

## Bullying Prevention Policy

### PURPOSE

Newport Gardens 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 Newport Gardens Primary School community
- make clear that no form of bullying at Newport Gardens Primary School will be tolerated
- outline the strategies and programs in place at Newport Gardens Primary School to build a positive school culture and prevent bullying behaviour
- we build and maintain a positive school culture to prevent bullying behaviour with the School-wide Positive Behaviour Program
- 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 Newport Gardens Primary School.

When responding to bullying behaviour, Newport Gardens 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

Newport Gardens 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 Newport Gardens Primary School aims to prevent, address and respond to student bullying behaviour. Newport Gardens 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 Code of Conduct' and 'Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy' and 'Inclusion and Diversity' policy and 'Digital Technologies Policy'.

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions. It also applies to bullying behaviour between students that occurs outside of school hours, where the behaviour impacts on student wellbeing and safety at school.

## 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.

There are four main types of bullying behaviour:

- Physical – examples include hitting, pushing, shoving or intimidating or otherwise physically hurting another person, damaging or stealing their belongings. It includes threats of violence.
- Verbal/written – examples include name-calling or insulting someone about an attribute, quality or personal characteristic.
- Social (sometimes called relational or emotional bullying) – examples include deliberately excluding someone, spreading rumours, sharing information that will have a harmful effect on the other person and/or damaging a person's social reputation or social acceptance.
- Cyberbullying – any form of bullying behaviour that occurs online or via a mobile device. It can be verbal or written, and can include threats of violence as well as images, videos and/or audio.

Bullying can be a form of racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia or other type of social prejudice when the behaviour is targeted at an individual or group because of a personal characteristic, such as race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability.

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 SWPBS Matrix.

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. Newport Gardens Primary School will use its SWPBS Matrix and Tiered Approach to Learning and Wellbeing to guide a response to single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression alongside Compass in recording incidences.

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 Newport Gardens Primary School and may have serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour. Newport Gardens 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.

*Discrimination* is behaviour that treats someone unfavourably because of a personal characteristic (for example, race, religious belief or activity, disability, sex or intersex status, gender identity or sexual orientation).

Discrimination, harassment, and any other inappropriate behaviour is not tolerated at our school and there may be serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour. This includes any form of racism, religious or disability discrimination, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, or any other behaviour that targets an individual or group.

## BULLYING PREVENTION

School-wide Positive Behaviour Support Program assists Newport Gardens Primary School to improve social, emotional, behavioural and academic outcomes for children and young people.

Newport Gardens Primary School's implementation of SWPBS is of priority and teachers and students have time to focus on relationships and classroom instruction. Students and staff benefit from:

- increased respectful and positive behaviour
- increased time focused on instruction
- improved social-emotional wellbeing
- positive and respectful relationships among students and staff
- increased adoption of evidence-based instructional practices
- a predictable learning environment with improved perceptions of safety and increased attendance

## **SWPBS assists Newport Gardens Primary School to:**

**Establish a common philosophy and purpose:** Staff and students use a common language to discuss behaviour. School philosophy emphasises the need to teach appropriate behaviour much like academic learning.

**Establish Leadership and school-wide support:** School leaders publicly endorse and support SWPBS. A team at the school leads implementation by creating, reviewing and monitoring an action plan. The work is done in collaboration by the whole staff with input from parents, students and the community.

**Clearly define a set of expected behaviours:** The school identifies 3-5 behavioural expectations that apply at all times. Clear, positively stated examples are identified and displayed in different school settings.

**Establish procedures for teaching and practising expected behaviours:** A school-wide plan is developed to ensure behavioural expectations are taught to all students by all staff.

**Implement a continuum of procedures to encourage expected behaviours:** School-wide systems are developed to acknowledge expected behaviour and promote commitment from all members of the school community.

**Develop a continuum of procedures to discourage inappropriate behaviour:** Schools clearly define problem behaviours and identify specific strategies and responses to minor and major behavioural infractions.

