

## Bullying Prevention Policy



### HELP FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Baxter Primary School on 03 5971 1391 or [baxter.ps@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:baxter.ps@education.vic.gov.au).

### PURPOSE

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

When responding to bullying behaviour, Baxter 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.

Baxter 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 Baxter Primary School aims to prevent, address and respond to student bullying behaviour. Baxter 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 following policies;

- *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy*
- *Inclusion and Diversity policy*
- *Values Philosophy*

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.

## DEFINITIONS

### 1. Bullying

In 2018 the Education Council of the Council of Australian Governments endorsed the following definition of bullying for use by all Australian schools:

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*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.*

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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](#) and the Department's [Bullying Prevention and Response](#) policy on the Policy and Advisory Library.

### 2. 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 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. Baxter 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.

*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.

## POLICY

Baxter Primary School has a number of programs and strategies in place to build a positive and inclusive school culture and relationships to promote wellbeing. We strive to foster a school culture that prevents bullying behaviour by modelling, encouraging and teaching behaviour that demonstrates acceptance, kindness and respect.

Bullying prevention at Baxter 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 address bullying utilizing the following approach:

### A: Primary Prevention

- Professional development for staff to ensure that there is a common understanding of the correct procedures in place at Baxter Primary School.
- All classroom and specialist teachers create a behavior agreement with the students at the beginning of the year. This ensures all students are aware of the expectations within the classroom and develops a safe and supportive environment for them to learn.
- Staff inform students and the school community of school values, expected behaviors and wellbeing policies at the beginning of the year.
- 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 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 implement our ASPIRE values program as part of our social and emotional learning curriculum, promoting resilience, conflict resolution and problem solving
- 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 promote upstander behavior as a way of empowering our students to positively and safely take appropriate action when they see or hear of a peer being bullied.

**B: Isolated, Infrequent or Less Serious Incidents**

- Any instances of inappropriate behaviour or early signs of suspected bullying or are quickly responded to by staff.
- Parents are encouraged to contact the school if they suspect a bullying or behaviour problem.
- The school will reinforce with students the importance of appropriately reporting incidents of inappropriate behaviour involving themselves or others, and it is imperative that staff respond appropriately and proportionally to each allegation consistent with the school's Student Code of Conduct, including the ongoing development of proper reporting and recording of the incident in the school's Learning Management System, Compass
- The school will assist the individual(s) participating in bullying behaviour to recognise, empathise and change his/her behaviour
- The school will support and assist the victim with programs designed to empower and build self-esteem.
- Parents will be contacted if their child is alleged to have been bullied or experienced inappropriate behaviour, or if their child appears to have behaved inappropriately or bullied someone else.
- The school may work with the parents of those involved to assist their child to better manage these situations.
- Repeated offences will lead to consequences as outlined below. Appropriate and proportional consequences may include a restorative chat, verbal or written apology, loss of privileges etc.
- Frequent transgressions may require individual counselling with their teachers or a member of the school leadership team and the development of joint parent/school strategies for behaviour modification.
- Incidents will be tracked on the Learning Management System, Compass, using the "Chronical" feature

**C: Serious or Repetitive Incidents (refer to student code of behaviour policy)**

- Serious incidents are those that include physical assault, sexual assault, criminal activity involving theft or serious damage of property, serious threats, racial, religious or homophobic bullying etc.
- Serious incidents and/or repetitive incidents of bullying or unacceptable behaviour will be reported, responded to by staff and documented in the school's Learning Management System, Compass.
- All such incidents or allegations will be properly investigated and documented. Depending upon the nature of each incident, they may also be reported to police, reported to the Student Critical Incident Advisory Unit, and/or reported to the Department's Emergency and Security Management Unit.
- The school may contact support professionals such as Chaplain, Welfare coordinators or Councillors and/or Student Support Officers for assistance and support.
- Students, staff and parents identified by others as bullies will be informed of allegations.
- All parties will be offered ongoing support.
- All repetitive or serious incidents must be brought to the attention of the Principal of the school.
- The most appropriate staff member will contact the parents of the targeted student. The Principal or member of the leadership team will contact parents of alleged bullies unless advised by police or other relevant authority not to do so.
- Regional Office will provide support as appropriate, and the Principal will monitor the investigation and review the situation until matters are appropriately resolved.

