Mount Compass Area School

Bullying Prevention Policy

We aim to establish a school community where everybody upholds our school values of respect, kindness and integrity; and where individual differences are appreciated, understood and accepted. Everybody has a right to feel included and safe in our school, free from harassment and bullying.

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)

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 action our bullying prevention policy and plan.

Our approach to bullying prevention

At Mount Compass Area School we plan, implement and review our bullying prevention strategies. We do this with our Governing Council, staff, students, families and local community:
We:

- Create a welcoming and inclusive school.
- Make sure staff understand their role to create a safe school.
- Build staff skills to respond well to bullying.
- Teach about bullying in all year levels, including how to prevent, identify, respond to and report bullying and cyberbullying.
- Take bullying seriously. Respond to reports of bullying or observed bullying behaviours.
- Use fair and consistent responses to bullying or suspected bullying.
- Document bullying incidents.
- Check in with students while bullying incidents are being resolved.
- Use restorative processes to actively resolve concerns and to restore and repair relationships harmed by bullying
- 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.
- 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.
- Develop solutions to bullying incidents with students, staff, parents and caregivers.
- 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.

How bullying is reported and resolved

We are committed to working collaboratively with students, parents, and carers to address and resolve any incidents of bullying. Where appropriate, we will seek advice, counselling, and support from external services to ensure the best outcomes for those involved. All reports of bullying will be taken seriously, and our responses will be timely, planned, and effective.

The school will make every effort to initiate a response to any observed or reported harmful behaviour, including bullying, within two school days of becoming aware of the behaviour.

This includes:

- Initiating immediate safety action
- Providing initial wellbeing support
- Contacting parents/carers
- Taking initial appropriate and proportional actions

The principal or leadership team will respond immediately to any situation involving life-threatening behaviour, significant harm, or suspected criminal activity. Any criminal matters will be referred to South Australia Police.

Our goal is to restore and maintain a safe, respectful, and positive learning environment for all members of our school community.

Report bullying

You can report bullying to:

- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- Assistant Principal
- Student Wellbeing Leader
- Home Group Teacher
- Support staff

You can report bullying incidents by:

- Email
- Face-to-face
- Over the phone
- Scheduling a meeting
- Other

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
- poses 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
- 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. Incidents will be recorded in a student record in DayMap.

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 if appropriate. 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.

Definitions

Bullying

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.

Bullying has three main features

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 eg a number of children acting against one child
- personal characteristics eg different physical, emotional or social development.

It is ongoing and repeated

One incident of misbehaviour is not defined as bullying. Schools will respond to all incidents of misbehaviour.
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.

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.

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.
- Collect data on bullying regularly
- 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 that are visible and consistent.
- 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 up, 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.

Supporting Documents

MCAS Behaviour Code

MCAS Bullying Prevention Brochure – information for families

Feedback and Complaints procedure – Parents

“Speak-up” poster (Feedback process for students)

Bullying prevention and response tools and resources

Behaviour support policy (PDF 603 KB)

Office of the eSafety Commissioner

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