

## BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY - STUDENTS

### Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to promote a safe and caring environment for students that is free from bullying, harassment and discrimination and to provide a fair and effective process for responding to reports of inappropriate and possibly bullying behaviour.

This policy applies to all students at Preshil. The School also expects parents/guardians, contractors, visitors and volunteers to follow the standards established by this policy while in the School environment.

### Bullying

Bullying is the repeated unreasonable behaviour directed towards a person that creates a risk to health and safety. It occurs when an individual or a group deliberately upsets or hurts another person, their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion.

### Forms of Bullying include

**Cyber bullying:** uses digital technologies and may include posting and sharing nasty, angry or rude messages, image-based violence or repeated threatening messages (whether or not this is done with the aim to intimidate and create fear). Cyber bullying can occur in chat rooms, on social networking sites, through emails, instant messaging, setting up a defamatory personal website or deliberately excluding someone from social networking sites or on mobile devices.

**Extortion bullying:** physically stronger and more powerful students may bully other students into giving up their possessions, buying food and drink, or taking part in rule breaking activities.

**Exclusion bullying:** deliberately being left out of activities is a most hurtful form of bullying.

**Physical bullying:** pushing, shoving, fighting, pinching and any other unwelcome physical contact used intentionally to intimidate or hurt someone. Damaging, stealing or hiding personal belongings is also a form of physical bullying.

**Psychological / Verbal bullying:** occurs when words or actions are used that result in psychological harm. Examples of psychological bullying include threats, name calling, teasing, offensive language, putting people down or making fun of someone because of their physical appearance, identity, physical characteristics or cultural background. Racial discrimination of any kind is a form of bullying.

**Sexual bullying:** touching, sexually orientated jokes, drawings of, or writing about someone's body, using rude names or commenting about someone's morals, unwanted invitations of a sexual nature, and asking questions about someone's private life.

**Student Sexual Offending** refers to sexual behaviour that is led by a student 10 years, which may constitute a sexual offence.

## **Bullying Prevention Policy**

- On occasions **bullying may be sexualised in nature** and may involve 'body shaming' and other personal sexual intimidation.
- It may be difficult to determine whether student sexual behaviour amounts to sexual offending.

### **What Bullying is Not**

There are many negative situations which, while potentially distressing for students, are not bullying. These include:

- **Mutual Conflict** - situations which arise where there is a disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Mutual conflict situations must be closely monitored as they may evolve into a bullying situation.
- **One-off acts** (of aggression or unkindness) including single incidents of loss of temper, shouting or swearing do not normally constitute bullying.

### **What are the signs that someone is being bullied?**

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

- crying at night and having nightmares
- changes in sleep patterns
- refusing to talk when asked if something is wrong
- having unexplained bruises, cuts or scratches
- an unwillingness or a refusal to go to school
- feeling ill in the mornings
- changes in eating patterns
- coming home hungry from school
- a decline in the quality of school work
- becoming withdrawn and lacking in confidence
- often alone or excluded from friendship groups at school
- starts stammering or stuttering
- beginning to bully siblings
- frequent unexplained mood swings
- becomes aggressive or unreasonable

Parents and guardians are encouraged to recognise signs of bullying and notify the School through a trusted staff member immediately (such as Head of Campus, the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, the Inclusive Education Leader, the School Counsellor or the relevant Year Level Coordinator) if they suspect their child is a victim of bullying.

### **Management of Bullying Behaviour**

Preshil recognises its duty of care to provide a safe and positive learning environment where individual differences and diversity are respected and accepted. Bullying is not tolerated at Preshil. It is our policy that:

1. Bullying should be managed through a whole-of-School community approach involving students, staff and parents / guardians.
2. Bullying prevention strategies are implemented within the School on a continuous basis with a focus on teaching age appropriate skills and strategies to empower staff, students and parents/guardians to recognise bullying, change attitudes and beliefs that perpetuate the behaviour and respond

## **Bullying Prevention Policy**

appropriately.

