

Bullying Prevention Policy



**To be read in conjunction with the
“WHS Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy”**

Williamstown High School



**Help for non-English speakers. If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Pasco: 9397 1899
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At Williamstown High School we value:

A Williamstown High School education provides a dynamic learning culture that promotes integrity, innovation and the individual. As a school community we value:

- Excellence and creativity in our achievements and ambitions.
- Integrity and honesty in our actions and relationships.
- Diversity in our curriculum, in each other and in our community.
- Strong and open communication between our school and our homes, and between our teachers, our students and our families.
- A commitment to social justice and a passion to protect and improve our environment and our community.

Rationale

Every person in our school community - students, teachers and other staff, families and members of the local community - has the right to feel safe and have a sense of belonging. A person who bullies another is denying them that right. The school will take all the necessary steps to ensure every person's right to feel safe is delivered. The involvement and commitment of the whole school community is required to achieve a culture in which safe and respectful schools are everyone's concern and responsibility

- Reinforce within the school community that bullying is not acceptable.
- Outline the strategies and programs in place to build a positive school culture and prevent bullying behaviour.
- Ensure everyone within the school community is alerted to signs and evidence of bullying and has a responsibility to report it to staff whether as an observer or victim.
- Ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up and that support is given to both victim and perpetrator.
- Seek parental and peer-group support and cooperation at all times.
- Raise the awareness within the wider school community about bullying

When responding to bullying behaviour, Williamstown High 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.

Williamstown High School is committed to the application of SWPBS reflective conversations (Restorative Practices). Our reflective conversations inform a positive and formative approach to student engagement and wellbeing (including behaviour management). Its aim is to promote resilience and provide support for all parties involved, in accordance with SWPBS and Respectful Relationships. The reflective conversation guides staff to support students to understand what they have done, give them ownership of their actions, recognise the impact of their actions on others, consider the most desirable way to reconcile and resolve conflict with others and be engaged and empowered through the process.

Scope

This policy addresses how Williamstown High School aims to prevent, address and respond to student bullying behaviour. Williamstown High 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.

Context

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

The behaviour may continue if no action is taken.

There are several types of bullying. For the purpose of this policy see definitions below:	
Direct physical bullying	Includes hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching and pushing, continuously invading personal space or damaging property
Direct verbal bullying	Includes - name calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, sexist, homophobic, transphobic or racist remarks, or verbal abuse
Indirect bullying	Is often harder to recognise and can be carried out behind the bullied person's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Indirect bullying includes: lying and spreading rumours, playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate, mimicking, and encouraging others to socially exclude someone, damaging someone's social reputation or social acceptance.
Cyberbullying	<p>Is direct verbal or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technologies. This includes harassment via a mobile phone, setting up a defamatory personal website or deliberately excluding someone from social networking spaces. It can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Flaming (online fights using electronic messages with angry or vulgar messages) ● Harassment (repeatedly sending nasty, mean and insulting messages) ● Denigration (posting or sending gossip or rumours about a person to damage his/her reputation or friendships) ● Outing (sharing someone's secrets or embarrassing information or images online) ● Exclusion (intentionally and cruelly excluding someone from an online group) ● Cyber-stalking (repeated intense harassment and denigration that includes threats or creates significant fear). ● Sexting (the creating, sharing, sending or posting of sexually explicit messages or images via the internet, mobile phones or other electronic devices by people, especially young people). <p>Williamstown High School provides specific advice to students about cyber-safe behaviours that help prevent cyberbullying. As such, this policy works in conjunction with the WHS Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy and WHS Acceptable Use Agreement (an agreement which requires students and families to agree to positive online behaviours designed to reduce and eliminate cyberbullying).</p>

When people are bullied or harassed some effects might be anger, embarrassment, fear and humiliation, loss of self- confidence and reduced function and potential. Bullying and harassment will be addressed with individual differences being respected. This will enable students and staff to be supported in both learning and teaching.