**Use procedures for record-keeping, decision making and ongoing monitoring:** Schools review data on repeated behaviour issues, the settings in which they occur, and the consequences most likely to be applied for inappropriate behaviours. They correlate these with other sources of data such as academic progress and analyse this data to make necessary adjustments to school operations in an effort to reduce inappropriate behaviour.

**Support staff to use effective classroom practices:** Schools establish systems to support staff to adopt evidence-based instructional practices associated with reductions in inappropriate behaviour.

## **At our school:**

- We identify and implement evidence-based programs and initiatives from the [Schools Mental Health Menu](#) that are relevant to preventing and addressing bullying and help us to build a positive and inclusive school climate.
- 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.
- We participate in the Respectful Relationships initiative, which aims to embed a culture of respect and equality across our school.
- We celebrate the diverse backgrounds of members of our school community and teach multicultural education, including Aboriginal History, to promote mutual respect and social cohesion.
- We participate in the Safe Schools program to help us foster a safe environment that is supportive and inclusive of LGBTIQ+ students.
- Teachers are encouraged to incorporate classroom management strategies that discourage bullying and promote positive behaviour.
- 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.
- We promote upstander behaviour as a way of empowering our students to take appropriate action positively and safely when they see or hear of a peer being bullied.
- We implement a peer support program to 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.
- We participate in the National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence.

## INCIDENT RESPONSE

Reporting concerns to Newport Gardens 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 Newport Gardens Primary School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances. We encourage students to speak to teachers, specialist staff and those in leadership positions. However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff including our Assistant Principal, Wellbeing Coordinator, previous teacher's or Team Leaders.

Parents or carers who develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Newport Gardens Primary School should contact our school email or contact by phone:

[Newport.Gardens@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:Newport.Gardens@education.vic.gov.au)

Phone: (03) 9391 2168

## Investigations

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

- record the details of the allegations on Compass and ensure that relevant staff are included in the information chain (E.g. Principal, Assistant Principal, Wellbeing Team, PLC Leader, Classroom Teacher etc.)

The Principal/Assistant Principal or Wellbeing Team is responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, the above-mentioned staff member 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/Assistant Principal or Wellbeing Team 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 Principal/Assistant Principal or Wellbeing Team 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 Principal/Assistant Principal, Wellbeing Team, teachers, Student Support Services, Department of Education and training specialist staff etc.

There are several 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, Newport Gardens 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.

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

- Offer counselling support to the target student or students, including referral to our Wellbeing Team or Student Support Services.
- Offer counselling support to the students engaging in bullying behaviour, including referral to the Wellbeing Team or Student Support Services.
- Offer counselling support to affected students, including witnesses and/or friends of the target student, including referral to the Wellbeing Team or Student Support Services
- 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 conversations between some or all the students involved to help to encourage students to take responsibility for their behaviour and explore underlying reasons for conflict or grievance.
- 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. **[www.readymade.com.au/method](http://www.readymade.com.au/method)**
- 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 SWPBS - Check-in, Check-out, Social Emotional Learning (SEL), Respectful Relationships or 'Zones of Regulation'.
- 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.

Newport Gardens 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 Coordinator and Principal/Assistant Principal is 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:

- Newsletter inclusions
- School website: <https://www.newportgardensps.vic.edu.au>
- Parent information sessions and workshops
- School Council meetings
- Staff induction and training
- Staff Operations Guide
- Year Start-up program across all year levels
- Transition sessions for new families
- Made available in hard copy form from school administration upon request

## 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:

- [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 2-year basis, 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
- 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 are discussed with staff, school council, parent feedback groups and student feedback groups, if appropriate.

## REVIEW CYCLE

Policy last reviewed	June 2024
Consultation	School Council & Staff
Approved by	Principal - Blayne Wallis
Next scheduled review date	March 2026