3. Bullying response strategies are tailored to the circumstances of each incident.
4. staff act as positive role models emphasising our no bullying culture and
5. Bullying and prevention strategies are reviewed on an annual basis against best practices.

## **Whole School Approach to Bullying**

The 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. These strategies are made explicit in a range of curriculum areas. Our students are supported to live our values of mutual respect, collaboration and courage. These values underpin all that we do and reinforce our expectations of how we treat one another.

## **Student Responsibilities**

Students are responsible for:

- refusing to be involved in bullying incidents (bystander training)
- if bullying occurs where and when they are present, if possible, take some form of preventative action before reporting this behaviour.
- ensuring that if they are made aware that their behaviour is of a bullying nature, they should take it seriously, reflect on their behaviour, check it out by asking an adult if it is inappropriate, stop the offending behaviour immediately and engage in a restorative process, including making an apology.

## **Reporting 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 where possible, 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 the individuals involved.
- maintains records of reported bullying incidents; and
- will escalate its response when dealing with persistent bullies and/or severe incidents.

## **Actions that may be taken when responding to bullying include:**

- the “Restorative Practice” (Healthy Relationships) Approach (Berry Street).
- the “Method of Shared Concern” Approach (Pikas).
- the “No Blame” Approach (Maines & Robinson).
- notification of/consultation with parents/guardians.
- offering counselling to persistent bullies/victims.
- implementing effective follow-up strategies such as arranging a follow-up meeting with the complainant to see how things are going.
- disciplinary action (see Student Behaviour Management Policy and Student Code of Conduct); and

## **Bullying Prevention Policy**

- in some circumstances it may be necessary for the School to notify a relevant authority or agency (e.g. the Police) immediately.

## **Staff Responsibilities**

All staff are responsible to:

- model appropriate behaviour at all times.
- deal with all reported and observed incidents of bullying in accordance with this policy.
- ensure that any incident of bullying that they observe or is reported to them, is recorded appropriately.
- be vigilant in monitoring students that have been identified as either persistent bullies or victims, and
- acknowledge the rights of parents/guardians to speak with the School if they believe that their child has been bullied.

## **Parent Responsibilities**

All parents are responsible to:

- watch out for any signs and changes in behaviour that may be related to bullying or harassment of their child.
- encourage their child to report any possible bullying, harassment and/ or discrimination incidents to a staff member in order for it to be followed up.
- communicate with the school if their child reports any incidents of bullying or harassment or shows any signs of distress or mentions thoughts of feeling unsafe at School.
- always allow the School to deal with the matter. Under no circumstances should parents approach the child (or parents of the child) they suspect to be responsible for inappropriate behaviour.
- discuss strategies with their child to enhance respectful and caring relationships with peers and teachers.
- discuss with their child appropriate strategies for managing conflict situations; and
- refrain from advising their child to retaliate, as this will often cause additional problems.

## **Breach of Policy**

- If a student or staff member witnesses or is notified that another person is being subjected to violence or experiencing bullying, harassment or discrimination, that person should take steps to intervene or protect the victim by reporting the alleged conduct to the relevant Head of Campus or other nominated person. If a student or staff member fails to do so, that person may be deemed to have facilitated the violence, bullying, harassment or discriminatory behaviour, and therefore may be subject to disciplinary action.
- If a student or their parents are unhappy with the application of this Policy, they should raise the issue in accordance with the procedure set out in the School's Grievance, Complaint and Dispute Resolution Policy
- Where a staff member breaches this policy, the School will take disciplinary action, including in the case of serious breaches, summary dismissal.
- Where a student breaches this policy, the School will take action in accordance with the Student Behaviour Management Policy and Student Code of Conduct. Complaints of alleged inappropriate behaviour that are found to be malicious, frivolous or vexatious may result in the complainant being

## **Bullying Prevention Policy**

liable for disciplinary action.

### **Associated policies**

Student Behaviour Management Policy

Student Code of Conduct

ICT Responsible Use Policy (Students)

### **Review**

This policy was reviewed in March 2023 and will be reviewed again by the Leadership Team every two years or following a critical incident.