Grovedale College

Bullying Prevention Policy

PURPOSE

Grovedale College 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 Grovedale College community
- make clear that no form of bullying at Grovedale College will be tolerated
- outline the strategies and programs in place at Grovedale College 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 Grovedale College.

When responding to bullying behaviour, Grovedale College 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.

Grovedale College 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 Grovedale College aims to prevent, address and respond to student bullying behaviour. Grovedale College 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 Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy, Inclusion and Diversity policy and student code of conduct for eLearning.

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

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 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. Grovedale College 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.

POLICY

Grovedale College 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 Grovedale College 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 that are relevant to preventing and addressing bullying 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 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 incursions and programs are planned for each year to raise awareness about bullying and its impacts.
- 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.
- 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.

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

Incident Response

Reporting concerns to Grovedale College

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 Grovedale College are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

We encourage students to speak to your Home Group teacher or Year Level Leader. 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 Grovedale College should contact the school by phone on 5245 4545, Compass or by email to grovedale.co@education.vic.gov.au.

Investigations
When notified of alleged bullying behaviour, school staff are required to:
1. record the details of the allegations; and
2. inform the relevant Home Gorup Teacher, Year Level Coordinator, Student Wellbeing Team and or Assistant Principal.

Grovedale College is responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, the staff member investigating 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 Grovedale College 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.

Responses to bullying behaviours
When Grovedale College 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 all or some of the following staff members; the Student Wellbeing Team, Home Group teachers, SSS, Assistant Principal, Principal, Department of Education and Training specialist staff.

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, Grovedale College 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.

Grovedale College may implement all, or some of the following responses to bullying behaviours:

- Offer wellbeing support, including referral to the Student Wellbeing Team 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 restricting contact between target and students engaging in bullying behaviour.
- Monitor the behaviour of the students involved for an appropriate time and take follow up action if necessary.
- 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.

Grovedale College 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.

Grovedale College 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
- Included in our staff handbook/manual
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- Included in student planners so that it is easily accessible to parents, carers and students
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Included as annual reference in school newsletter
- Discussed at student forums/through communication tools
- 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 and Training 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
- 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 staff, student leadership groups, school council.

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	December 2023
Consultation	School council
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	Before June 2024

APPENDIX

The following is printed and available in annual student planners.

Bullying / Harassment Policy (Including Cyberbullying)

Definition of Bullying

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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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- 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.

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.

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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. 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.

What are the effects of Bullying and Harassment?
• poor health – anxiety, depression
• lower self esteem
• reduced study performance
• absenteeism, social withdraw
• reduced career prospects

What should you do if you are being bullied or harassed?
 If you are being bullied you need to tell someone
- a parent, a Home Group teacher, Year Level Leader, or another adult you can trust. Then choose options you are comfortable with.
• be assertive, tell the person you do not like what they are doing and they need to stop
• walk away as soon as they speak Bullying / Harassment Policy (Including Cyberbullying)
• act unimpressed
• talk to a close friend or family member
• the school will take your concerns seriously, all complaints will be treated confidentially

What should you do if you see another person being bullied or harassed?
Tell the person that you witnessed the event and advise them to report it to an appropriate person. If you feel comfortable, be assertive and tell the bully that what they are doing is wrong. However, if your friend is harassing another person, let them know that their behaviour is unacceptable. Bystanders who do nothing to stop bullying may be contributing to the problem by providing an audience for the bully.

AWARENESS
AWARENESS breaks the cycle of violence. Bring bullying out in the open - the silent majority must speak out.

Cyber Safety and Cyberbullying
Keeping students safe online is a shared responsibility between students, parents and teachers. Grovedale College has a reasonable expectation that students and parents will take appropriate steps to increase online safety both at school and at home.

Be a safe, responsible and ethical user whenever and wherever I use it. The school Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy outlines the values of the school and expected behaviours when students use online and digital technologies at school. Support others by being respectful in how I communicate with them and never write or participate in online bullying (this includes forwarding messages and supporting others in harmful, inappropriate or hurtful online behaviour). Being online can make students feel that they are anonymous and sometimes students may say things online that they would never say to someone's face.

The web space or online chat environment that they use in leisure time might also have explicit language and they may feel they have to be part of it. Bullying online can take a number of forms from repeated messages to exclusion from social spaces. Students who forward on messages or participate in the exclusion may not see themselves as bullying. These actions also contribute to the hurt and distress of others.

Responding to Bullying / Harassment

What students can do:
Social Networking Sites
- **Keep your personal details private.** Use an appropriate handle or username instead of your real name. If you are unsure, don't give out your name, address, phone number or any other personal details over the internet. Set your profile to private.
- **Don't share** your username or password with anyone, even friends.
- **Think before you hit send or post.** Once something is posted, it can be online forever. Don't post anything you don't want others to know – or that you wouldn't say to them face to face. Respect your friends too, do not post

photos without permission.

- Remember that private images and videos you send to friends or post on a social networking site may be easily passed on to others and uploaded to public sites. Once they are up, it's almost impossible to remove them completely.

- **Choose your friends.** Having hundreds of online friends makes it harder to control what happens to information you post online. Don't accept friend requests if you are not sure about the person.

- **Keep your friends manageable.** By making sure that the majority of your friends are your real-life ones. If someone writes something rude, offensive or something you don't like, don't respond, block them.

Safety online

- **Be careful who you trust online.** A person can easily pretend to be someone they are not in the online world.

- **Unwanted contact.** Be cautious if you are asked to provide personal information, to meet in person, if you are sent gifts, or if the discussions have been of a sexual or suggestive nature.

- **If you enter a site** that is rude or offensive, immediately leave the site and report it via the Cybersmart website.

Grovedale College staff will follow up all reports of Bullying and Harassment for matters of bullying (including cyberbullying) and take a no tolerance approach. For this to occur, it is also expected that students and parents have followed the precautions outlined in this policy. Cyberbullying can have a negative academic, social and psychological impact and providing support for children and young people who are involved in cyberbullying is critical. Grovedale College has a Student Wellbeing Team to support students who have personal issues impacting on them at school, as well as links to other agencies and resources that can provide support.

Our Aim

Our aim at Grovedale College is to develop a school culture of support and concern. All members of the school community need to be involved.

Bullying / Harassment Statement

Bullying/Harassment is any verbal or physical behaviour that is:
• offensive • degrading • unwelcome • violent • abusive • intrusive

It may include:
• offensive pictures and written materials including text messages, emails, electronic messenger services, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram or other social media platforms.
• teasing and name calling
• suggestive or offensive comments about a person's appearance, lifestyle, religion, race or sex
• unwelcome physical contact including hitting, pushing, kicking and touching
• graffiti about people, making stories/spreading rumours about someone
• comments about a person's sexuality or sex life
• whistles, call outs or unwelcome noises or sexual jokes
• rude gestures, making faces and hurtful looks
• touching, hiding and damaging others' possessions/property
• using threats towards someone to get what you want
• purposefully excluding another

Recommended Ways to Stop Bullying
If you are being bullied you need to tell someone then choose options you are comfortable with:
• be assertive, tell the person you do not like what they are doing
• walk away as soon as they speak
• talk to a close friend or family member
• act unimpressed

If you see someone being bullied
If you feel comfortable you need to:
• be assertive

• stand tall, look them in the eye, say "No! What you are doing is wrong."
• tell a teacher

Who Can You See?
Talk to a member of the school community you feel comfortable with. It may be your Home Group teacher, a teacher, a Year Level Leader, the student Wellbeing Team member, an Assistant Principal.

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