



**BRIGHTON**  
SECONDARY COLLEGE

**BULLYING  
PREVENTION  
POLICY  
2021 - 2024**

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## BACKGROUND

**Bullying and harassment is completely unacceptable at Brighton Secondary College.**

As part of the Department of Education and Training Student Engagement Policy schools are required to:

- create and maintain environments that are safe and supportive
- value diversity and promotes pro-social behaviour

## PURPOSE

Brighton Secondary College 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 Brighton Secondary College community
- make clear that no form of bullying at Brighton Secondary College will be tolerated
- outline the strategies and programs in place at Brighton Secondary College 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 Brighton Secondary College.

When responding to bullying behaviour, Brighton Secondary College 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.

Brighton Secondary College acknowledges that school staff owe 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 Brighton Secondary College aims to prevent, address and respond to student bullying behaviour. Brighton Secondary College recognises that there are many other types of inappropriate student behaviours that do not meet the definition of bullying which are also unacceptable at our school. These other inappropriate behaviours will be managed in accordance with our Student Code of Conduct and Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy and Inclusion and Diversity policy.

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

## POLICY

### DEFINITION

#### BULLYING

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. There is an imbalance of power in incidents of bullying with the bully or bullies having more power at the time due to age, size, status or other reasons.

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
- it is ongoing and repeated, and
- it involves behaviours that can cause harm.

Bullying includes but is not limited to:

- direct physical bullying – e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.
- direct verbal bullying – e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.
- 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.

### TYPES OF BULLYING

#### Covert bullying

Covert bullying can be very difficult for someone outside of the interaction to identify. It can include hand gestures and threatening looks, whispering, excluding or turning your back on a person, restricting where a person can sit and who they can talk with. Social bullying (spreading rumours, manipulation of relationships, excluding, isolating) is often covert bullying.

#### Cyberbullying

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.

Cyberbullying includes:

#### Pranking

- repeated hang ups, anonymous, mocking or threatening phone calls.
- image sharing
- forwarding, sharing or creation of unflattering or private images without permission.
- sexually explicit images

- People of any age, who forward or share images of a sexual nature of a person under 18 need to be aware that this is a criminal offence (child pornography) that may result in prosecution.

#### **Text and email**

- sending insulting or threatening text messages or emails.

#### **Personal online information**

- publishing online someone's private, personal or embarrassing information without permission, or spreading rumours online.

#### **Identity theft**

- Assuming someone's identity online and negatively representing them in a way that damages their reputation or relationships.

#### **Hate sites**

- creating hate sites or implementing social exclusion campaigns on social networking sites.
- other types of cyberbullying

It is also cyberbullying when a student, or students, uses technology to run a multi-step campaign to bully another student. For example, setting another student up to be assaulted, video-recording their humiliation, posting the video-recording online and then sending the website address to others.

Cyberbullying is invasive. Cyberbullying can be difficult to escape and is incredibly invasive. It is more likely to occur outside of school, including while at home, and can happen at any time.

Cyberbullying can involve a large audience. Cyberbullying can involve harmful material being widely and rapidly shared to a large audience, for example, rumours and images can be posted on public forums or sent to many people at once. This material can also continue to be available and harmful long after the cyberbullying has ceased.

Cyberbullies have a sense of anonymity. Cyberbullying can provide the bully with a sense of relative anonymity and distance from the target, so there is a lack of immediate feedback or consequences.

#### **Physical bullying**

Physical bullying includes hitting, pushing, shoving or intimidating or otherwise physically hurting another person, damaging or stealing their belongings. It includes threats of violence.

#### **Social bullying**

This is sometimes called relational or emotional bullying, and includes deliberately excluding someone, spreading rumours, sharing information that will have a harmful effect on the other person and/or damaging a person's social reputation or social acceptance.

#### **Verbal and written bullying**

Verbal and written bullying includes name-calling or insulting someone about an attribute, quality or personal characteristic.

#### **HARASSMENT**

Is language or actions that are demeaning, offensive or intimidating to a person. It can take many forms, including sexual harassment, racial harassment, racial vilification or disability harassment. Further information about these forms of harassment, including definitions, is set out in our Inclusion and Diversity Policy. Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated at Brighton Secondary College and may have serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour. Brighton Secondary College will use its Inclusion and Diversity 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.

#### **OTHER DISTRESSING AND INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOURS**

Many distressing and inappropriate behaviours may not constitute bullying even though they are unpleasant. Students who are involved in or who witness any distressing and inappropriate behaviours should report their concerns to school staff and our school will follow the relevant policies for example the Student 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 repeatedly 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.

**Single-episode acts of nastiness or physical aggression** are not the same as bullying. However, single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not acceptable behaviours at our school and may have serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour. Brighton Secondary College will use its Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy to guide a response to single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression.

#### **PREVENTION OF BULLYING**

Brighton Secondary College 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 behaviour that demonstrates acceptance, kindness and respect.

