

# Moomba Park Primary School

## Bullying Prevention Policy



### Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact  
Moomba Park PS 93592028

### PREPARED BY:

**Maria Marchionna**

### APPROVED BY COUNCIL:

**This policy needs to be read in conjunction with the Behaviour Management Policy and Program and the Student Wellbeing Policy.**

### PURPOSE

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

When responding to bullying behaviour, Moomba Park 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.

Moomba Park 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 Moomba Park Primary School aims to prevent, address and respond to student bullying behaviour. Moomba Park 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*.

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 Student 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. Moomba Park Primary School will use its Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy and Restorative Justice Practices 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. Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated at Moomba Park Primary School and may have serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour. Moomba Park 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

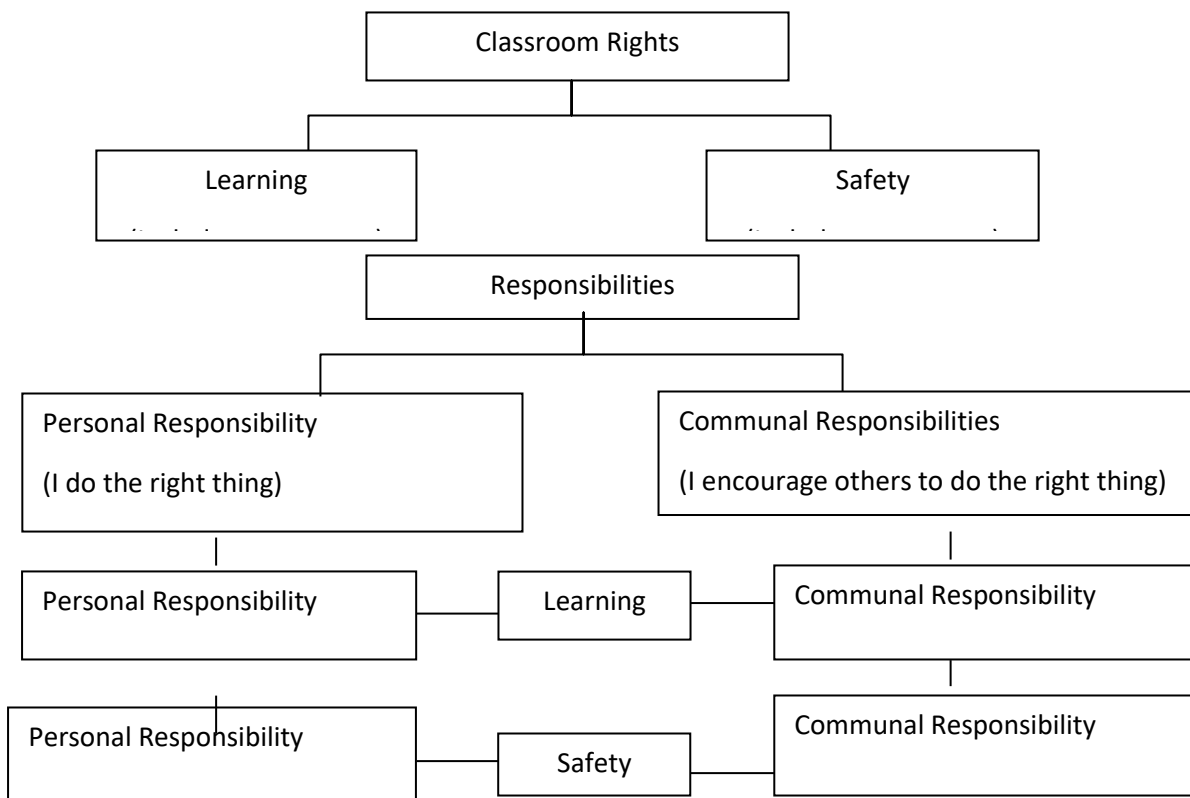
Moomba Park Primary School has a number of programs and strategies in place to build a positive and inclusive school culture. We strive to foster a school culture that prevents bullying behaviour by modelling and encouraging behaviour that demonstrates acceptance, kindness and respect.

