



Bullying Prevention and Response Policy and Plan

Our values

We aim to establish a community in which everybody upholds our school values of respect, safety and trust; and where individual differences are appreciated, understood and accepted. Everybody has a right to enjoy their time at school.

Our vision

“Australian schools are learning communities that promote student wellbeing, safety and positive relationships so that students can reach their full potential.”

(Australian Student Wellbeing Framework 2023)

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.

We are a safe, supportive and respectful school. Our environment promotes learning success and wellbeing. Our school culture encourages positive social interaction. We have programs that build resilience, emotional intelligence and growth mindsets. Everyone works together to implement our bullying prevention policy and plan.

Definition

A national definition of bullying 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.

It is important to understand the characteristics that set bullying apart from other forms of student conflict. While student conflict can cause great distress, strategies designed to address bullying may be different from those to manage non-bullying behaviours.

Bullying has three main characteristics:

1. It involves a misuse of power in a relationship

Conflict or fights between equals are not defined as bullying; bullying occurs in a situation of an imbalance of power. A power imbalance may arise from: the context (e.g. a number of children acting against one child); assets (e.g. access to a weapon); or from personal characteristics (e.g. being more developmentally advanced, or socially skilled).

2. It is ongoing and repeated

A single incident of misbehaviour is generally not defined as bullying. However, schools will take steps to address and respond to isolated incidents of misbehaviour.

A single act by a single person may be considered to be “bullying” if the behaviour is within a series of behaviours by other people that misuse power and result in harm. A single act may also be considered bullying if it can be shared online or through technology to a wide audience, or repeated via multiple viewings.

3. It involves behaviours that can cause harm

Bullying can cause physical and/or psychological harm.

Physical harm can include injury to a person or theft of, or damage to, their belongings.

Psychological harm can include anxiety, school avoidance and disengagement, isolation and depression. Psychological harm can have both short-term and long-term effects. The extent to which a person experiences psychological harm will depend upon their own personal resources and the support system that is available to them from family, school and friends.

The fear of being bullied can be enough to trigger psychological harm. A person who has not experienced bullying directly but has witnessed it can experience psychological harm even though they are not the direct target of the bullying behaviour.

Some examples of types of bullying include:

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

Verbal: verbal abuse, name calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, or threats. Verbal abuse can relate to a person's physical characteristics (e.g. weight or height) or other attributes such as race, sexuality, culture or religion. Verbal bullying can occur in a face to face setting, online or both.



Social: social exclusion, lying, spreading rumours, unwelcoming facial expressions or body language, menacing and contemptuous looks, playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate, mimicking unkindly, or damaging someone's social reputation or social acceptance (e.g. sharing information or images that will have a harmful effect on the other person). Social bullying can occur in a face to face setting, online or both.

Cyber: Cyberbullying (sometimes called online bullying) is bullying that is carried out through information and communication technology, including the internet (e.g. on social media sites) and on mobile devices. Examples include communications that intimidate, manipulate, put down, threaten or humiliate others. Cyberbullying includes behaviour such as:

- abusive texts and emails
- hurtful messages, videos and images (including images that have been manipulated / edited)
- intimidating others online
- excluding others online
- nasty online gossip
- distributing personal images and videos without consent.

Harassment, discrimination and violence

Bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence all create or contribute to negative environments where children can feel unsafe and are unable to reach their full potential. The relationships between bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence can be complicated.

Harassment: is behaviour that targets an individual or group due to their: identity, race, culture or ethnic origin; religion; physical characteristics; gender; sexual orientation; age; ability or disability. It offends, humiliates, intimidates or creates a hostile environment. It may be: an ongoing pattern of behaviour or a single act; directed randomly or towards the same person(s); intentional or unintentional.

Discrimination: occurs when people are treated less favourably than others because of their: identity, race, culture or ethnic origin; religion; physical characteristics; gender; sexual orientation; age; ability or disability. Discrimination interferes with the legal right of all people to be treated fairly and have the same opportunities as everyone else.

