

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY (STUDENTS)

OUR VISION

Wild Cherry School strives to educate and support the development and potential of each individual child, whilst fostering a creative and ethical community.

OUR VALUES

- Fostering a desire in our students to aim for academic and artistic excellence by providing them with a rich, diverse, and integrated Steiner curriculum.
- Inspiring the children with a lifelong love of learning, a morality that strives for goodness, an appreciation of beauty, and a pursuit of truth.
- Developing respect, trust, and caring for themselves, each other, the broader community, and the earth.

PURPOSE

Wild Cherry School rejects all forms of bullying. It is not acceptable for any student to experience bullying within the learning and social environment of the school.

In rejecting bullying and harassment, Wild Cherry School is committed to the development and the reinforcement of a culture of positive behaviour, respect and tolerance.

The Anti-Bullying Policy sets out the principles and framework governing the school's behaviours and activities that support all members of the school community in enacting a zero tolerance of bullying. The policy, together with the policy implementation documents listed in this document should be read and understood by all those connected to the school.

PRINCIPLES

- Wild Cherry School rejects all forms of bullying and takes a zero tolerance stance in response to bullying wherever and whenever it occurs within the school community.
- Wild Cherry School believes that, in order to reduce and eliminate bullying behaviour, it is essential to create a culture of positive behaviour, respect and tolerance.
- Underpinning the Wild Cherry School's zero tolerance stance in response to bullying, is a belief that all students, no matter what their background, race, ethnicity, gender, physical and intellectual attributes, are to be valued and respected.
- Wild Cherry School is committed to the importance of students both being and feeling safe within the school.
- Wild Cherry School, in discharging its duty of care, understands that it has a responsibility to enable students to flourish in relation to their emotional, mental and physical health.

AIMS OF THIS POLICY

- To set out Wild Cherry School's clear expectations in relation to positive student behaviour and in so doing to define what constitutes unacceptable bullying behaviour.
- To support Wild Cherry School and its employees, parents and students themselves in creating a climate characterised by respectful and positive relationships.

- To comply with the requirements of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic.), to implement anti-bullying (including cyberbullying) and harassment strategies and procedures as part of the Wild Cherry School's responsibility to provide an environment which is safe, where the risks of harm are minimised and where students feel emotionally and physically secure.

LEGAL AND REGULATORY BASIS FOR COMPLIANCE

- Duty of Care
- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic)
- *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017* (Vic)
- Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) Minimum Standards
- Victorian Government Department of Education and Training's (Vic DET) guidance for government schools, equally applicable to non-Government schools, on bullying, cyberbullying and the role of the school.
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth)
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (Cth)
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth)
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic)
- *Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001* (Vic)
- *Crime Act 1958*

KEY DEFINITIONS

- Wild Cherry School has a **duty of care** to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students. In discharging this duty, School Leaders, teachers and other school staff are 'held to a high standard of care in relation to students. The duty requires School Leaders and teachers to take all reasonable steps to reduce the risk of harm to students, including the implementation of strategies to prevent bullying. The duty is non-delegable, meaning that it cannot be assigned to another party.
- Wild Cherry School College of Teachers will review annually how the School provides opportunities for students to grow in their social learning in order to develop **positive behaviour, respectful relationships and high levels of student engagement**. They may utilise a range of programs including but not limited to The Resilience Project, Victoria Police, Relationships and Sexuality Education Program and Wild Cherry Growing Up program.
- Wild Cherry School's **School Counsellor** has a specific responsibility for overseeing the development and implementation of anti-bullying strategies and for reviewing their effectiveness.
- Wild Cherry School has an **anti-bullying policy** that is regularly reviewed by the Board, College of Teachers and Parent Engagement Group.
- Wild Cherry School Staff and School Counsellor have access to a comprehensive range of age appropriate **anti-bullying strategies** to address issues of bullying at whole-school level, in the classroom, outside the classroom, online and at individual student level.

Working in partnership with parents, students, staff and the wider community, Wild Cherry School will implement and promote bullying prevention strategies. These will help to minimise and manage unacceptable behaviour and bullying and increase the capacity of the whole-school community to foster respectful relationships and provide safe environments.

