

# Bullying Prevention and Intervention

*This policy is compatible and compliant with The Brotherhood of St Laurence – High Street Centre Frankston, Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) and the broader Brotherhood of St Laurence policies.*

## **Policy background and purpose**

The David Scott School will provide a safe, inclusive, supportive and ordered learning environment free from bullying, harassment and violence. Bullying in any form is not acceptable and will be dealt with seriously and expediently. Staff will work with the David Scott School community and other services and agencies to support students in being responsible and productive members of the community.

**The David Scott School has a Zero Tolerance to Bullying.**

## **Policy Objectives**

To maintain a safe space for all students and staff and to ensure respect and tolerance.

## **Scope**

All members of the David Scott School Community.

## **Definitions**

Bullying is the repeated and intentional behaviour of causing fear, distress or harm towards another person that involves an imbalance of power. It can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and harassment. Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological, aggressive behaviour by a person or group directed towards a less powerful person or group that is intended to cause harm, distress or fear.

Bullying can take many forms including:

- **Physical bullying** which involves physical actions such as hitting, pushing, obstructing or being used to hurt or intimidate someone. Damaging, stealing or hiding personal belongings is also a form of physical bullying.
- **Psychological bullying** which is when words or actions are used to cause psychological harm. Examples of psychological bullying include name calling, teasing or making fun of someone because of their actions, appearance, physical characteristics or cultural background.
- **Indirect bullying** which is when deliberate acts of exclusion or spreading of untrue stories are used to hurt or intimidate someone.
- **Cyber bullying** which is the ongoing abuse of power to threaten or harm another person using technology. Cyber bullying can occur in chat rooms, on social networking sites, through emails or on mobile phones.

There are some specific types of bullying behaviour:

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- Verbal or written abuse - such as targeted name-calling or jokes, or displaying offensive images
- Violence - including threats of violence
- Sexual harassment - unwelcome or unreciprocated conduct of a sexual nature, which could reasonably be expected to cause offence, humiliation or intimidation
- Homophobia and other hostile behaviour towards students relating to gender and sexuality
- Discrimination including racial discrimination - treating people differently because of their identity

Some examples of conduct that may constitute bullying (but not limited to) are set out below:

- Physical assault or threats
- Excluding or isolating individuals
- Verbal abuse
- Initiation rites
- Intimidation
- Assigning meaningless tasks unrelated to the learning activity
- Teasing, sarcasm or insults
- Deliberately withholding information that is vital for effective performance
- Psychological harassment
- Constant and unwarranted criticism

## What is Bullying?

There are many negative situations which, whilst being potentially distressing for students, are not bullying. These include:

- **Mutual Conflict Situations** which involves a disagreement, but not an imbalance of power. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation
- **Single-Episode Acts** of nastiness or aggression directed towards many different people, including single incidents of loss of temper, shouting or swearing do not normally constitute bullying.
- **Social rejection or dislike** unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

## Signs of Bullying

Major behavioural changes in a student may be indicative of bullying. Such behavioural changes may include but are not limited to:

- crying at night and having nightmares
- refusing to talk when asked "What's wrong?"

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- having unexplained bruises, cuts or scratches
- an unwillingness or refusal to go to school
- feeling ill in the mornings
- a decline in quality of school work
- becoming withdrawn and lacking confidence
- beginning to bully siblings
- acting unreasonably.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to recognise signs of bullying and notify the School through a trusted staff member immediately (such as their class teacher or a member of the David Scott School's Wellbeing Team), if they suspect their young person is a victim of bullying.

## **David Scott School's Policy**

David Scott School recognises its duty to students to provide a safe and positive learning environment where individual differences and diversity within the School is respected and accepted.

Bullying is not tolerated at David Scott School.

It is our policy that:

- bullying be managed through a 'whole-of-School community' approach involving students, staff and parents/guardians
- bullying prevention strategies be implemented within the School on a continuous basis with a focus on teaching appropriate skills and strategies to empower staff, students and parents/guardians to recognise bullying and respond appropriately
- bullying response strategies be tailored to the circumstances of each incident
- staff establish positive role models emphasising our no-bullying culture
- bullying prevention and intervention strategies are reviewed on an annual basis against best practice.

## **Responsibilities**

The Principal or delegate will:

- Develop, implement and regularly review the Anti-Bullying Policy
- Ensure that new staff and new students and their families are aware of The David Scott School Anti-Bullying policy
- Provide students with orientation on The David Scott School policies and procedures as part of their induction
- Manage incidents of bullying in a way that is consistent with the Student Behaviour Management Process and
- the Student Engagement Policy
- Ensure ongoing training and development of teachers, induction of students and the provision of information to parents.

Teaching and support staff members will:

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- Develop and foster positive relationships with students and families
- Communicate and interact effectively with students and engage in cooperative and restorative problem-solving relationships to address issues of bullying
- Participate in developing, implementing and reviewing the school's anti-bullying policy, curriculum and in service offerings, and the procedures for managing incidents of bullying
- Critically reflect on practices and develop the knowledge and skills needed to manage incidents of bullying successfully
- Establish, maintain, make explicit and model The David Scott School's expectations relating to bullying
- Participate in training and development related to decreasing bullying in schools
- Support students to be effective bystanders.

Parents will support The David Scott School in maintaining a safe and supportive environment by:

- Keeping staff informed of concerns about behaviour, their student's health issues or other matters of relevance
- Communicating with staff about issues of concern as soon as possible.

Students will support The David Scott School in maintaining a safe and supportive environment by:

- Being respectful towards other students, staff and members of The David Scott School community
- Participating in sessions regarding The David Scott School's anti-bullying policy, being an effective bystander,
- and other sessions regarding behavioural expectations
- Communicating with an appropriate adult if they are aware that someone else is being bullied or harassed.

## **Bullying Prevention Strategies**

David Scott School recognises that the implementation of whole-School prevention strategies is the most effective way of eliminating, or at least minimising incidents of bullying within our community.

The following initiatives form part of our overall bullying prevention strategy and our strategy to create a 'no bullying' culture within the School:

- a structured curriculum that provides appropriate information and skills relating to bullying (including cyberbullying) and bullying prevention, to students over the course of the academic year
- education, training and professional development of staff in bullying prevention and response strategies

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- provision of information to parents/guardians, to raise awareness of bullying as a School community issue to
- equip them to recognise signs of bullying, as well as to provide them with clear paths for raising any concerns
- they may have relating to bullying directly with the School
- promotion of a supportive environment that encourages the development of positive relationships and
- communication between staff, students and parents/guardians
- promotion of responsible bystander behaviour amongst students, staff and parents/guardians
- reporting of incidents of alleged bullying by students, bystanders, parents/guardians and staff are encouraged,
- and made easy through the establishment of multiple reporting channels (as specified below)
- risk assessments of bullying within the School are undertaken by surveying students to identify bullying issues
- and to determine the efficacy to the David Scott School's approach to addressing bullying
- records of reported bullying incidents are maintained
- education of staff, students and parents/guardians on health conditions, notably mental health presentations, to
- promote understanding and to reduce stigma and fear
- promotion of student awareness and a 'no-bullying' environment.

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## Policy Changes

Date	Reason for Change	Made by