Bullying is not:	
Mutual conflict	An argument or disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the problem.
Social rejection or dislike	Unless the social rejection is directed towards someone specific and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.
Single-episode	Acts of nastiness or meanness, or random acts of aggression or intimidation – while unacceptable are not the same as bullying. If a student is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied.

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 and may have serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour. Williamstown High 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.

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 Engagement and Wellbeing Policy.

Role and Responsibilities

All students have the responsibility to:	All staff have the responsibility to:	All parents and guardians have the responsibility to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Show respect for all members of the school community. ● Treat others with courtesy, kindness and respect including active listen of others. ● Take responsibilities for their own actions; value others, allowing for individual differences and similarities. ● Not take part in bullying in any way (zero tolerance). ● Report incidents of bullying to a teacher. ● Understand and not tolerate the participatory role of bystanders. ● Speak out against bullying and report it when seen. ● Report if they are bullied. ● Support students who are bullied. ● Support the Student Representative Council or Senior School Council to assist with anti-bullying suggestions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Model and promote positive relationships that respect and accept individual differences and diversity within the school community. ● Treat others with courtesy, kindness and respect, including active listening to others. ● Apply knowledge of the school’s bullying prevention policy. ● Model bullying prevention attitudes and behaviour. ● Be alert, attentive, proactive and responsive to potential signs and behaviours of bullying behaviour. ● Respond in a timely manner to incidents of bullying according to the school’s bullying prevention policy. ● Document all incidents of bullying and harassment in line with the school’s required processes. ● Provide support and refer as needed. ● Listen when a student needs to speak about particular school or home matters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Model and promote positive relationships that respect and accept individual differences and diversity within the school community. ● Treat others with courtesy, kindness and respect including active listening to others. ● Be aware of the school’s bullying prevention policy and assist their children in understanding bullying behaviour. ● Support their children in developing positive responses to incidents of bullying consistent with the school’s bullying prevention policy. ● Watch for signs of distress in their child. ● Report incidents of school related bullying behaviour to the school. ● Provide support and encourage their child to seek help. ● Work collaboratively with the school to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur. ● Make use of the resources provided on the Department of Education website in relation to bullying and harassment.

Implementation

Prevention Strategies

- A summary of the policy and practices will be included in the Student Enrolment Package.
- All staff will receive ongoing documentation as part of the school's approach to bullying prevention.
- We use our positive behaviour expectations to build and foster an environment enabling respect and safety.
- We teach students a curriculum that promotes resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.
- The school's curriculum programs will emphasise roles and strategies for all involved in a bullying episode – including the role of bystanders.
- Student programs will be organised to raise student awareness about bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment, to provide a forum for discussion of matters and to aid development of attitudes. Some matters will be dealt with formally in the curriculum and in peer support programs, leadership programs, extra-curricular programs and occasional activities run by outside experts and workers.
- A data collection tool is used to identify students' perceptions of safety, and associated patterns of behaviour. The data from this tool is reviewed by the Student Engagement and Wellbeing Team and appropriate responses implemented.
- 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.
- A range of year level incursions and programs are planned for each year to raise awareness about bullying and its impacts.

What can the student do if they are being bullied (to diffuse the situation)

We do not tolerate bullying. If you find yourself in a bullying situation, one or more of the following strategies may be effective:

- Try to act unimpressed or unaffected.
- Talk to the teacher or another staff member, e.g. student wellbeing coordinator, student management leaders.
- Act confidently even when you don't feel it.
- Walk away when the bully approaches you.
- Use positive self-talk. Try saying to yourself something like "I know I am better than that".
- Tell a trusted adult eg: parent, guardian etc

Responding to Reported Incidences of Bullying

A school-wide approach will be taken to deal with bullying and harassment in a consistent and systematic way. Bullying complaints will be taken seriously and responded to sensitively at our school in an appropriate and timely manner. Staff programs will occur on a regular basis to keep staff informed of current issues and strategies for dealing with these issues. Teaching staff are responsible for ensuring that incidences of bullying are dealt with as soon as possible and in a manner consistent with the Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy. When a bullying incident is reported or observed we use the following actions:

