



Bullying Prevention Policy

Ratified: 17 May 2022

Review Date: May 2025

Aims

The purpose of this policy is to clarify what is classified as bullying, and ways in which Ridgehaven Primary School will manage issues of bullying should they occur – but ideally, how early education and support will prevent bullying from occurring at all. At Ridgehaven Primary school, our motto is ‘a community learning together’ and we encourage and foster a strong sense of inclusive community, aligned with our school values of respect, persistence and success.

What is bullying?

Bullying is described as ongoing misuse of power in a relationship; deliberate, hurtful gestures, words or actions that are repeated over time and involve behaviours that cause harm. Single incidents of misbehaviour are not defined as bullying – inappropriate behaviours will be managed within the guidelines of other relevant school policies. Bullying can cause physical and psychological harm.

Bullying is unacceptable behaviour. Everyone has the right to feel safe and welcomed at school.

Some examples of bullying behaviour are;

- **Social**; ignoring someone, or threatening exclusion from friendship groups, spreading rumours about a person, mimicry
- **Physical abuse**; hitting, pushing, or kicking, pinching, destroying, or interfering with property
- **Verbal abuse**; offensive name calling, putting someone down, insults, offensive behaviour
- **Cyber-bullying**; using technology to hurt someone else, by sending offensive messages or pictures, via text, a chat room, or on a social media site. Pretending to be someone else, sharing videos or images without consent.
- **Discrimination and harassment**; based on gender, race, cultural or ethnic origin, physical characteristics, disability, sexual orientation, age, or ability.

Many of these behaviours in isolation may not fit the definition of bullying but will be managed through the Behaviour Support Policy when appropriate.

As a student at Ridgehaven Primary School, what can I do about bullying?

Remember that if you are being bullied, it is not your fault. There are some things that you can do:

- Tell the person involved to stop
- If you witness bullying, ask other people to stop bullying
- If you are being bullied, or you witness bullying, please report it.

As a student at Ridgehaven Primary School who do I report bullying to?

Bullying is not something you have to work through alone. It is not something you should feel ashamed of, or that it is your fault. You should report bullying as soon as it happens, to someone you trust.

- Your friends
- Your parent(s) or caregiver(s)
- Your teachers, school counsellor, School Leader, or Principal
- Out of School House Care (OSHC)

You can also seek support at:

- Youth Helpline 1800 55 1800 or www.kidshelpline.com.au

How do you report bullying?

- Face-to-Face with a trusted adult (ie your parents or an SSO, or teacher or school leader)
- Schedule a meeting with your teacher and SSO, or a school leader
- Problem Box – if this is used in your classroom
- Message your teacher via Google classrooms, or by writing a note

Give as much information as possible. This might include:

- Who was involved, including who engaged in the bullying behaviour, who the behaviour was directed at, witnesses to the behaviour, and if anyone tried to stop it.
- When the incident happened
- Where the incident took place
- What the bullying behaviour was

At Ridgeway Primary School, how do we respond to incidents of bullying?

Each situation is unique and requires a personalised approach by the school dependent on the needs of the students involved, and the right of all students to have a safe learning environment. We will listen and talk to both the person being bullied, and the person(s) who responsible for bullying, to give us a starting point for ending the bullying and preventing further incidents.

Investigation

Staff may speak about the incident with:

- Students
- Parents or Caregivers
- Other staff
- Any other witnesses or people involved

Communication & Documentation

- Communicate regularly with all caregivers when bullying occurs.
- All incidents and subsequent investigations will be documented in line with the Department of Education's procedures.

Outcomes

- Negotiated consequences for the bully (dependent on the nature of the incidents, for example, suspension for cyber-bullying which occurs off campus)
- A formal warning
- Contact with parents
- Take home suspension
- Exclusion and mediation processes
- Repair and restore relationships
- Ongoing support for students involved.

Bullying Prevention Strategies

Education is key to preventing bullying from occurring. Children are still learning how to interact with each other and the world, and we work to prevent bullying by modelling and promoting positive behaviour.

Action

- Using our positive school values (Caring, Honesty, Excellence, Respect and Responsibility) to create a respectful, inclusive, and welcoming environment.
- Valuing and celebrating diversity, inclusion, and respect, and creating a caring and safe environment for students.
- Explicitly model and promote positive behaviour, leading by example.
- Continually developing policies and strategies to promote student safety.

Roles of Staff

- Teaching students in their class programs about respectful relationships; addressing violence prevention, conflict resolution, anger management and problem solving.
- Ongoing education for all students on how to prevent, identify, respond and report to bullying.
- Ongoing training and support for all staff to build confidence and capacity to identify, prevent and respond to bullying.

- Have regular check ins with at risk students to make sure they are adequately supported

Roles of caregivers

- Model and encourage respectful, safe, and inclusive behaviours at home
- Have discussions with children about what bullying is and educate them in ways to be both be safe when it comes to bullying (online and in person) and teach them not to engage in bullying behaviours
- Report incidents of bullying to the school and follow the procedures as outlined in this policy.
- Check in with children regularly around their usage of technology
- Support children to continue to attend school while the issue is being resolved

Role of Students

- Behave in the Ridgehaven way – treating others with kindness, respect, inclusiveness and caring, both online and in person.
- Learn to identify bullying to keep yourself, and other students safe.
- Support other students by stepping in – when it is safe, and by seeking help from adults.
- If one of your friends is engaging in bullying behaviour, support them to act in safer, caring and more inclusive ways.

Intervention Strategies

Bullying is not something that can usually be solved with one meeting with a student and parent. It is a complex issue that often requires long term strategies to be put in to place to both assist the person being bullied, and to help the perpetrator understand not only why their behaviour is unacceptable, but to learn ways to better interact with others. At Ridgehaven Primary School we address bullying by:

- Counselling students who are bullied, and those who are bullying
- Engaging parents to discuss strategies
- Negotiated consequences and behaviour management
- Engaging District services support.

Post- Intervention Strategies

Our commitment to preventing bullying at Ridgehaven Primary School means we have a range of strategies in place after the initial reporting:

- Carefully monitoring the person who has been bullied to ensure their continued safety and well-being and checking that the bullying has stopped
- Providing access to support services as needed
- Continually reviewing and evaluating the school's behaviour codes and policies, by assessing data related to incidents of bullying that have occurred.

The Ridgehaven Primary School Bullying Prevention Policy is aligned with the Ridgehaven Primary School Behaviour Education Policy and the two will be used in conjunction when addressing any behaviour incidents at the school.