**Purpose**

Cockatoo 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
* make clear that all forms of bullying at Cockatoo Primary School will not be tolerated
* outline the strategies and programs in place at Cockatoo 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 understands the importance of reporting 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 victims, bystanders, witnesses and students engaging in bullying behaviour)
* seek parental and peer group support in addressing and preventing bullying behaviour at Cockatoo Primary School.

When responding to bullying behaviour, Cockatoo Primary School aims to:

* be proportionate, consistent and responsive
* find a constructive and positive solution for everyone
* stop the bullying from happening again
* restore the relationships between the students involved.

Cockatoo 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 Cockatoo Primary School aims to prevent and respond to student bullying behaviour. Cockatoo 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 Engagement and Wellbeing 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

**Policy**

**Definitions**

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 targeting 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 behaviours**

Many distressing behaviours may not constitute bullying even though they are unpleasant. Students who are involved in or who witness any distressing behaviours should report their concerns to school staff and our school will follow our Student Safety 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 harassment, nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If someone is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion, they are not being bullied. Harassment, nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different people is not the same as bullying. However, single episodes of harassment, nastiness or physical aggression are not acceptable behaviours at our school. Cockatoo primary school will use its Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy to guide a response to single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression.

**Bullying Prevention**

A school-wide approach will be taken to deal with bullying (including cyber bullying) in a consistent and systematic way. Corporal punishment is prohibited in all Victorian schools and must not be used under any circumstances. All new students and staff will be informed of the anti-harassment policy and practices at the commencement of their time at the school. All complaints of harassment will be heard in confidence and taken seriously. Our school will build in our students skills of resilience, assertiveness, conflict resolution, problem solving and life and social skills. Principal is to be kept informed of incidents of bullying and harassment staff will be informed of students who are experiencing difficulties with any form of bullying and harassment. Staff programs will occur periodically to keep staff informed of current issues/strategies for dealing with these issues. There will be disciplinary consequences, covering a range of strategies, for those in breach of the Anti-Bullying (including cyber bullying) and Anti-Harassment Policy, guidelines and procedures

Cockatoo Primary School has a number of 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 Cockatoo 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:

* We identify and implement evidence-based programs and initiatives for the Schools Mental Health Menu that are relevant to preventing and addressing bulling 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 programs are planned for each year to raise awareness about bullying and its impacts. Some matters will be dealt with formally in the curriculum and in Circle Time programs, leadership programs, extra-curricular programs and occasional activities run by outside experts and workers.
* 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 positively and safely take appropriate action when they see or hear of a peer being bullied.
* We seek to empower students to be confident communicators and to resolve conflict in a non-aggressive and constructive way. The curriculum will include anti-bullying messages e.g. No Put Down Zone posters displayed, and strategies in line with current DET materials e.g. ‘Bully Stoppers’
* 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.

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

**Incident Response**

**Reporting concerns to Cockatoo Primary School**

Bullying is not tolerated at our school. We ensure bullying behaviour, including repeated incidents of bullying are identified and addressed with appropriate and proportionate consequences. All 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 or another trusted adult as soon as possible.

In most circumstances, we encourage students to speak to their teacher, mentor teacher or Principal. However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff including teachers, Principal, school chaplain etc.

Parents or carers who may develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Cockatoo Primary School should contact the Principal, by phone on 59688017 or by email directed to Darrelyn.boucher@education.vic.gov.au

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 Cockatoo Primary School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

**Investigations**

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

1. record the details of the allegations in writing, and
2. inform the Principal.

Each teacher is responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, the teacher may:

* speak to the students involved in the allegations, including the victim/s, the students alleged engaging in bullying behaviour/s and any witnesses to the incidents
* speak to the parents/carer 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 during 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.](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/advicesheetbrodieslaw.aspx)

**Responses to bullying behaviours**

When the investigating staff member 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 School Chaplain, teachers, SSS, Leading Teachers, Principal.

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, Cockatoo Primary School will consider:

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

The investigating staff member may implement all, or some of the following responses to bullying behaviours:

* Offer wellbeing support including to the target student or students, the students engaging in the bullying behaviour, affected students, including witnesses and/or friends of the target students including referral to the Chaplain SSS, external provider.
* 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 victim student(s), the perpetrator students and a group of students who are likely to be supportive of the victim(s).
* Implement a Method of Shared Concern process with all students involved in the bullying.
* Implement disciplinary consequences for the perpetrator students, 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.
* Facilitate a Student Support Group meeting and/or Behaviour Support Plan for affected students.
* Prepare an Individual Management Plan restricting contact between victim and perpetrator students.
* Provide discussion and/or mentoring for different social and emotional learning competencies of the students involved, including connect affected students with an older Student Mentor, resilience programs, staff mentor, and extra yard duty supervision.
* 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 Values program, resilience building, positive self-talk.

The investigating staff member is responsible for maintaining up to date records of the investigation of and responses to bullying behaviour.

Cockatoo 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.

**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

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

* Bullying Prevention and Response
* Cybersafety and Respnsible Use of Digital Technologies
* Equal Opportunity and Human Rights – Students
* LGBTIQ Student Support 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
* 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 on an 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 to inform this review will be collected through:

* discussion and consultation with students and parents/carers
* regular student bullying surveys
* regular staff surveys
* assessment of 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 staff, students, school council and will be made available on the school’s website.

Policy Review and Approval

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Policy last reviewed | June 2022 |
| Consultation | School Council meeting – 21st June 2022 |
| Approved by | School Council – 21st June 2022  Principal – Darrelyn Boucher |
| Next scheduled review date | June 2024 |

**Anti-Bullying**

**What are Bullying, Cyber Bullying?**

**Bullying**

*Definition of Bullying*

Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, who have more power at the time, deliberately upset or hurt another person, their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion.

*Types of Bullying*

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 targeting at an individual or group because of a personal characteristic, such as race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability

**Note:** Many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying even though they areunpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management.

**Mutual conflict:** involves an argument or disagreement between people but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution. 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. If someone is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied. Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different people is not the same as bullying. However, this does not mean that single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression should be ignored or condoned as these are unacceptable behaviours.

**Appendix A**

**Reporting on Incident of Bullying – Template**

Staff member recording incident:

Date: / /

Name of student(s) who appears to have instigated bullying

Year/Class:

Name(s) of target(s)

Name(s) of witnesses

Did you observe the incident? Yes **🞎** No **🞎**

If ‘No’ who reported the incident to you?

Brief description of incident (what was allegedly said or done to the student who appears to have been bullied?

What form(s) of bullying took place? Verbal 🞎 Physical 🞎 Indirect 🞎 Cyber 🞎

Other 🞎 Please detail:

Was the incident of bullying: Mild 🞎 Severe 🞎

Describe how you responded (Did you use a school anti-bullying practice?)

Describe how student responded to your intervention

**Where / when / time incident took place:**

Location:

When: before school 🞎 recess 🞎 lunch 🞎 in class 🞎 after school 🞎

Time: : am/pm

Date incident took place: / /

**Additional comments:**