



BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY

PURPOSE

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

When responding to bullying behaviour, Pascoe Vale North 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.

Pascoe Vale North 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 Pascoe Vale North Primary School aims to prevent, address and respond to student bullying behaviour. Pascoe Vale North 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 [*Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy, Inclusion and Diversity policy, and Student Behaviour Management Policy & Procedures*].

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

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 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, Student Behaviour Management Policy & Procedures].

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. Pascoe Vale North Primary School will

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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 (updated Feb 2020). Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated at Pascoe Vale North Primary School and may have serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour. Pascoe Vale North 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

Pascoe Vale North 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 Pascoe Vale North Primary School is proactive and is supported by research that indicates that a whole school, multifaceted approach is the most effect 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 encouraged to incorporate classroom management strategies that discourage bullying and promote positive behaviour.
- A range of year level activities are planned for each year to raise awareness about bullying and its impacts.
- In the classroom, our social and emotional learning curriculum teaches students what constitutes bullying and how to respond to bullying behaviour assertively. This promotes resilience, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.
- 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.
- We participate in the National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence.

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

INCIDENT RESPONSE

Reporting concerns to Pascoe Vale North 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.

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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 Pascoe Vale North Primary School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

We encourage students to speak to their teacher and/or Year Level Coordinator. However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff including teachers, wellbeing staff, Assistant Principal, Principal.

Parents or carers who develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Pascoe Vale North Primary School should contact Paul Phypers, the Student Wellbeing Coordinator or Deborah Crane, the Principal by phone on 9354 3343 or by email directed to Pascoe.vale.north.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 Compass; and
2. inform the Student Welfare Coordinator / Assistant Principal / Principal.

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

- speak to the those involved in the allegations, including the target/s, the students allegedly 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 Assistant Principal / 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 Assistant Principal / 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 any of the following: Student Welfare Coordinator, classroom teachers, SSS, Assistant Principal, Principal, Department of Education and Training specialist staff etc.



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, Pascoe Vale North 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 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.

The Assistant Principal / Principal may implement all, or some of the following responses to bullying behaviours:

- Offer counselling support to the target student or students, including referral to the Assistant Principal / Principal, SSS, or our school based psychologist.
- 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.
- Facilitate a process using the Support Group Method, involving the target student(s), the students engaging in bullying behaviour and a group of students who are likely to be supportive of the target(s).
- Implement a Method of Shared Concern process with all students involved in the bullying.
- 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 target and students engaging in bullying behaviour.
- 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 year group targeted strategies to reinforce positive behaviours.
- 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.

Pascoe Vale North 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.

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The Assistant Principal / Principal is responsible for maintaining up to date records of the investigation of and responses to bullying behaviour.

Section 4: Shared Expectations

PVNPN has developed shared expectations to ensure that the learning, safety and rights of all are respected. The expectations are intended to be positive in that they set out what is expected and appropriate behaviours for our school community. Our shared expectations are intended to support individual students and families that come to our community from a diversity of backgrounds, communities and experiences.

Staff Engagement

The school leadership team will:

- uphold the right of every child to receive an education up to the compulsory age of schooling
- ensure the school complies with its duty of care obligations to each student as well as its obligations under the equal opportunity and human rights legislation
- identify the diversity of the school community and deliver teaching and learning, educational and extra-curricular activities and community services inclusive and responsive to student needs
- Ensure best practice by supporting and promoting professional and personal development opportunities for staff

The staff will:

- develop flexible pedagogical styles to engage different learners
- deliver curriculum and assessment that challenges and extends students' learning
- develop positive relationships with students that promote engagement, wellbeing and learning
- provide opportunities for student voice developing a positive school culture
- Engage in regular professional and personal development activities

Behaviour

PVN will support and promote positive behaviours by developing and implementing shared behavioural expectations with the school community through a staged response.

The school leadership team will:

- lead and promote preventative approaches to behavioural issues
- monitor the profile of behaviour issues at the school and the effectiveness of implemented strategies
- provide professional development for the staff to build their capacity to promote positive behaviours .

The staff will:

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- use the Student Engagement policy as a basis for developing class-based shared expectations with students
- teach students social competencies through curriculum content and pedagogical approach
- employ behaviour management strategies that reflect the behaviour expected from students
- build a collegiate atmosphere to share strategies and support each other to reflect on one's own behaviour management approach

Student Engagement

All students are expected to:

- respect, value and learn from the differences of others
- have high expectations that they can learn
- reflect on and learn from their own differences
- actively engage in learning programs
- participate in the school's educational programs
- learn and employ socially appropriate behaviours
- demonstrate respect for themselves, peers, staff, families and community members

Behaviour

All students will:

- support each other's learning by behaving in a way that is courteous and respectful
- have high expectations that they can learn
- be considerate and supportive of others
- demonstrate behaviour and attitudes that support the wellbeing and learning for all and contributes to a positive collegiate environment that is safe, inclusive and happy
- understand that bullying, including cyber-bullying, violence, property damage, inappropriate language and disrupting the learning of other students is unacceptable

Parents/Carers Engagement

- parents/carers are expected to support the school's efforts to educate young people to live in a diverse world by promoting an understanding and appreciation of diversity in the home
- parents/carers should also help the school to provide student-centred responses by providing all relevant information to the school
- parents/carers are encouraged to actively participate in supporting their child's learning by building a positive relationship with the school
- parents/carers will work with the school through attendance at parent-teacher meetings and responding to communications in a timely manner

Behaviour

Parents/carers should understand the school's behavioural expectations and aim to provide a consistent approach that supports their child's learning and engagement in and out of school.



