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| | **Bullying & Harassment Prevention Policy** | **June 2026** |

## PURPOSE

Belle Vue 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 Belle Vue Park Primary School community
- make clear that no form of bullying at Belle Vue Park Primary School will be tolerated
- outline the strategies and programs in place at Belle Vue 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, witnesses and students engaging in bullying behaviour)
- seek parental and peer group support in addressing and preventing bullying behaviour at Belle Vue Park Primary School.

When responding to bullying behaviour, Belle Vue 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.

Belle Vue 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 Belle Vue Park Primary School aims to prevent, address and respond to student bullying behaviour. Belle Vue 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 Code of Conduct* and *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy.*

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions. It also applies to bullying behaviors between students that occurs outside of school hours, where the behavior 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.

For further information about bullying, refer to: Bully Stoppers (education.vic.gov.au) and the Department's Bullying Prevention and Response policy on the Policy and Advisory Library.

**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 our *Student Code of Conduct* and *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* and/or this *Bullying Prevention Policy* where the behaviour constitutes bullying.

***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. Belle Vue Park 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.

Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated at Belle Vue Park Primary School and may have serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour.

***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. Further information about discrimination and harassment, including definitions, is set out in our *Inclusion and Diversity Policy.*

**BULLYING PREVENTION**

Belle Vue Park Primary School has several 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 Belle Vue 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:
For further information about our engagement and wellbeing initiatives, please see our *Student Code of Conduct*

and *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy*.

**INCIDENT RESPONSE - REPORTING CONCERNS TO BELLE VUE PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Bullying is not tolerated at our school. We ensure bullying behaviour is identified and addressed with appropriate and proportionate consequences. All bullying complaints will be taken seriously and responded to sensitively.

Students who may be experiencing bullying behaviour, or students who have witnessed bullying behaviour, are encouraged to report their concerns to school staff, or another trusted adult, 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 Belle Vue Park Primary School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

We encourage students to speak to their classroom teacher, however, students are always encouraged and welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff including other teachers, teacher aides, wellbeing staff, school psychologists/social workers and our onsite external service provider, RelateWell Counselling.

Parents or carers who develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Belle Vue Park Primary School, should initially contact the Assistant Principal, Natalie Wise via email natalie.wise@education.vic.gov.au and/or the Student Wellbeing Officer, Susan Sandy via email at susan.sandy@education.vic.gov.au; or for extremely urgent incidents, advise the School Administration team on (03) 93067900 for them to arrange a meeting with the Principal; and/or Assistant Principal; and/or Classroom Teacher as quickly as possible.

**INVESTIGATIONS**

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

1. record the details of the allegations in the student records and/or XUNO
2. inform staff involved, i.e. the relevant Year Level Coordinator, Classroom Teacher, Student Welfare Officer; Assistant Principal; and Principal, as required.

The Assistant Principal is responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner.

To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, the Welfare Officer and/or Classroom Teacher may assist by:

- speaking 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;
- speaking to the parents of the students involved;
- speaking 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 nominated staff while 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 – https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/bullystoppers/bsadvicebrodieslaw01.pdf

**RESPONSES TO BULLYING BEHAVIOURS**

When the Assistant Principal 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 the relevant Year Level Coordinator, Classroom Teacher, Student Welfare Officer; Assistant Principal; and Principal, and if required, SSS, 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, Belle Vue Park Primary School will consider:

- the age and maturity of the students involved; and
- the severity and frequency of the bullying; and
- the impact it has had on the target student; and
- whether the student/s engaging in bullying behaviour have displayed similar behaviour before; and
- whether the bullying took place in a group or one-to-one context; and
- whether the students engaging in bullying behaviour demonstrates insight or remorse for their behaviour; and
- the alleged motive of the behaviour, including any element of provocation.

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

- Offer wellbeing support including referral to the Student Wellbeing Officer; or Psychologist/Social Worker; or RelateWell Counselling our onsite external service provider, to:
  - to the target student or students;
  - the students engaging in the bullying behaviour;
  - affected students, including witnesses and/or friends of the target student.
- 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.
- Facilitate a Student Support Group meeting and/or Behaviour Support Plan for affected students.
- Prepare a Safety Plan and/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 connecting affected students with an older Student Mentor, social and emotional programs, resilience programs, as arranged with the Student Welfare Officer.
- 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 *Social Stencil; CASEA,* or *RRRR*.
- Implement proportionate 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.

Belle Vue 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.

The 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:

- 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
- 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:

- Duty of Care Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Parent Complaints Policy
- Statement of Values

- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy

Our school also follows Department of Education and Training policy relating to bullying including:

- Bullying Prevention and Response
- Digital Technologies – Responsible Use
- Equal Opportunity and Human Rights - Students
- LGBTIQA+ Student Support
- Preventing and Addressing Racism in Schools

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
- Report racism or religious discrimination in schools
- Kids Helpline
- ReachOut Australia
- Lifeline
- Bullying. No way!
- Student Wellbeing Hub
- eSafety Commissioner
- Australian Student Wellbeing Framework

## EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed every 2 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
- 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 Council.

**POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL**

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| Policy last reviewed | June 2026 |
| Consultation | School Teaching Staff; ESO School Staff; School Council |
| Approved by | Principal |
| Next scheduled review date | June 2028 |

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**BRODIE'S LAW**

Brodie's law can apply to all forms of serious bullying, including physical bullying, psychological bullying, verbal

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*Serious bullying may amount to a criminal offence.*

In 2011, the offence of stalking in section 21A of the Crimes Act 1958 was extended to cover behaviour that amounts to serious bullying. The offence of stalking carries a maximum penalty of 10 years imprisonment.

*What behaviour leads to the application of Brodie's law?*

Brodie's law can apply to all forms of serious bullying, including physical bullying, psychological bullying, verbal bullying and cyber bullying. It is not limited by the location at which the conduct occurred or was experienced by the victim. It can apply to bullying by young people in schools, although children under 10 cannot be charged with a criminal offence.

Brodie's law will apply to the most serious types of bullying behaviour. For it to apply there must be a course of conduct, that is, repeated bullying behaviour. The bully must also intend that the bullying cause physical or mental harm, including self-harm, to the victim. A possible example of when the law might apply is where a victim is repeatedly being encouraged to commit suicide.

*Why is it called Brodie's law?*

This law is known as 'Brodie's Law' because of a case where a young woman, Brodie Panlock, was subjected to serious and ongoing workplace bullying and eventually took her own life.

*Crisis Support*

Anyone who needs crisis support can contact their local police, call Lifeline (24 hours a day) on 13 11 14, or visit their website. See: Lifeline

# A Summary of Brodie's Law

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Advice Sheets: Brodie's Law | © 2014 | Department of Education and Training