



Bullying Prevention Policy and Plan

Endorsed: March 2021
Review: March 2022



Government of South Australia
Department for Education

At Felixstow Community School we aim to create a positive, flexible and collaborative learning environment that encourages academic, social and emotional growth. **Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school.** If bullying does occur, students should be able to report it and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Anyone who knows that bullying is occurring is expected to report it to staff.

Our Vision

"Australian schools are safe, inclusive and connected learning communities that promote positive relationships and wellbeing as a foundation for children and young people to reach their full potential."

(Australian Student Wellbeing Framework 2018)

All students have the right to feel safe, respected and included. Our learning communities are free from bullying and harassment. Our school climate fosters healthy and respectful relationships. We will create this with our students, families and the broader community. We will model behaviours that:

- demonstrate respect
- value diversity
- promote belonging and wellbeing.

DEFINITIONS (provided by Department for Education)

Bullying

The following is a national definition of bullying which has been endorsed by the Education Council.

"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:

1. It involves a misuse of power in a relationship.

Conflict or fights between equals are not defined as bullying. Bullying occurs where there is a power imbalance. This might come from:

- the context. For example, a number of children acting against one child.
- personal characteristics. For example, different physical, emotional or social development.

2. It is ongoing and repeated.

One incident of misbehaviour is not defined as bullying. Schools will respond to all incidents of misbehavior. One act by a single person might be bullying if:

- the behaviour adds to a series of other people's behaviours that misuse power and result in harm.
- it can be shared online or through technology to a wide audience or repeated with multiple views.

3. It involves behaviours that can cause harm.

Bullying can cause physical and psychological harm, physical harm can include injury. It can also include theft or damage to belongings.

Psychological harm can include:

- anxiety
- not wanting to go to school
- lack of interest in school

- isolation and depression.

Psychological harm can last some time. It will depend on a student's situation and the support available to them. Support might come from family, school and friends. A fear of being bullied can create psychological harm.

Examples of Types of Bullying

Physical: hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching, pushing or damaging or stealing belongings.

Verbal: verbal abuse, name calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, or threats.

Social: social exclusion, lying, spreading rumours, unkind facial expressions or body language, mean and condescending looks, playing jokes to embarrass and humiliate, mimicking and damaging someone's reputation or social relationships.

Cyber: Cyberbullying is online bullying. It uses technology, including social media platforms. Verbal and social bullying can be cyberbullying when they occur online.

Cyberbullying includes:

- abusive texts and emails
- hurtful messages, videos and images, including images that have been changed
- sharing personal images and videos without consent
- pretending to be someone else online to be hurtful.

Harassment, Discrimination and Violence

Bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence all create or add to a negative environment. This can make students feel unsafe and unable to reach their full potential.

Harassment

Harassment is behaviour that targets an individual or group. This can be because of their: identity, race, culture or ethnic origin; religion; physical characteristics; gender; sexual orientation; age or ability.

It offends, humiliates, intimidates or creates an unsafe environment. It might be a: pattern of behaviour or a single act. It might be on purpose or unintended.

Discrimination

Discrimination happens when people are treated differently to others. This can be because of their: identity, race, culture or ethnic origin; religion; physical characteristics; gender; sexual orientation; age or ability. Discrimination interferes with people's right to fair treatment and equal opportunities.

Violence

Violence is the intentional use of physical force or power. It can be threatened or actual, against another person. It might result in psychological harm, injury or in some cases death. It might involve provoked or unprovoked acts. It can be one incident, a random act or can happen over time.

Bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence may be based on gender, race, sexuality, culture, religion, disability and care status. Bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence for any reason is not acceptable in South Australian public schools. It will be responded to. Responses will depend on the:

- behaviours
- needs of the students
- rights of all students to be safely included in learning.

Roles and responsibilities

We each have a role to play to:

- prevent bullying and harassment
- respond when it happens
- support those involved and affected by bullying.

The Australian Student Wellbeing Framework elements are leadership, inclusion, student voice, partnerships and support. They guide our practices and responses to prevent and reduce bullying in our school community.