Behavioural Consequences

Students are expected to cooperate:

To promote cooperation, students could choose to:	Cooperation is difficult when a student:	Appropriate responses to minor/initial incidents:	Major or repeated incidents:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider other classmates' needs Think of ways for everyone to have a turn Encourage everyone to have a say 	<p>Always has to be first</p> <p>Refuses to take turns</p> <p>Ignores the ideas of others</p>	<p>Speak to child</p> <p>Student to reflect on the incident (student incident report may be completed)</p> <p>Reflection Sheet may allow opportunity for student to take responsibility for actions and repair damage done to people or property.</p>	<p>Parents contacted</p> <p>Withdrawal of privileges, with explanation of how behaviour impacts our experience</p> <p>Behaviour management plan</p> <p>Student Support Group</p> <p>In school suspension.</p>

Students are expected to play safely, show respect, learn, be honest, care and be responsible.

Detention

Teachers may require a student to finish school work which has not been completed in the regular classroom, or to undertake additional or new work duties at a reasonable time and place. No more than half the time allocated for any recess may be used for this work.

Where students are required to undertake school work out of school hours, the time should not exceed forty-five minutes. The principal should ensure that parents are informed at least 24 hours prior to the detention. Where family circumstances are such that the completion of work would create undue hardship, we may choose to negotiate alternative disciplinary measures with parents.

PVN is permitted to detain students, but will take into account family circumstances and negotiate with parents where appropriate.

Student Support Group

A Student Support Group may be convened by schools to exchange information and facilitate solutions to behavioural problems or difficulties of students. In general, they will be convened at the school, although they could occur at alternative locations agreed to by the school and parents.

These meetings are to be held at a time suitable both to the school and the parents. The purpose of procedures for such meetings will vary depending on the needs of individuals and schools, but they promote positive behaviours through a staged response. As well as teachers, parents and the student, the meeting could involve a person requested by the parents who is not acting for fee or

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reward, principal, or nominee and any support staff (including interpreters) who have been involved with the student and/or the student's family or who have particular relevant expertise. If the principal considers it warranted, or the student or the student's parents request, the principal must ensure suitable language interpretation facilities are made available.

A brief written statement including a list of participants and agreed outcomes should be maintained to assist future problem-solving processes at the school. The statement should be verified by the parents and/or student and remain confidential.

Exclusion

Details of suspension and expulsion procedures are discussed below, however, it should be noted that parents are to be involved in exclusion procedures.

At Pascoe Vale North Primary School, every attempt would be made to avoid exclusion processes as far as possible.

Suspension – General information

Suspension is a serious disciplinary measure and should normally only be used when other measures have not produced a satisfactory response. Suspension should be used for the shortest time necessary. The maximum period of time a student can be suspended consecutively is five school days. 'School days', as referred to in this document, does not include weekends, public holidays or school holidays. A student cannot be suspended for more than fifteen school days in a school year, unless approval is sought from the regional director. However, a student may be suspended for a further period (not exceeding five school days) pending the principal's decision whether to expel a student.

Procedures prior to suspension

With the exception of situations which require an immediate response, principals of schools should ensure that a range of options (and in particular those to accommodate the needs of students with a disability or impairment) has been considered before suspending a student. The student must be informed that suspension is being considered and given an opportunity to address the issues of concern and to respond positively, unless the principal is satisfied that immediate action (in the form of a suspension or expulsion) is required. When it is believed that a student's behaviour warrants suspension, the principal must ensure that every reasonable step is taken to arrange a meeting with the parent, the student and the student support group to discuss:

- the student's behaviour and performance
- the strategies being developed within the school to meet the educational needs of the student
- the possibility of suspension, should the behaviour continue
- the responsibilities of the parents, should suspension be considered necessary

(1) The principal must ensure that –

- (a) the behaviour, the educational needs of a student, disability, age of student and the residential social circumstances of the student has been considered before suspending a pupil
- (b) a pupil is informed that suspension is being considered and is given an opportunity to address the issues of concern and respond positively with a student support group that is consistent with

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- a staged response, unless the principal is satisfied that immediate action (in the form of a suspension or expulsion) is required
- (c) the parent may be accompanied at that meeting by another person who is not acting for fee or reward
 - (d) if it is considered warranted by the pupil or parent, the principal must ensure that suitable language interpretation facilities are available at the meeting arranged.

Grounds for suspension

- (1) A student may, by order of the principal of a state school, be suspended if, whilst attending school or travelling directly to or from school or engaged in any school activity away from school, including travel organised by the school, the student:
 - (a) behaves in such a way that threatens or endangers health, safety and wellbeing of any staff member, student or any person assisting in the conduct of school activities; or
 - (b) commits an act of significant violence against a person or property or being knowingly involved in the theft of property; or
 - (c) possesses, uses or assists another person to use prohibited drugs and substances; or
 - (d) fails to comply with any reasonable and clearly communicated instruction of a principal, teacher, or other staff member; or
 - (e) consistently behaves in a manner that interferes with the wellbeing, safety or educational opportunities of any student; or
 - (f) engages in behaviour that vilifies, defames, degrades or humiliates another person.
 - (g)

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](#)

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years, or earlier 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.

Data will be collected through:

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- discussion and consultation with students and parent/carers
- regular student bullying surveys
- regular staff surveys
- assessment of other school-based data, including the number of reported incidents of bullying in each year group and the effectiveness of the responses implemented
- Attitudes to School Survey
- [Parent Opinion Survey](#)

Proposed amendments to this policy will be discussed with student representative groups, parents groups, school council

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated on June 2021 and is scheduled for review in May 2023.