- Wild Cherry School will ensure that all members of the school community have a clear and shared understanding of acceptable behaviour, unacceptable behaviour and how to recognise the signs of when bullying, including cyber bullying, might be taking place.
 - **Bullying behaviour** takes different forms and is almost always deliberate, repeated and indicative of an imbalance of power. Bullying behaviour seeks to harm, humiliate, dominate, intimidate, embarrass, ostracise, or isolate. Some specific types of bullying behaviour include:
 - Verbal or written abuse
 - Violence or threats of violence
 - Sexual harassment and homophobia
 - Discrimination, including racial discrimination.
 - **Cyberbullying** is bullying using digital technologies, including mobile phones, email and social media tools. Some specific types of bullying behaviour include:
 - Sending/sharing nasty, hurtful or abusive messages or emails
 - Humiliating others by posting/sharing embarrassing videos or images
 - Spreading rumours or lies online
 - Setting up fake profiles
 - Excluding others online
 - Repeated harassment and threatening messages (cyberstalking)
 - Students involved in bullying do so by playing a number of different **roles**:
 - Engaging directly in bullying behaviour or assisting and actively joining in
 - Encouraging the bullying behaviour by giving, for example, silent approval, by smiling, by laughing or by making comments
 - Standing by silently and passively, doing nothing when knowing or seeing bullying behaviour.
 - School staff, parents and other students are provided with information within this policy on how to recognise the **warning signs** that may result in changed behaviour at school or at home. Other examples and resources of changed behaviour are listed in the advice for parents given in the Bully Stoppers program.
- **Equal opportunity and anti-discrimination** practices must be addressed as part of Wild Cherry School's duty of care to provide respectful, safe and inclusive school environment which is, free of discrimination, harassment, bullying, vilification, victimisation and otherwise unlawful and unacceptable behaviours. Equal opportunity and anti-discrimination are covered in a range of commonwealth and state laws.
- Wild Cherry School proactively identifies and considers the needs of **vulnerable students** who may be more at risk of either engaging in bullying behaviour or being the victim of bullying behaviours. At risk students may include those with special educational needs and/or with a disability, racial and minority groups and those who are potentially the subject of homophobic bullying.
- **Reporting Bullying:** Wild Cherry School has clear, easy to use and confidential procedures whereby students, parents, staff and other members of the school community are able to report bullying concerns, including critical incidents. Wild Cherry School ensures that the reporting procedures are supportive of the person making the report.

- Wild Cherry School publicises for parents and students across the whole-school access to **support services** such as Kids Helpline or Headspace via the newsletter.
- Wild Cherry School ensures reports of bullying are collated by the School Leaders to **monitor** the impact of anti-bullying strategies and positive behaviour programs.
- Wild Cherry School has a publicly available **complaints policy** that provides an escalation procedure when the school's response to a bullying incident is thought to have been inadequate or unsatisfactory.

SCOPE

The application of the Policy is relevant to the governing Board, School Leaders, College of Teachers, school staff, students and parents.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- The governing Board is responsible for reviewing the Anti-Bullying Policy and its implementation.
- The School Leaders are responsible for ensuring the Wild Cherry School has Anti-Bullying policies and procedures in compliance with the VRQA minimum standards.
- The School Leaders are responsible for:
 - developing strategies that ensure the culture of the Wild Cherry School is one in which positive behaviour and respectful relationships are given high priority
 - developing and implementing strategies and procedures that, as far as possible, reduces bullying to zero.
- The School Leaders are responsible for ensuring clear procedures are in place for the reporting and monitoring of bullying incidents and behaviour.
- The School Leaders are responsible for ensuring staff have access to regular training in the development of positive behaviour and in strategies for reducing bullying, particularly cyberbullying. The School Leaders may also wish to provide regular training and support for parents in respect of bullying, particularly cyberbullying when necessary.
- The School Counsellor and College of Teachers are responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of anti-bullying strategies and for monitoring their effectiveness.
- All staff at Wild Cherry School are responsible for working together in collaboration with students and parents to ensure issues of behaviour and relationships are given high priority at all times.

The staff are responsible for:

- modelling appropriate behaviour at all times
- dealing with all reported and observed incidents of bullying in accordance with this Policy
- ensuring that any incident of bullying they observe or is reported to them, is recorded appropriately
- being vigilant in monitoring students that have been identified as either persistent bullies or victims
- acknowledge the right of parents/carers to speak with the School if they believe their child is being bullied.

COMMUNICATION OF THE POLICY

- Wild Cherry School will embed the language of positive behaviour, respect and tolerance in all its communications.
- Wild Cherry School will make regular public statements to demonstrate its commitment to a zero-tolerance culture with respect to all forms of bullying.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

This policy is implemented through a combination of:

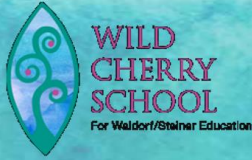
- staff training student and parent/carer education and information
- effective incident reporting procedures
- effective management of bullying incidents when reported
- the creation of a 'no-bullying' culture within the School community
- effective record keeping procedures
- initiation of corrective actions where necessary.
- anti-bullying posters may be posted in strategic locations in the School to promote appropriate behaviour and encourage students to respect individual differences and diversity.

The documents setting out the strategies and actions required to implement this policy are:

- Appendix A that clearly defines what is and what is not bullying
- Bullying Prevention and Intervention (Appendix B)
- strategies to address issues of bullying at whole-school level, in the classroom, outside the classroom, online and at individual student level
- procedures for students, parents, teachers and other school staff for reporting bullying to Wild Cherry School
- procedures for responding to and intervening in instances of bullying.

LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

- Duty of Care
- Student Wellbeing Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Student Code of Conduct
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Equal Opportunity Policy (Students)
- Complaints Policy



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- Internet Use Policy (Students)
- Supervision Procedures
- Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy (Staff)

POLICY REVIEW

The governing Board will review the Anti-Bullying Policy (Students) biennially.

The governing Board will require the School Leaders to report on the implementation of the Anti-Bullying Policy (Students) as part of the Board's review of the Policy.

Date Approved: 25 August 2022

Date for Review: 25 August 2024

APPENDIX A: WHAT IS AND WHAT IS NOT BULLYING

WHAT IS HARASSMENT?

Harassment occurs through the misuse of power. It may involve repeated verbal or physical attacks on a person by another person or group. This includes, but is not limited to attacks based on race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion or disability.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is unreasonable behaviour that is intimidating, threatening or humiliating and repeated over time or occurring as part of a pattern of behaviour. Bullying can be physical, verbal or indirect and creates an unfriendly, threatening or offensive environment. Cyberbullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies.

TYPES OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

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.

WHAT IS NOT BULLYING?

There are also some behaviours, which, although they might be unpleasant or distressing, are not bullying:

- **Mutual conflict** - which involves a disagreement, but not an imbalance of power. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation
- **Single-episode acts** of nastiness or physical aggression, or aggression directed towards many different people, is not bullying
- **Social rejection or dislike** is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

APPENDIX B: BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

Bullying is the repeated and intentional behaviour of causing fear, distress or harm towards another person that involves an imbalance of power.

It can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and harassment. In any bullying incident there are likely to be three parties involved: the bully, the person being bullied, and bystanders.

SIGNS OF BULLYING

Parents/carers are encouraged to recognise signs of bullying and notify the School through a trusted staff member immediately, if they suspect their child is a victim of bullying

Major behavioural changes in a student may be indicative of bullying.

Such behavioural changes may include:

- crying at night and having nightmares
- refusing to talk when asked "What's wrong?"
- having unexplained bruises, cuts or scratches
- an unwillingness or refusal to go to school
- feeling ill in the mornings
- a decline in quality of school work
- becoming withdrawn and lacking confidence
- beginning to bully siblings acting unreasonably.

BULLYING PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Wild Cherry School recognises that the implementation of whole-School prevention strategies is the most effective way of eliminating, or at least minimising incidents of bullying within our community.

The following initiatives form part of our overall bullying prevention strategy and our strategy to create a 'no-bullying' culture within the School:

- a structured curriculum (Curriculum Framework) and peer group support culture, that provides age-appropriate information and skills relating to bullying (including cyberbullying) and bullying prevention, to students over the course of the academic year
- education, training and professional development of staff in bullying prevention and response strategies
- regular provision of information in the newsletter to parents/carers, to raise awareness of bullying as a School community issue to equip them to recognise signs of bullying, as well as to provide them with clear paths for raising any concerns they may have relating to bullying directly with the School
- cultivation of a supportive school environment that encourages positive relationships and communication between staff, students and parents/carers
- promotion of responsible bystander behaviour amongst students, staff and parents/carers
- reporting of incidents of alleged bullying by students, bystanders, parents/carers and staff are encouraged

- regular risk assessments of bullying within the School are undertaken by surveying students to identify bullying issues that may ordinarily go unnoticed by staff
- records of reported bullying incidents are maintained and analysed, in order to identify persistent bullies and/or victims and to implement targeted prevention strategies where appropriate
- statements supporting bullying prevention are included in School newsletter
- education of staff, students and parents/carers on health conditions to promote understanding and to reduce stigma and fear when necessary
- anti-bullying posters are displayed strategically within the School
- promotion of student awareness and a 'no-bullying' environment by participating in events such as the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence.

REPORTING BULLYING

Students and their parents/carers are sometimes reluctant to pursue bullying incidents, for fear that it will only make matters worse. A key part of the School's bullying prevention and intervention strategy is to encourage reporting of bullying incidents as well providing assurance to students who experience bullying (and parents/carers) that:

- bullying is not tolerated within the School
- their concerns will be taken seriously
- the School has a clear strategy for dealing with bullying issues.

Bullying incidents can be advised to the School verbally (or in writing) through any of the following avenues:

- informing a trusted member of staff
- informing the School Counsellor
- informing a School Leader

RESPONDING TO BULLYING

Bullying behaviours vary enormously in their extent and intent and, as a consequence, each incident needs to be dealt with on its facts.

In all circumstances the School:

- takes bullying incidents seriously
- provides assurance to the victim that they are not at fault and their confidentiality will be respected
- takes time to properly investigate the facts including discussing the incident with the victim, the bully and any bystanders
- takes time to understand any concerns of individuals involved
- maintains records of reported bullying incidents
- will escalate its response when dealing with persistent bullies and/or severe incidents.

Actions that may be taken when responding to bullying include:



- notification of/consultation with parents/carers
- offering counselling to persistent bullies/victims
- implementing effective follow up strategies disciplinary action, at the School Leaders discretion, including suspension and expulsion of persistent bullies, in cases of severe incidents.