- Consequences of repetitive or serious incidents may include criminal charges, suspension, expulsion, loss of privileges, counselling, conciliation or any other consequences outlined.
- A management strategy for all parties will be developed in consultation with the students and parents involved.
- Parents or community members who bully, harass or abuse staff will be provided with official warnings, and if necessary, referred to the police, and/or have trespass restrictions placed upon them by the Principal in line with the Summary Offences Act.
- We identify and implement evidence-based programs and initiatives from the [Schools Mental Health Menu](#) that are relevant to preventing and addressing bullying and help us to build a positive and inclusive school climate.
- We participate in the Safe Schools program to help us foster a safe environment that is supportive and inclusive of LGBTIQ+ students.
- A range of year level incursions and programs are planned for each year to raise awareness about bullying and its impacts.
- The Peer Support Program and the Peer Mediation program encourage positive relationships between students in different year levels. We seek to empower students to be confident communicators and to resolve conflict in a non-aggressive and constructive way.

### 3. Incident Response

#### ***Reporting concerns to Baxter 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 Baxter Primary School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

We encourage students to speak to their classroom teacher or trusted member of staff (Tier 1), The Leading Teacher for Student Engagement and Wellbeing (Tier 2) or the Assistant Principal (Tier 3). However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff.

Parents or carers who develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Baxter Primary School should initially contact their classroom teacher using the appropriate and agreed communication methods, alternatively or address concerns in writing to;

Principal: Nick Schneider

Assistant Principal: Michelle Bremner

Leading Teacher, Student Engagement and Wellbeing: Nick Shute

Ph: 59711391

Email: [Baxter.ps@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:Baxter.ps@education.vic.gov.au)

#### ***Investigations***

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

1. record the details of the allegations in the schools Learning Management System, Compass, tagging all students involved using Chronical

## 2. inform all classroom teachers involved and the School Leadership Team

The Classroom teacher is responsible for the initial investigation of allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, the teacher 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
- speak to the parents/carer(s) 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 investigating member of staff 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 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](#).

## 4. Responses to bullying behaviours

When the classroom teacher / investigating member of staff has sufficient information to understand the circumstances of the alleged bullying and the students involved, several strategies may be implemented to address the behaviour and support affected students in consultation with families, the Student Wellbeing Team, teachers, and if/where necessary Assistant Principal, Principal, School Support Officers (SSS), Department of Education specialist staff

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, Baxter 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 target student
- whether the perpetrator 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.

The Leadership Team may implement all, or some of the following responses to bullying behaviours:

- Offer wellbeing support, including referral to the Student Engagement and Wellbeing Team, School Leadership Team, SSS or appropriate external agency 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).
- Facilitate a Student Support Group for affected students.
- Prepare a Behavior Support Plan, Safety Plan 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 develop specifically targeted extracurricular clubs.
- Monitor the behaviour of the students involved for an appropriate time by assigning ES supervision when out of the classroom, taking follow up action if necessary.
- Implement cohort, year group, or whole school targeted strategies to reinforce positive behaviours, for example accessing behavior specific units of work through departmental resources such as CLICKView and ARC.
- 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.

Baxter 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 classroom teacher / investigating member of staff 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
- Shared annually via the schools Learning Management System
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included in our staff handbook/manual
- 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:

- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Parent Complaints policy
- Duty of Care Policy

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

- [Bullying Prevention and Response](#)
- [Cybersafety and Responsible 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 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 to inform this evaluation will be collected through:

- discussion and consultation with students and parent/carers
- regular student bullying surveys
- regular staff surveys
- 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 the Baxter Focus Group (student representative group), Staff, School Leadership,

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	26-11-2024
Consultation	School Council presentation 26-11-2024
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	Before November 2026

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### School Leadership Team

Principal: Nick Schneider

Assistant Principal: Michelle Bremner

Leading Teacher, Engagement and Wellbeing: Nick Shute

Learning Specialist, Curriculum: Jade Dahlstrom