

## STUDENT HEALTH, SAFETY, WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT

### Bullying Prevention Policy

#### PURPOSE

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

When responding to bullying behaviour, Springvale Rise 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.

Springvale Rise 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 Springvale Rise Primary School aims to prevent, address and respond to student bullying behaviour. Springvale Rise 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 the school's Student Code of Conduct, Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy and Inclusion and Diversity policy, DET Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Policy and in line with our school values and expectations.

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 [Springvale Rise Primary School. Bullying Prevention Policy. 2021 to 2024.](#)

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students engaging in this behaviour. Springvale Rise 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 Springvale Rise Primary School and may have serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour. Springvale Rise 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

Springvale Rise Primary School's vision is to *'aspire to create an inclusive and respectful learning community that nurtures, supports, inspires and challenges all members of the school community to achieve and celebrate their personal best within a culture of collaboration, shared responsibility and high expectations.'* We strive to foster a school culture that prevents bullying behaviour by modelling and encouraging high expectations and behaviour that demonstrates our school values of Respect, Excellence, Collaboration and Resilience.

Springvale Rise Primary School strives to embed our school values and build a positive and inclusive school culture using specifically selected programs and initiatives. Bullying prevention at Springvale Rise 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. At our school, we:

- have a positive school environment that provides safety, security and support for students and promotes positive relationships and wellbeing.
- build strong partnerships between the school, families, and the broader community so that all members work together to ensure the safety of students. This often begins with parents attending Community Hub before their children even formally begin school.
- train all staff in Restorative Practices, equipping them with the skills and knowledge to facilitate and maintain positive relationships with all students and address wrongdoing restoratively.
- provide formalised weekly Social and Emotional lessons (SEL) in every classroom, which are supported by the Respectful Relationships Initiative as well as the Zones of Regulation. Students develop the emotional literacy, resilience, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem-solving skills they need to be confident communicators who can resolve conflict in a non-aggressive and constructive way.
- teach students about bullying and how to respond to bullying behaviour assertively.
- facilitate daily Circle Time in every classroom, enabling students to express their feelings and voice their thoughts and possible concerns.
- encourage teachers to incorporate classroom management strategies that discourage bullying and promote positive behaviour.
- organise a range of year level incursions and programs each year that raise awareness about bullying and its impacts.
- have designated Wellbeing Leaders on each campus who provide support to teachers, students, and their families.
- use a Buddy program for our Foundation and Senior students to encourage positive relationships between students in different year levels.
- Promote the Student Representative Council (SRC) and encourage students to look out for each other and speak up if they hear or see something that they know is not ok. We specifically teach students to identify five people

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they can go to for help or to talk to (including teachers, older peers, and family) about any bullying or wrongdoing they have experienced or witnessed.

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

## INCIDENT RESPONSE

### Reporting concerns to Springvale Rise 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 Springvale Rise Primary School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

We encourage students to speak to their classroom teacher. However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff including, past or present teachers, Sub-School Team Leader, Wellbeing Leader or Assistant Principal.

Parents or carers who develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Springvale Rise Primary School should contact their child's classroom teacher either in person before or after school, or through the school number (Heights Campus: 03 9546 3799 or the Springvale Campus: 03 9546 9604) as soon as practical.

### Investigations

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

1. record the details of the allegations on Compass and,
2. inform the classroom teacher and their Sub-School Team Leader.

The Sub-School Team Leader is responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, the Sub-School Team Leader 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
- consult with the Assistant Principal and/or Principal
- 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 Sub-School Team Leader 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 implement an appropriate response to the behaviour most effectively.

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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 Sub-School Team Leader 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. 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, Springvale Rise 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.

In consultation with the classroom Teacher/s, Education Support Staff and/or Multicultural Aids, Wellbeing Officer, SSSO, Assistant Principal and the Principal support the Sub-School Team Leader may implement all, or some of the following responses to bullying behaviours:

- Refer the targeted student/s or students engaging in bullying behaviour, to the Wellbeing Team, who may engage with the student directly or refer onwards for further support (for example, SSSO, CASEA).
- Support other affected students, including witnesses and/or friends of the targeted student/s.
- Facilitate a restorative conference(s) with all or some of the students involved. The objective of restorative conference 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 Student Support Group (SSG) meeting to create Behaviour Support Plan (BSP) for the student/s engaging in bullying behaviour. This would be completed in consultation with the Wellbeing Leader, Assistant Principal, classroom teacher, students' parents or carers, and depending on the circumstances, the student themselves.
- Prepare a Behaviour Support Plan (BSP) restricting contact between target and students engaging in bullying behaviour.
- Provide additional learning opportunities for the students to develop social and emotional competencies including individual, small group and whole class as deemed necessary (for example, specific, targeted learning activities and incursions, projects or year level assemblies).
- Monitor the behaviour of the students involved for an appropriate time and take follow up action if necessary.
- Implement targeted strategies to reinforce positive behaviours (for example, Values Awards and leadership roles)
- 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.

Springvale Rise 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 Sub-School Team Leader together with the Assistant Principal is responsible ensuring that responses to bullying behaviour and any relating investigations are recorded correctly and that these records are up to date.

## FURHTER 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
- Duty of Care Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Equal Opportunity and Human Rights — Students DET Policy

<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/equal-opportunity-human-rights-students/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 as a part of our school's next triennial review process, 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
- Students Attitudes to School Survey
- [Parent Opinion Survey](#)

Proposed amendments to this policy will be discussed with The School Leadership Team, the wellbeing team, student leaders and school council.

## REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated in May 2021 and is scheduled for review prior to the next school review, or if guidelines change.

It is required that Springvale Rise Primary School consults school council regarding this policy.

This policy was discussed at School Council in: May 2021