* can also constitute bullying if it amounts to a pattern of behaviour or course of conduct towards another person that is demeaning, offensive or intimidating to a person.

*Cyberbullying* is direct or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technology. For example via mobile phones, iPads, computers, chat rooms, email, social media, etc. It can be verbal, written or include use of images, video and/or audio.

### **Other distressing behaviours**

Many distressing behaviours may not constitute bullying, even though they are unpleasant. Students who are involved in or who witness any distressing behaviours should report their concerns to school staff and our school will follow the procedures in the *Safe and Happy Book* and *Student Engagement and 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 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.

It should be noted, that while behaviours listed above do not fit into the definition of bullying, they are all unacceptable at our school.

## **BULLYING PREVENTION**

Roberts McCubbin 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 and school values of: *Creativity, Endeavour, Respect, Trust, Honesty and Friendliness*

Bullying prevention at Roberts McCubbin 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 aim to:

- Create a positive school environment that provides safety, security and support for students and promotes positive relationships and wellbeing.
- Learn the languages and strategies of *Restorative Practices*.
- Build strong partnerships between the school, families and the broader community that means all members work together to ensure the safety of students.
- Encourage teachers to incorporate classroom management strategies that discourage bullying and promote positive behaviour.
- Implement a range of programs from Foundation to Year 6 to raise awareness about bullying and its impacts.
- Provide a social and emotional learning curriculum teaching students about what constitutes bullying and how to respond assertively to bullying behaviour. This promotes resilience, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.
- Programs which 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.
- Encourage students to look out for each other and to talk to teachers and peers about any bullying they have experienced or witnessed.
- Participate in the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence and other community awareness programs.

For further information about our engagement and wellbeing initiatives, please see our *Safe and Happy Book and Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy*.

## **INCIDENT RESPONSE**

### **Reporting concerns to Roberts McCubbin Primary School**

Bullying concerns 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.

In most circumstances, we encourage students and parents/carers to speak to their class teachers or other teachers. However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff including the Principal/Assistant Principal/Well-being Coordinator.

Parents or carers who may develop further concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Roberts McCubbin Primary School should contact Peter Watson Assistant Principal/Well-being Coordinator by phone on 9890 2372 or by email directed to [watson.peter.j@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:watson.peter.j@edumail.vic.gov.au)

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 Roberts McCubbin Primary School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

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

1. record the details of the allegations and;
2. inform Principal/Assistant Principal/Well-being Coordinator.

## **Investigations**

Assistant Principal/Well-being Coordinator is responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, the teacher/Assistant Principal/Well-being Coordinator may:

- speak to the students involved in the allegations, including the victim/s, the alleged perpetrator/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/Well-being Coordinator 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 teacher/Assistant Principal/Well-being Coordinator 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 SSS (Student Support Services), Principal, and Department of Education and Training specialist 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, Roberts McCubbin 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 students
- 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 student demonstrates insight or remorse for their behaviour
- the alleged motive of the behaviour, including any element of provocation.

The teacher/Assistant Principal/Well-being Coordinator may implement all, or some of the following responses to bullying behaviours:

- Offer counselling support to the victim student or students, including referral to SSS
- Offer counselling support to the perpetrator student or students, including referral to SSS
- Offer counselling support to affected students, including witnesses and/or friends of the victim student, including referral to SSS
- 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 restorative action on the part of the person who has bullied someone and forgiveness by the person who has been bullied

- Implement disciplinary consequences for the perpetrator students, which may include removal of privileges, in line with our *Safe and Happy Book* and *Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy*
- Facilitate a Student Support Group meeting and/or Behaviour Support Plan for affected students
- Prepare a Safety Plan or Individual Management Plan restricting contact between victim and perpetrator students
- Provide discussion and/or mentoring for different social and emotional learning competencies of the students involved
- Monitor the behaviour of the students involved for an appropriate time and take follow up action if necessary
- Implement targeted strategies to reinforce positive behaviours

Roberts McCubbin Primary School is responsible for maintaining up to date records of the investigation of and responses to bullying behaviour.

Roberts McCubbin 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.

## **FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Roberts McCubbin Primary School following school policies:

- Safe and Happy Book
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy
- Parent Complaints policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Equal Opportunity 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:

- [Kids Matter](#)
- [Better Buddies](#)
- [Bully Stoppers](#)
- [Kids Helpline](#)
- [Lifeline](#)
- [Bullying. No way!](#)

## **EVALUATION**

This policy will be reviewed as required, following analysis of school data on reported incidents of, and responses to bullying to ensure that the policy remains up to date, practical and effective.

Data will be collected through:

- discussion with students

- regular student bullying surveys
- 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.

This policy will be evaluated as part of a regular review process.

Last reviewed in September 2018