1. The school leadership team and the teachers will work together to ensure the safety of all school members in situations of bullying and harassment, by:
 - Thoroughly investigating all complaints while respecting the need for confidentiality, notifying parents/guardians and planning interventions.
 - Finding out the circumstances and who are involved.
 - Talking to each student involved in the incident to ascertain their actions.
 - Speaking to any bystanders as needed.
 - Record and document the details of the allegations whilst maintaining confidentiality.
 - Ensure all parties are informed that appropriate processes have been followed by the school.

If a teacher feels a student is at serious and imminent risk from bullying and harassment they will pass on the information to the appropriate student management leader in order to ensure appropriate support for the student. It is important that teachers document fully their interaction with the student and verify the actions taken.

- After discussion with the victim, determine how they would like to proceed. If they indicate their willingness, act as a mediator so that the victim can discuss the matter with the bully/harasser and they can make amends and plans for future behaviour.
- Monitor the behaviour of students involved for an appropriate time following this discussion. Both the victim and initiator may need support to avoid repeated incidents and this will be monitored by teacher and leadership.
- Parents/guardians of both victim and initiator are contacted and informed.
- Other teachers are informed of incidents in order to help monitor any further incidents and to follow up consistently.
- Where appropriate prepare a Safety Plan or Individual Management Plan restricting contact between victim and students engaging in bullying behaviour.

2. Constructive strategies to deal with bullying include: education in coping strategies; assertiveness training; problem solving and social skills; counselling, reteaching experiences and behaviour modification. These strategies will be employed in preference to disciplinary actions and follow up consequences, although disciplinary arrangements will be enacted where appropriate.
3. If the bullying or harassment continues, or in instances of severe bullying or harassing, a referral should be made to the Student Engagement and Wellbeing Leader or Student Wellbeing Coordinator. They may:
 - Meet with the student to develop a behaviour support plan.
 - Provide discussion/mentoring of different social and emotional learning competencies including structured learning activities.
4. For 'at risk' students whose bullying or harassing behaviour is severe and for other non-at risk students whose bullying or harassing and other aggressive behaviour is resistant to change, a behaviour management support plan should be developed, and reviewed at regular intervals as required in consultation with student, parents/carers and Student Engagement and Wellbeing team. The plan will be developed by a member of the student engagement and wellbeing team in consultation with student, parents/carers and teachers.

A behaviour management support plan and associated interventions help connect the student to programs and actions in the community, school and home as well as develop the student's inner social and emotional strengths (such as skills, values).

5. A student whose severe bullying or harassing behaviour resists school efforts and represents a significant threat to the safety and wellbeing of themselves or other individuals within the school, will be referred to outside agencies for evaluation. Serious bullying, including serious cyberbullying, is a criminal offence and may be referred to Victoria Police. For more information, see: [Brodie's Law](#). Student Wellbeing Coordinator and Mental Health Practitioner will connect the school, student and families to those community agencies and organisations that can offer more intensive services to the student and their family.

Note: Disciplinary consequences for bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment will comply with the School's Engagement and Wellbeing Policy. The principal or their nominee will provide disciplinary consequences, including suspension in accordance with DET Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance at any stage in the process depending on the contextual information relating to the severity of the bullying

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
- Included in our staff handbook/manual
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Discussed at student forums
- 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 which can be found at:

- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
http://www.willihigh.vic.edu.au/?page_id=108

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 every 3 years, or earlier as required. Data will be collected through:

- discussion and consultation with students and parent/carers
- staff surveys
- assessment of other school-based data, including Student Engagement and Wellbeing Data

- Attitudes to School Survey
- Parent Opinion Survey

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	August 2021
Approved by	School Council
Next scheduled review date	August 2024