School Leaders and Staff

- Model and promote positive behaviour. Value diversity, demonstrate respect, and include all students and their families.
- Provide and take part in professional development to build skills, knowledge and confidence about preventing bullying. Including how to recognise, respond and manage it.
- Assess bullying data and trends to develop prevention strategies. Do this with the Governing Council and school community.
- Collect data on bullying regularly. Use the data to plan how you will prevent and respond to bullying.
- Explicitly teach students about respectful relationships, bullying and cyberbullying. Teach them how to recognise bullying, what to do and how to get help.
- Work with students to come up with solutions to bullying. Include them in decisions that affect their safety and wellbeing.
- Support all students to be included, in particular students at higher risk of being bullied.
- Take action when bullying and cyberbullying has been reported. This includes incidents that happen out of school hours or off school grounds when it relates to school relationships.
- Report criminal matters to the South Australian Police.
- Help parents and carers to recognise bullying. Include information about what to do when their child is engaging in or affected by bullying.
- Work with families, service providers and the community to support students affected by bullying.
- Support students to repair and restore relationships that have been harmed by bullying.
- Have planned responses to bullying. Make them visible and consistent. Responses should foster trust and confidence.
- Help students to be physically and psychologically safe from bullying.

Parents and Families

- Model and promote safe, respectful and inclusive behaviours.
- Help their children to be safe online at home. This includes checking their children's use of technology and social media.
- Make sure their children know how to identify and report bullying. Work with the school to help their children be safe from bullying.
- Talk to their children about safety issues. This includes bullying and cyberbullying. Help them understand what it is, why it is harmful and how to respond. Use the same messages the school uses.
- Report concerns about bullying to school staff.
- If a bullying incident happens, work with the school.
- Support their children to go to school while a bullying issue is being worked on.
- Get external professional support for their child, if needed.

Students

- Model behaviours that are safe, respectful and inclusive, both face-to-face and online.
- Build skills, knowledge and confidence to recognise, respond to and manage bullying.
- Be a part of decision making to improve student safety and wellbeing.
- Take a stand when bullying is observed. Step in, if it's safe. Seek help from adults.
- Support friends and peers get help from trusted adults if they experience bullying.
- Support friends to behave in safe, respectful and inclusive ways if their friends engage in bullying.

Our Approach to Bullying Prevention

At Felixstow Community School we will plan, implement and review our bullying prevention strategies. We will do this with our Governing Council, staff, students, families and local community.

Promote

We will model and promote positive behaviour.

Our actions

- Create a welcoming and inclusive school.
- Make sure staff understand their role to create a safe school.
- Positive role modelling by staff & student leaders

Teach

We will explicitly teach respectful behaviours and expectations about bullying in the classroom.

Our actions

- Build staff skills to respond well to bullying.
- Teach about bullying in all year levels. Include how to prevent, identify, respond to and report bullying and cyberbullying.
- Encouraging students to be accepting & tolerant of differences by exploring different cultures, countries & beliefs.
- Acknowledging every student has strengths.
- Encouraging students to take responsibility for the choices they make and to look for ways to repair damage done.
- Teach internet safety skills & knowledge.
- Teach the Child Protection Curriculum (CPC).
- Teach social skill, problem solving & conflict resolution skills.

Intervene

We will intervene in specific incidents of bullying or observed bullying behaviour.

Our actions

- Take bullying seriously. Respond to reports of bullying or observed bullying behaviours.
- Use fair and consistent responses to bullying or suspected bullying.
- Document all bullying incidents. Check in with students while bullying incidents are being resolved.

Work with others

We will work with families, service providers and the community to address bullying.

Our actions

- Work with the Governing Council, site leadership, department staff and the local community to design local strategies to prevent and reduce bullying.
- Encourage parents and carers to take part in activities that promote safety and wellbeing.

Respond

We will provide visible and consistent responses to bullying that foster trust and confidence in the school community.

Our actions

- Share information on how to prevent and respond to bullying and cyberbullying.
- Review our strategies and actions to prevent and respond to bullying. We will make sure that student needs are being met.
- Set up safe ways for students to report bullying and let students know how to do this.
- Make information about the complaints resolution process available.

Repair and restore relationships

We will repair and restore relationships that have been harmed by bullying.

Our actions

- Develop solutions to bullying incidents with students, staff, parents and caregivers.
- Facilitating restorative conversations.

Create safety and wellbeing

We will establish safety and wellbeing.