Bullying prevention at Moomba Park 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.
- Each year classrooms work to build a positive climate for learning through our Learning Framework which emphasizes respectful relationships, student rights and responsibilities.
- A range of year level incursions and programs 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.

- The Peer Support Program and the Buddy 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.
- Multi-age across the school encourage strong relationships across the school, friendship and students looking out for each other.
- 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.
- All staff are trained in Restorative Justice Practices and Trauma Informed Practices to support students in solving issues of bullying as they arise.
- Families are informed and involved in all aspects of solving serious issues at school.

At Moomba Park Primary School everyone has both **Personal and Communal responsibilities**.



- The right to be safe at school
- The responsibility of all not to take part in bullying in any way.
- The responsibility to let teachers or senior staff know about bullying situations of which they are aware.

At Moomba Park Primary School, our actions are based on the following values.

<p><b>Respect</b></p> <p>Tolerance</p> <p>Treat others as you would like to be treated yourself</p> <p>Honesty</p> <p>Caring for school property</p> <p>Treat others fairly</p> <p>Appreciating diversity</p>	<p><b>Learning</b></p> <p>Having a voice in my learning</p> <p>Learning new skills and developing as individuals</p> <p>Equality of opportunity</p> <p>Working to gain knowledge in a variety of situations</p> <p>Lifelong learning</p> <p>Expressing opinions and ideas</p>
<p><b>Caring / Support</b></p> <p>Assisting those in need</p> <p>Positive reinforcement</p> <p>Listening with empathy</p> <p>Being understanding</p>	<p><b>Positive Attitude</b></p> <p>Approaching people, activities, problems and tasks in a proactive, cheerful, optimistic and enthusiastic manner, things can be changed</p>

When we 'live' these values, bullying situations are greatly reduced and students have the opportunity to reach their potential.

### **The consequences of bullying affect everyone in the community...some examples.**

#### **Children with bullying behaviour...**

- Students who take part in bullying can become desensitised to cruelty and injustice, fail to develop social responsibility and, in some cases, become involved at a later stage in domestic abuse, workplace bullying and or other forms of anti-social behaviour.

#### **Children experiencing the bullying...**

- The student who is bullied suffers emotional and physical distress.

#### **The by-standers...**

- Students who are aware of bullying but do nothing about it often feel guilty and ashamed.

#### **Families...**

- The victim's family suffers emotional, social, intellectual and physical distress.

### **The community...**

- No-one is safe whilst bullying is happening because it creates a climate of intimidation and fear in which effective learning cannot take place.

### **School staff...**

- The school's reputation as being a safe learning environment can be damaged

### **Our commitment to preventing and minimising bullying...**

Moomba Park Primary School does not tolerate bullying in any form. All members of the school community are committed to ensuring a safe and caring environment which promotes personal growth, achievement and positive relationships for all students.

### **In order to address issues of bullying, the community need to:**

#### **Understand what bullying is...**

Bullying is a repetitive attack which causes distress not only at the time of the attack but also by the threat of future attacks. Usually there is an imbalance of power and it has a negative impact on the victim. It can be verbal, physical, social or psychological. It can be done in person, by manipulating others to take part, or by electronic means such as email, text messages chat rooms or social networking sites. It is more likely to happen when the bully identifies something 'different' about the victim.

#### **Understand different forms of Power...**

Bullies will often use various forms of power in order to control situations and their victims. Forms include:

- Age
- Popularity
- Physical size and strength
- Intelligence
- Physical appearance including clothing, weight, eye colour, skin colour etc.
- Financial
- Language

#### **Understand the wide range of bullying behaviours including...**

- Direct physical attacks such as hitting, tripping, pushing, throwing things towards others etc
- Name calling, mocking, setting up, belittling, and insulting someone
- Making insulting racist or sexual comments
- Trying to damage someone's reputation amongst other students by spreading rumours, exposing private information, telling lies, etc.
- Using verbal and non-verbal put-downs in a public context such as a discussion or meeting
- Playing nasty practical jokes on others
- Damaging or hiding other people's personal property
- Using covert forms of physical intimidation such as blocking the way and making the other person walk around them or bumping them and claiming it was an accident
- Encouraging others to socially exclude someone else

- ‘Cyberbullying’ (e.g. making malicious comments or playing nasty practical jokes on someone via email, chat rooms, text messages, etc.)
- Accusing someone of things they haven’t done.
- Threatening to arrange someone else to hurt the target.
- Provoking others to fight

**Understand why some students are motivated to bully.**

For instance...

