

Eastern Ranges School

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Bullying Prevention Policy

PURPOSE

Eastern Ranges School 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 Eastern Ranges School community
- make clear that no form of bullying at Eastern Ranges School will be tolerated
- outline the strategies and programs in place at Eastern Ranges School 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 accept responsibility to report 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 and students engaging in bullying behaviour)
- seek parental and peer group support in addressing and preventing bullying behaviour at Eastern Ranges School.

When responding to bullying behaviour, Eastern Ranges School 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.

Eastern Ranges School acknowledges that school staff have 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 Eastern Ranges School aims to prevent, address and respond to student bullying behaviour. Eastern Ranges School recognises that students may display behaviours of concern that do not meet the definition of bullying. The Engagement and Wellbeing Policy identifies processes to support students displaying these behaviours.

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

POLICY

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 a deliberate misuse of power in relationships through 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 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 two main features:

- It involves a misuse of power in a relationship, and
- It involves behaviours that can cause harm.

Bullying can be:

1. *direct* physical bullying – e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.
2. *direct* verbal bullying – e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.
3. *indirect* bullying – e.g. spreading rumours, playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate, mimicking, encouraging others to socially exclude a person and/or damaging a person's social reputation or social acceptance.

Cyberbullying is direct or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technology. For example via a mobile device, computers, chat rooms, email, social media, etc. It can be verbal, written and include images, video and/or audio.

Other distressing and inappropriate behaviours

Many distressing and behaviours of concern may not constitute bullying even though they are unpleasant. Students who are involved in or who are distressed by behaviours of concern should report their concerns to school staff who will follow the Wellbeing and Engagement Policy.

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 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.

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. Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated at Eastern Ranges School and may have serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour. Eastern Ranges School will use its Wellbeing and Engagement Policy to guide a response to

students demonstrating harassing behaviour, unless the behaviour also constitutes bullying, in which case the behaviour will be managed in accordance with this Bullying Prevention Policy.

BULLYING PREVENTION

Eastern Ranges School has a number of programs and strategies in place to build a positive and inclusive school culture. We strive to foster a school culture that prevents bullying behaviour by modelling and encouraging behaviours that demonstrates acceptance, kindness and respect.

Bullying prevention at Eastern Ranges School 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 maintain a positive school environment that provides safety, security and support for students and promotes positive relationships and wellbeing through implementation of the School Wide Positive Behaviour framework.
- 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.
- Teachers explicitly teach desired and expected behaviours and skills that promote positive behaviour.
- Students are encouraged to look out for each other and to talk to teachers about any bullying they have experienced or witnessed.
- Teachers incorporate the Personal and Social Capability curriculum within their teaching program, ensuring safety skills are taught and modelled explicitly.
- Incidents relating to student behaviours are recorded via Sentral and monitored continually to identify patterns of behaviour that require further investigation.

- We identify and implement evidence-based programs and initiatives from the [Schools Mental Health Menu](#) that are relevant to preventing and addressing bullying and help us to build a positive and inclusive school climate.
 - Blue Edge
 - I CAN Network
 - Seasons for Growth
 - Respectful Relationships
 - Brainstorm Productions
 - Cool Kids

- 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 participate in the Safe Schools program to help us foster a safe environment that is supportive and inclusive of LGBTIQ+ students.

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

INCIDENT RESPONSE

Reporting concerns to Eastern Ranges Schools

Bullying complaints will be taken seriously and responded to sensitively at our school.

Eastern Ranges School acknowledges that being the victim of, or witness to, bullying can have a profound effect on student's behaviour and sense of wellbeing. Eastern Ranges School understands that the best way to support students through any incidences of bullying is via a collaborative and cooperative relationship between the school, the student and the student's family.

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 Eastern Ranges School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

Students who may be experiencing bullying behaviour, or students who have witnessed bullying behaviour, are encouraged to report their concerns to school staff as soon as possible.

We encourage students to speak to their classroom teacher however students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff. Where a student is not able to communicate verbally or confidently with staff, a range of visual supports are available to support students to report such concerns, including classroom communication devices.

Parents or carers who have concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Eastern Ranges School should contact their child's classroom teacher by phone, via the student diary or the parent portal on Sentral.

Eastern Ranges School understands and acknowledges that some of our students may find it difficult to identify and communicate concerns to staff or parents / carers. At all times, staff monitor student behaviours to identify behaviours that may indicate there are concerns around the student's sense of safety and wellbeing. Where concerns are identified, and unable to be confirmed by students, staff will escalate the issue to PCO, including the school psychologist and other members of the therapy team as appropriate.

Investigations

When notified of alleged bullying behaviour, school staff are required to record the details of the allegations in Sentral. This will trigger a response from the Leadership and Student Engagement and Wellbeing teams.

The school Leadership Team is responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, Leadership 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 / carers of the students involved (both the perpetrator/s and the victim/s)
- 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 school staff 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 school staff have 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 the student's family, school leadership, the Student Wellbeing and Engagement team, and the school-based therapy team.

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, Eastern Ranges School will consider:

- the age and maturity of the students involved
- the impact it has had on the target student
- whether the 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, including any element of provocation.

Eastern Ranges School may implement all, or some of the following responses to bullying behaviours:

- Offer counselling support to the target student or students, including referral to the school therapy team.
- Offer counselling support to the students engaging in bullying behaviour, including referral to the school therapy team and the Student Wellbeing and Engagement team.
- Facilitate a Student Support Group meeting and/or Behaviour Support Plan for affected students.
- 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.
- Monitor the behaviour of the students involved for an appropriate time and take follow up action if necessary.
- Implement measures to prevent further incidences of bullying behaviour in alignment with our School Wide Positive Behaviour framework, Engagement and Wellbeing Policy, Ministerial Order 1125 and procedures for the suspension and expulsion of students in Victorian government schools.
- Engage with a wide range of resources available from organisations including Life Education, headspace, kidshelpline etc.
- Provide support to the family of the students involved as required.

Eastern Ranges School 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.

Eastern Ranges School is responsible for maintaining up to date records of the investigation of and responses to bullying behaviour.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Parents, Students and Community Complaints policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity 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](#)
- [Kids Helpline](#)
- [Lifeline](#)
- [Bullying. No way!](#)
- [Student Wellbeing Hub](#)
- [Office of the eSafety Commissioner](#)
- [Australian Student Wellbeing Framework](#)

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, or earlier as required, following analysis of school data on reported incidents of, and responses to bullying to ensure that the policy remains up to date, practical and effective.

Data will be collected through:

- incident reports entered via Sentral
- the Engagement and Wellbeing team
- attitudes to School Survey
- Staff Opinion Survey
- discussion and consultation with students via the SRC program.

Proposed amendments to this policy will be discussed with the Education Policy Committee and School Council.

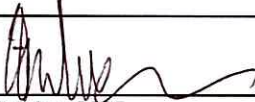
COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website and communication app.
- Included in staff induction processes
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Included as annual reference in school newsletter
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated in October 2025 and is scheduled for review in October 2028.

Date Implemented	June 2019
Author	Susan Collier
Approved By	School Council
Approval Authority (Signature & Date)	 October 2025
Date Reviewed	October 2025
Responsible for Review	Principal/Assistant Principal
Review Date	October 2028