

## Bullying Prevention Policy

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

### Purpose

Mount Eliza 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 Mount Eliza North Primary School community
- Make clear that no form of bullying at Mount Eliza North Primary School will be tolerated
- Outline the strategies and programs in place at Mount Eliza 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 Mount Eliza North Primary School

When responding to bullying behaviour, Mount Eliza 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.

Mount Eliza 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 Mount Eliza North Primary School aims to prevent, address and respond to student bullying behaviour. Mount Eliza 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* and *Inclusion and Diversity policy*.

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.

*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. Mount Eliza North 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 Mount Eliza North Primary School and may have serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour. Mount Eliza 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**

Mount Eliza 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 Mount Eliza North 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. The Mount Eliza North Primary School community will be aware of the school's position on bullying. This will be implemented through a three-phase approach:

### **Implementation**

#### **At Mount Eliza North Primary School we:**

- 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.
- Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships Program is implemented to learn 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.
- The Play Leaders and Horizons programs 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.
- 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.

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

### A. Primary Prevention:

- Provide professional development opportunities for staff relating to bullying, harassment and proven countermeasures
- Promote parent workshops to enhance community understanding and support, towards a shared approach to bullying
- Provide programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving. These programs may include but are not restricted to The Resilience Project & Journals, Building Resilience – Social and Emotional Learning (Department of Education and Training, DET), Kelso’s Choice, IB Attributes and Learner Profiles, ‘Stop, Think, Do’, Strength Cards, Positive Play, Restorative Justice, Circle Time, Classroom and Yard Behavioural Management Process and through Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships.
- Implement and become an accredited eSmart school which is an anti-cyber bullying program involving the whole school community.
- Students in Years Prep to 2 to have a class computer log in; Students from Year 3 to 6 to be ~~provided~~ with individual and confidential computer and network logins and passwords; Processes implemented to ensure tracking of student activity on the school’s computer equipment and network
- Forums established for students to provide feedback i.e. SRC, Student Forums, Survey My Class & Student Attitude to School Survey
- Bullying in the playground will be tracked using the yard duty folders and attendance to our Restorative Chat Group.
- Structured activities (e.g. Horizons, Library, Art, and Sporting activities) will be made available to students at lunch breaks
- Senior Buddy program where Year 5 and 6 students are paired with Prep students to provide friendship and additional support

### B. Early Intervention:

- Promote the reporting of bullying incidents by students, staff and parents to appropriate staff (Principal, Assistant Principals, Sub-School Coordinators)
- A designated staff member to monitor student traffic on the school’s computer network to identify and report potential problems
- Provide support for both the perpetrators and the victims
- Appropriate staff (the Principal, Assistant Principals, Sub-School Coordinators or class teacher) may be involved with parent, student or staff consultation sessions, in order to address bullying problems

### C. Intervention:

- Once identified, each person who bullied, each target, and any witnesses will be spoken with, and all incidents or allegations of bullying will be fully investigated and documented
- Parents will be contacted at the discretion of the appropriate staff member
- Support will be offered to each student who bullied, and the targets
- Students whose bullying behaviour continues may be referred for further support; This may include DET psychologist and/or social worker
- If bullying persists the Principal or Assistant Principals will commence formal disciplinary action

Mount Eliza North Primary School will impose consequences for students who continue to exhibit bullying behaviour.

These consequences may include:

- Confined play areas
- Exclusion from the yard
- Restorative Chat Group

- Isolation, through the use of detention
- Removal/withdrawal of privileges
- Individualised Behaviour Management Plans (BMP) as set out by the school and discussed with the family of the student
- Suspension or expulsion proceedings (refer to DET Procedures)

Mount Eliza North Primary School will impose consequences for staff who exhibit bullying behaviour. These consequences will be individually based and may involve:

- Counselling
- A period of monitoring
- Referral to a mentor
- Disciplinary action

## **Incident Response**

### **Reporting concerns to Mount Eliza 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.

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 Mount Eliza North Primary School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

We encourage students to speak to their teacher. However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff.

Parents or carers who develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Mount Eliza North Primary School should contact the Assistant Principal (Wellbeing), by phone on 97876611 or by email.

### **Investigations**

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

1. record the details of the allegations in Sentral and
2. inform their Sub-School Leader and Assistant Principal/s or Principal.

The Principal or Assistant Principal/s are responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, the Principal or Assistant Principals 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 Principal or Assistant Principals 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 teachers have 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 Assistant Principal/s, 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, Mount Eliza 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 or 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 Student Wellbeing Team, SSS, external provider.
- Offer counselling support to the students engaging in bullying behaviour, including referral to the Student Wellbeing Team, SSS, external provider.
- Offer counselling support to affected students, including witnesses and/or friends of the target student, including referral to the Student Wellbeing Team, SSS, external provider.
- 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 (Restorative Chat)
- 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, including



- 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 Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships.
- 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.

Mount Eliza 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.

Assistant Principals and Principal are responsible for maintaining up to date records of the investigation of and responses to bullying behaviour.

## COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- Included as a reference in school newsletter
- Discussed at student forums/through communication tools
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

## Further information and resources

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- 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 3 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:**

- 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 school council.