Violence: is the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against another person(s) that results in psychological harm, injury or in some cases death. It may involve provoked or unprovoked acts and can be a single incident, a random act or can occur over time.

It is important to remember that bullying and violence are not the same issue. Violence can be an aspect of bullying. If bullying can be addressed in its earlier stages then many instances of violence can be prevented.

It is important that bullying and violence are treated as separate issues with their own responses, but both issues are as important as each other and both can have a devastating effect on children and the school community.

Behaviour that constitutes a criminal offence will be reported to South Australia Police.



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, carers 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 to 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 Hillcrest Primary 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.
- Set up school values and behaviour expectations. Make sure these reflect inclusion, respect, safety and diversity.
- Share the school values and behaviour expectations with the school community. Lead by example.
- Use consistent language among staff, students, parents and carers that encourages positive behaviours and social interactions.
- Set up a physical school environment that encourages positive social interactions.
- Set up and display behavioural expectations in all classrooms through class agreements. Develop these with students. Review regularly. Lead by example.
- Make sure students feel safe to raise concerns and report bullying.

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.
- Explicitly teach positive behaviour and social and emotional skills. Guide students to have healthy relationships, both in person and online. Do this across all subject areas.
- Use teachable moments when a bullying issue happens. Teach about respectful and appropriate behaviours.

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.
- Leadership to manage complex bullying incidents. This includes where bullying is ongoing.



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.
- Involve parents, carers and students in planning bullying prevention and intervention responses.
- Share information with parents and carers about bullying. Include how to recognise it and what to do when their child is involved in bullying.
- Work with community organisations to promote safe and inclusive messages.
- Communicate regularly with families when a bullying incident happens.
- Work with other services to support students who have been involved in bullying incidents.

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 students' 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.
- Provide opportunities for staff, parents, carers and students to feel confident to respond to bullying.
- Set aside staff time and funds to plan, implement and assess our strategies to prevent and respond to bullying.

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.
- Support students who have engaged in bullying behaviours. Encourage reflection on the result of the behaviour and teach positive behaviours.
- Support all students who experience bullying, engage in bullying behaviour, or witness bullying.

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.
- Set up inclusive practices so students who might feel excluded are safe and supported.
- After a serious incident of bullying, supervise the students involved before school, at break times and after school. This will be organised and visible.
- Plan and coordinate transition visits between preschools, primary schools and high schools.
- Build staff skills, knowledge and confidence to restore safety and wellbeing after critical incidents.



How bullying is reported and resolved

We will work with students, parents and caregivers to resolve bullying issues. If needed, we will get advice, counselling and support from internal and external services.

All reports of bullying will be taken seriously. Responses will be planned and quick. The principal or leadership team will immediately respond to life threatening, significant harm or criminal behaviour issues. We will refer criminal actions to South Australia Police.

Our responses will restore the safe and positive learning environment.

Report bullying

You can report bullying to:

- Your child's classroom teacher
- Principal
- Deputy Principal

You can report bullying incidents by:

- Direct contact with one of the three key people mentioned above.
- Email a member of leadership dl.0665.leaders@schools.sa.edu.au
- Email or private message the classroom teacher on ClassDojo
- Submit an inquiry form through our website <https://hillcrstps.sa.edu.au/contact-us/>

Give us 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.

Gather and document information

Staff might speak about the incident with:

- students
- parents or carers
- other staff
- any other witness or person involved.

Intervention and support

Staff will see if the incident:

- meets the definition of bullying
- pose an immediate risk to student or staff safety.

If there is no immediate risk, staff might use the following strategies with students directly involved:

- restorative practices, including an apology
- Method of Shared Concern or Support Group Method of intervention
- parent or carer meeting

- school-based consequences
For example:
 - loss of privileges
 - given a learning task
 - use of reflection space or class
 - limited areas for play or activities or extra yard supervision
- suspension and exclusion.

Refer to services

Refer students to specialist support, if needed. This might be from the Department for Education or external services. Options will be discussed with students and their families.

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, EMS, Day Map or the department's incident management system.

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.

Ratified by staff and Governing Council: September 2025

Review date: September 2028