Our actions

- Take action against discrimination, harassment and violence. Report criminal actions to South Australia Police.
- Provide targeted social and emotional support for students who need more help after bullying incidents.
- Regular surveys of student safety at school.
- Having open discussions about bullying & practicing a range of responses to bullying

What To Do If You Believe Your Child May Be The Target Of Bullying

If you believe your child is being bullied, please **REPORT** it. Reports can be made to any staff member you feel comfortable talking to. Provide as much detail as possible about each incident. Written details of bullying should include: *when, where, what happened, who was involved (including bystanders), and any action your child may have taken to stop it.* This will ensure the school can respond *immediately, accurately & effectively.* ***Please do not approach any children involved or their parents.***

How to Report

- You can report bullying to:
 - Principal
 - Student Wellbeing Teacher
 - Classroom Teacher
 - Support staff
 - Out of School Hours Care (OSHC)
- You can report bullying incidents in person, over email or schedule a meeting.
- Please provide us with as much information as possible, this might include:
 - who was involved, including who engaged in the bullying behaviour, who the behaviour was directed at and witnesses
 - when the incident happened
 - where the incident took place, for example social media
 - the behaviour
 - if anyone stopped or tried to stop the behaviour
 - what led up to the incident
 - what happened after the incident.
- Work with your child & school staff on *a plan to keep your child safe*, including strategies to keep themselves safe.

What The School Will Do When Bullying Is Reported

- Staff will see if the incident meets the definition of bullying and assess the risk to student or staff safety
- In all cases of reported bullying the incident will be investigated.
- Responses may take the form of counselling support, mediation or peer support.
- Where appropriate, parents will be informed and asked to meet with a staff member.
- All responses will maintain a “Restorative Justice” approach giving the person using bullying behaviours an opportunity to repair the relationship damaged.
- Students using bullying behaviour may undergo counselling in order to make changes to their behaviour.
- After an incident has been investigated and dealt with, the students involved will be monitored to ensure bullying does not continue.
- Students may be referred to external supports if required such as the Department for Education external services.
- If bullying behaviour continues, the following consequences may be imposed:
 - *Removal* from the group (in class)
 - *Withdrawal* of play time privileges.
 - *Withholding participation* in school trips, sports events, camps that are not an essential part of the curriculum.
 - A fixed period of *internal or external suspension*
 - A fixed period of *exclusion*.

Document and Record

All incidents of bullying and responses will be documented and stored in line with Department for Education records management procedures. A record of an incident might go in a student's file. Incidents can be recorded in our electronic databases. For example EDSAS, IRMS or Day Map.

Monitor and Follow-Up

Staff will check on all students involved in a bullying incident. They will make sure all students are safe and relationships are repaired. They will talk with students, parents and carers about the actions taken. They will check if these actions have helped. If a student, parent or carer are not happy with the steps taken by the school, they can call the Department's complaints management line on 1800 677 435.

What To Do If Your Child Is The Bully

It's important to *tell your child you think their behaviour is unacceptable* and that you want it to end.

- Explain to your child what bullying is. Try to be calm about it. Talk with your child about what they are doing and why they might be doing it.
- Monitor your child's use of the internet and mobile phones.
- Talk to the school about its approach to bullying. Ask what you can do from home to support the approach. Call back regularly to check how your child is behaving.
- Some children bully because they themselves have been bullied. Listen to your child for clues that they might be a victim of bullying.
- Sometimes children join in a group that uses bullying behaviour to avoid being bullied themselves. If your child is bullying so they can fit in, talk to the school about strategies they can learn to resist joining in.

It's best to do something about bullying sooner rather than later. You can have the most influence on your child's bullying behaviour while they are still young – the younger they are, the more likely they are to change the way they act.

Not all Distressing or Hurtful Behaviour is Bullying

- **A SINGLE INCIDENT OF MALICIOUS OR AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR:** Bullying and harassment are repeated actions. A single incident may still be responded to as part of the school's behaviour management processes as unacceptable behaviour.
- **DISLIKE:** Although social rejection can be hurtful, it is not bullying unless accompanied by repeated and deliberate attempts to distress or hurt.
- **CONFLICT:** Arguments can be distressing but it is not bullying when two people are both upset and neither one is misusing power over the other. Conflict may still give rise to unacceptable behaviour which will be responded to as part of the school's behaviour development processes.

If bullying occurs, TELL someone IMMEDIATELY.