Bullying prevention at Brighton Secondary College is proactive and is supported by research that indicates that a whole school, multifaceted approach is the most effective way to prevent and address bullying. At our school:

- we have a positive school environment that provides safety, security and support for students and promotes positive relationships and wellbeing.
- 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 are encouraged to incorporate classroom management strategies that discourage bullying and promote positive behaviour.
- a range of year level incursions and programs are planned for each year to raise awareness about bullying and its impacts.
- in the classroom, our social and emotional learning curriculum teaches students what constitutes bullying and how to respond to bullying behaviour assertively. This promotes resilience, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.
- the Peer Support Program and the Peer Mediation program encourage positive relationships between students in different year levels. We seek to empower students to be confident communicators and to resolve conflict in a non-aggressive and constructive way.
- students are encouraged to look out for each other and to talk to teachers and older peers about any bullying they have experienced or witnessed.
- we participate in the National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence.

For further information about our engagement and wellbeing initiatives, please see our Student

Wellbeing and Engagement policy/Student Engagement Policy.

**Brighton Secondary College undertakes to:**

- ensure that each staff member receives a copy of all related policies; create awareness of the nature of bullying and harassment; provide supporting professional development on a regular basis (including the induction of new staff members), identify risk factors, control the risk and encourage reporting of any incident.
- sustain a supportive learning environment and work culture to encourage constructive relationships between students, staff and parents. Such relationships are built through behaviours such as cooperation, consideration, and open and honest forms of communication.
- provide learning experiences to develop appropriate social skills, considerate relationships and resilience. These learning experiences will be expressed in the College curriculum and co-curricular programs at all year levels.
- provide counselling to both the victim and the perpetrator of bullying and harassment. Counselling will deal with issues of conflict resolution, and offer acceptable strategies to resolve conflicts of interest, opinion and expectation.

**The College requires students to:**

- allow other students to learn and teachers/staff to teach and work in an environment free from disruption, discrimination and harassment.
- accept responsibility for their behaviour and actions.
- be cooperative and treat all members of the College community with respect and courtesy at all times.
- promote a supportive and caring environment for all.
- refuse to be involved in any bullying situation.
- take preventative action and report actions of bullies.
- help break the code of silence which often surrounds bullying by speaking out about incidents of bullying they experience or observe.

**The College requires staff to:**

- foster inclusive community values in classes, and in all areas and activities of the College.
- discourage behaviours that exclude individuals from any aspect of school life.
- allow others to work in an environment free from disruption, discrimination and harassment.
- be a role model to students through the use of appropriate language and behaviour.
- focus on the behaviour, not the person, when dealing with issues of conflict.
- be sensitive to signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying.
- encourage victims to speak out, take steps to help victims, and remove those who are responsible for distress, in order to reduce the risk to the victim.
- implement the recommended procedures for dealing with incidents of bullying (see attached procedures).

**The College asks parents to:**

- foster inclusive community values.
- be a role model to children through the use of appropriate language and behaviour.
- watch for signs of distress in your child.
- encourage their children to discuss any incidents of bullying with them, and reinforce the need to

speak out and not keep the bullying a secret.

- discuss issues and strategies with your child to develop relationship skills and understanding.
- inform the school if bullying is suspected.
- discourage their children from retaliating to incidents of bullying.
- be willing to actively participate in school interviews if their children are involved in a bullying incident.

**INCIDENT RESPONSE**

**REPORTING CONCERNS TO BRIGHTON SECONDARY COLLEGE**

Bullying, harassment and/or racial vilification complaints will be taken seriously and responded to sensitively at our school.

A receipt will be issued to the person making a report, whenever an allegation or an incident report is received. This may be a student or parent. The receipt will allow students or parents to verify that a report was received, when it was received, a brief description of the incident and how it was flagged (e.g. as an antisemitic incident) in the student's Chronicle record,

All reports of bullying received at Brighton Secondary College will be entered into the individual Chronicle records of both the target and the alleged perpetrator.

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.

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 Brighton Secondary College are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

Students who may have a complaint or concern about something that has happened at school are encouraged to speak to their parents or carers and approach a trusted teacher or a member of the school leadership team.

Students and parents are strongly encouraged to immediately report all instances of this behavior to Year Level Managers, the Wellbeing Team, or the Principal. If parents or students feel uncomfortable reporting to these people, they may go to the designated contact officer for these reports, Mr Pat Gargano.

If students or parents are uncomfortable reporting these matters at school, they may report them the Department of Education and Training contact desk at:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/going-to-school/Pages/discrimination-schools.aspx#:~:text=Report%20the%20incident%20on%20the%20Report%20racism%20hotline&text=In%20an%20emergency%2C%20contact.vic.gov.au>

Parents or carers who develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Brighton Secondary College should contact the relevant Student Manager by phone or email.

**INVESTIGATIONS**

When notified of alleged bullying behaviour, school staff are required to:

1. record the details of the allegations in Compass, student chronicle; and
2. inform relevant Student Manager and the designated officer for receiving reports

The Student Manager is responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, the Student Manager 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 of the students involved
- 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 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 the Student Manager has 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.