- Wanting to belong,
- Fear
- Seeking attention
- Enjoying feeling powerful
- Pattern – “it is what I always do”
- Peer Pressure
- Jealousy
- Seeking revenge

**Know when someone is bullying and being bullied...**

How to spot a bully... some signs may include	How to spot an affected person... some signs may include
Aims to dominate, command and control others Has minimal empathy Bullies siblings and parents His /her school work and school behaviour deteriorates Associates with mean friends Denies responsibility for his behaviour and blames others May boast about his bullying exploits Shows limited remorse Offers devious and dishonest answers, and Resists compliance and cooperation with parents and teachers.	Eyes red, teary, narrowed or wide open, looking down or away Face white or red, with tense muscles Lips tight or mouth open Shoulders slumped, bent over or pulled back Body movements paralysed, rigid or fidgeting, walking off Voice very quiet, angry, upset, muffled, grunting Retaliates verbally by blabbing, blaming or criticising back Feelings are exposed: fear, anger, hurt, hate, embarrassment, teariness, frustration and Does nothing, looks like a rabbit in the headlights, walks away or retaliates.

Source: “Bully Blocking.” by Evelyn M. Field

## Be aware of how children may respond...

Unhelpful responses	Helpful responses
Chinese Whisperer – telling others the story and it changing Searching for Allies – brothers, sisters, friends Passive support – walking away and doing nothing, watching, laughing Buying in – sticking up for a person rather than doing “what’s right” Telling/sharing – bringing up things that happened in the past Protection – lying on your friends behalf Associate current issue with a previous one	Helping your friend to calm down by using humour and distraction Telling a trusted friend / adult who will <b>help</b> you or your friend Telling the bully / aggressive person to stop Ask the bully / aggressive person how they’d feel if this was happening to them Thinking about how this would feel if it was happening to you – showing empathy

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

## INCIDENT RESPONSE

### Reporting concerns to Moomba Park 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 Moomba Park Primary School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

We encourage students to speak to yard duty teachers, their classroom teachers, wellbeing teacher and principal class when issues arise. However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff including [teachers, wellbeing staff, school social worker etc.].

Parents or carers who develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Moomba Park Primary School should contact the Wellbeing teacher, Assistant principal or Principal on 93592028 or [moomba.park.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:moomba.park.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au).

### Investigations

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

1. record the details of the allegations in their diaries and notebooks
2. inform Wellbeing teacher, Assistant Principal and/or Principal

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

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 Wellbeing 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 teachers, ESS, 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, Moomba Park Primary School will consider:

- the age and maturity of the students involved
- the additional needs of the student
- 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.

Wellbeing 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 Student Wellbeing Team, SSS, external provider
- Offer counselling support to the students engaging in bullying behaviour, including referral to 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 Community Restorative 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, including connect affected students with an older Student Mentor, resilience programs, social competence programs.
- 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 peer mentoring, social skills and resilience programs.
- 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.

Moomba Park 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.

Wellbeing teacher is responsible for maintaining up to date records of the investigation of and responses to bullying behaviour.

## 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

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 on a biannual or earlier 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 and consultation with students and parent/carers
- regular student bullying surveys
- regular staff surveys
- [Bully Stoppers Data Collection](#) tool
- 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 staff, Junior School Council, Parents, Friends and Carers Group, and School Council]

## REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated on September 2022 and is scheduled for review in September 2024.

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	September 2022
Consultation	Ongoing consultation via school website
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	September 2024