**Department Resources**

For more information see:

DET's Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance

DET's Student Engagement Policy Guidelines

**Appendices**

**Appendix A – Behaviour Management Process**



## APPENDIX A:

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### CLASSROOM BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT PROCESS

**Step 1** Verbal warning

**Step 2** Remind student of rules and consequences

**Step 3** Isolation within the classroom

**Step 4** Isolation in a Buddy classroom/grade (checklist to be ticked))

**Step 5** Isolation in Sub School Leader's classroom (reflection form completed)

**Step 6** Isolation in the office of a Principal Class Officer (Assistant Principal first) or their delegate.

**Severe Clause** - Any student, who commits an aggressive act towards another student or adult with intent to harm, will incur detention/suspension at the discretion of the Principal Class Officers or their delegate.

\*Any student who fails to follow reasonable instructions and is verbally abusive towards a student/adult will incur detention/suspension at the discretion of the Principal Class Officers or their delegate.

\*Severe acts of disturbance may result in teachers moving to steps 4, 5 and/or 6 with immediacy. The severe clause may also be invoked at this stage. These steps must all occur within a day, where practicable. New day – fresh start.

\* If a child is sent to a buddy grade three times in a two week period or before this will result in a formal detention. (Assistant Principal to be informed)

\* Teachers will keep a record of incidents requiring step 3, 4, 5 and 6 in their personal classroom 'incidents' book.

\* If a child is sent to a Sub School Leader twice in a two week period this will result in a detention.

\* Sub School Leaders need to keep a record of students exited to them.

\* After 3 detentions, due to classroom misbehaviour, a meeting between class teacher, parents and a member of the Leadership Team must be arranged.

\* Specialist classes follow the same process.

### **Detention:**

Detention/s will be determined by the Principal Class Officers or their delegate. Parents/caregivers will be notified by letter and the incident will be recorded.

Detention/s not served on the day/s specified will carry over until served.

### **DOCUMENTATION:**

- Folder containing records of detentions due to classroom misbehaviour to be retained by Assistant Principal marked CLASSROOM INCIDENTS.
- Folder containing Master Copies and photocopies of Buddy Grade lists, Reflection Forms and Detention Slips to be retained in Assistant Principal's office marked MASTER COPIES.
- Each class teacher has a class list of their 'Buddy Grades' class to tick off.

### YARD BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT PROCESS

**Step 1** Remind student of rules and consequences

**Step 2** Walk with teacher for 5 minutes

**Step 3** Time out seat – 10 minutes

**Step 4** Removal from the yard to 'Time-Out Space' for an RCG (reflection form completed)  
15 minutes - 30 minutes.

**Severe Clause:** Any student who commits an aggressive act towards another student with intent to harm, will incur detention/suspension at the discretion of the Principal Class Officers or their delegate.

Any student who fails to follow reasonable instructions and is verbally abusive towards a student/adult will incur detention/suspension at the discretion of the Principal Class Officers or their delegate.

\* Severe acts of disturbance in the yard may result in teachers moving to step 4, or severe clause may be invoked. This is to be documented on SENTRAL

\* Assistant principal decides whether a student needs a restricted area of play.

\* Three visits to the 'Time out Space' in a two week period or less will result in a formal detention.

\* If time is running out (i.e. 5 minutes left) teacher in time out room records when they ARRIVE at time out and then the next day, they finish the rest of the time.

\* If a child is sent to the 'Time out Space' three times in a two week period or before this will result in a formal detention. (Assistant Principal to enforce)

\* After 3 detentions, due to yard misbehaviour, a meeting between parents and a member of the Leadership Team must be arranged.

\* Parents are **not** informed of a yard 'timeout'.

### **Detention:**

Detention/s will be determined by the Principal Class Officers or their delegate. Parents/caregivers will be notified by letter and the incident will be recorded.

Detention/s not served on the day/s specified will carry over until served.

### **DOCUMENTATION:**

- Folder containing records of detentions due to classroom misbehaviour to be retained by Assistant Principal and on SENTRAL
- Folder containing Master Copies and photocopies of Buddy Grade lists, Reflection Forms and Detention Slips to be retained in digital form on Google Drive and/or SENTRAL

### **Behaviour Management Process: severe and mild behaviours**

#### **Mild** (begin at step 1)

1. Name calling
2. Interrupting yard game (e.g. taking ball)
3. Continually/consistently interrupting class
4. Taking/grabbing objects off others without permission
5. Inappropriate use of equipment
6. Squirting water/throwing dirt/sand misuse
7. Being inside during recess and lunchtimes without permission
8. Defacing own property
9. No hat
10. Littering
11. Late to class
12. Out of bounds

**Severe** Yard Behaviour Management Process begin at step 4, or severe clause may be invoked at the discretion of the Principal class officers or their delegate.

Classroom Behaviour Management Process begins at steps 4, 5 or 6, or severe clause may be invoked at the discretion of the Principal Class Officers or their delegate.

1. Swearing and/or inappropriate language
2. Throwing objects

3. Refusal to come to class
4. Leaving during class time
5. Consistently, deliberately (three or more times in a two week period) late to class from recess and lunch
6. Defiance towards teacher
7. Arguing or answering back to a teacher
8. Stealing
9. Defacing property of others or school
10. Aggressive behaviour towards others (student or adult)

Severe Clause: Any student, who commits an aggressive act towards another student/adult with intent to harm, will incur detention/suspension at the discretion of the Principal Class Officers or their delegate.

\*Any student who fails to follow reasonable instructions and is verbally abusive towards a student/adult will incur detention/suspension at the discretion of the Principal Class Officers or their delegate.

**Bullying** (refer to the Bullying Policy for definition of bullying and procedure)

\* Please note that in some situations the procedure may vary depending on the factors surrounding the situation (i.e. age, cognitive, language, social, emotional and physical development and intent of the child/children etc) and this is up to the discretion of the staff involved.