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, Brighton Secondary College will consider:

- the age and maturity of the students involved
- the severity and frequency of the bullying, and 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.

Student Manager 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 Student Wellbeing Team, SSS or external provider
- offer counselling support to the students engaging in bullying behaviour, including referral to the Student Wellbeing Team, SSS or external provider.
- offer counselling support to affected students, including witnesses and/or friends of the target student, including referral to the Student Wellbeing Team, SSS or external provider.
- facilitate a restorative practice meeting with all or some of the students involved. The objective of restorative practice is to repair relationships that have been damaged by bringing about a sense of remorse and restorative action on the part of the person who has bullied someone and forgiveness by the person who has been bullied.
- 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.

- facilitate a process using the Support Group Method, involving the target student(s), the students engaging in bullying behaviour and a group of students who are likely to be supportive of the target(s).
- implement a Method of Shared Concern process with all students involved in the bullying.
- facilitate a Student Support Group meeting and/or Behaviour Support Plan for affected students.
- prepare a [Safety Plan or Individual Management Plan] restricting contact between target and students engaging in bullying behaviour.
- provide discussion and/or mentoring for different social and emotional learning competencies of the students involved, including [insert specific examples, i.e. connect affected students with an older Student Mentor, resilience programs, etc.].
- monitor the behaviour of the students involved for an appropriate time and take follow up action if necessary.
- implement year group targeted strategies to reinforce positive behaviours, for example SECASA, work shops and 'Click for Hate' session,
- implement disciplinary consequences for the students engaging in bullying behaviour, which may include removal of privileges, detention, suspension and/or expulsion consistent with our Student Wellbeing and Engagement policy, the Ministerial Order on Suspensions and Expulsions and any other relevant Department policy.

Brighton Secondary College understands the importance of monitoring and following up on the progress of students who have been involved in or affected by bullying behaviour.

As a matter of course, students who are reporting incidents of bullying or any other form of discrimination are referred to the Wellbeing Department for support, irrespective of whether they have identified the perpetrator

The Student Manager is responsible for maintaining up to date records of the investigation of and responses to bullying behaviour.

The parents of all students involved in bullying allegations (irrespective of whether their child was the target or perpetrator of the behaviour) be advised of the outcome of any investigations into such allegations, and a record of this communication will be included on the student's chronicle record.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION**

Any incidents of reported bullying or cyberbullying or harassment will be handled/dealt with as follows:

- victim(s) and written perpetrator statement(s) will be taken by the student manager.
- victim(s) and perpetrator(s) will be interviewed separately
- parent(s) or carer(s) will be contacted
- well-being team will be involved to provide counselling, support and further education if necessary
- depending on the nature or severity of the incident (or repetitive) appropriate consequences will apply which may include:
- temporary removal from the classroom or placement in a senior class
- completion of a special task
- detention (before or after school or during recess or lunchbreaks)
- Conduct card
- written behavioural or work agreements

- attendance on student free days
- being sent home from excursions, camps, other activities at parents' expense
- involvement of the Police
- suspension – either Internal or External
- assisted transfer (in line with DET guidelines)

For further information, see:

- [Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy](#)
- [Inclusion and Diversity Policy](#)

#### **REPEATED AND SERIOUS OFFENCES**

After investigation, if it is established that repeated or serious bullying, harassment or vilification has occurred, the following procedures or sanctions may be implemented:

- any student found to have exhibited repeated bullying, harassment or vilification is committing an offence against the law.
- any student found have exhibited repeated sexual harassment will be suspended immediately, and the parents/guardians of the student will be notified in order to begin a consultation process. Police may be notified. As each situation is unique, in addition to the steps stipulated above, other steps may be taken depending on the individual circumstances of the incident.
- at the discretion of the Principal, the students may be encouraged and assisted to find an alternative educational setting.

#### **FALSE REPORTING:**

If it is found that any student has deliberately or falsely accused another student or staff member of bullying, harassment or vilification, the accusing student will be dealt with as the offending student.

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

- [School Values and Philosophy Policy](#)
- [Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy](#)
- [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:

- Kids Helpline
- Lifeline
- Bullying. No way!
- Student Wellbeing Hub
- Office of the eSafety Commissioner
- Australian Student Wellbeing Framework
- Headspace

#### **EVALUATION**

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years, or earlier as required following an incident or analysis of new research or school data relating to bullying, to ensure that the policy remains up to date, practical and effective.

Data will be collected through:

- discussion and consultation with students and parent/carers
- regular student surveys
- regular staff surveys
- assessment of other school-based data, including the number of reported incidents of bullying in each year group and the effectiveness of the responses implemented
- Attitudes to School Survey
- Parent Opinion Survey

Proposed amendments to this policy will be discussed with [include consultation i.e. student representative groups, parents groups, school council]

**REVIEW CYCLE**

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years.

