



## Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy



### Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the administration office who can support you further.

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and members of our school community understand:

- (a) our commitment to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for students
- (b) expectations for positive student behaviour
- (c) support available to students and families
- (d) our school's policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

Aitken Creek Primary School is committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for all students. We understand that students reach their full potential only when they are happy, healthy and safe, and that a positive school culture helps to engage students and support them in their learning. Our school acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are closely linked.

The objective of this policy is to support our school to create and maintain a safe, supportive and inclusive school environment consistent with our school's values.

### Scope

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

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## Policy

### 1. School profile

Aitken Creek Primary School opened in 2011. The school is located within the City of Hume, approximately 26 kilometres north of Melbourne. The area is under constant development and has become very urbanised over the last few years. The school has attained a steady increase of enrolments since its opening and has a current enrolment of over 1000 students. We have a very multicultural population with a significant number of students whose English is not their first language.

The school leadership and staffing profile evolves every year to address the growth and directly link with the School Strategic Plan priorities. The staffing profile has a mix of expertise however predominantly teaching staff are in the initial graduate years of teaching. Professional learning, coaching and induction processes have been instrumental in ensuring the development of the school culture and the school wide approach to teaching and learning.

The curriculum at Aitken Creek Primary School is developed using the Victorian Curriculum Framework with a focus on Literacy and Numeracy. This forms a basis for teacher planning and curriculum implementation. Specialist programs offered include Physical Education, Visual Arts, Performing Arts and Spanish as an additional language.

The school structure is organised around the stages of schooling. The Early Years caters for the learning and developmental needs of students in Prep to Year 2 and is based on the

principles of foundational learning. The students of Year 3 to 6 are part of the Middle Years of schooling with close links being forged with the local secondary schools in the later years. The Middle Years focuses on the needs of the emerging adolescent and independent learning. The school is committed to providing a range of learning experiences for your child. The current structure allows teachers to cater for a range of students, learning styles and individual needs, whilst encouraging peer interaction. A range of extra-curricular opportunities are developed every year as part of our Clubs program, offering students singing, sporting, socialising and artistic options.

The Student Leadership system at Aitken Creek Primary School provides students with leadership training and skill developments, and there are many opportunities for students to experience positions of responsibility. Our student leaders are actively encouraged to make decisions, take on responsibility and have an input into the direction of the school. Within the learning environment build a culture where teachers and students work together, and where student voice, agency and leadership are understood as interrelated factors that contribute to the notion of empowerment and sense of school pride.

The wellbeing of our students and staff is of the utmost importance to us. We have access to a high calibre Student Wellbeing Team, which consists of a school based allied health and department allied health workers who provide support and guidance for our students, staff and families. As a school we operate under the School Wide Positive Behaviour Framework where the school values underpin our schoolwide processes and procedures and work towards developing a culture of support and pride.

## **2. School values, philosophy and vision**

Aitken Creek Primary School's Statement of Values and School Philosophy is integral to the work that we do and is the foundation of our school community. Students, staff and members of our school community are encouraged to live and demonstrate our core values of respect, teamwork, achievement and responsibility at every opportunity.

At Aitken Creek Primary School, our students will achieve personal success in their learning and become responsible and productive citizens. An environment that is caring, safe and supportive will be provided so that each student achieves their full potential. Parents, students and staff are strongly encouraged to work together in partnership to ensure our students succeed.

The core beliefs that we base our work on are:

- Through effort everyone can succeed and personal achievements are celebrated
- Active engagement as well as positive work habits and attitudes are essential to learning
- Social skills are fundamental in the way we interact with each other

View our ***Statement of Values and School Philosophy*** on our school website.

### 3. Engagement strategies

Aitken Creek Primary School has adopted the School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) framework. Through this we have developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students in our school. This is documented in the ACPS Matrix of Expected Behaviours. We acknowledge that some students may need extra social, emotional or educational support at school, and that the needs of students will change over time as they grow and learn.

A summary of the universal (whole of school), targeted (year group specific) and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

Universal - school and classroom-wide systems for all students, staff and settings

- high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers
- prioritise positive relationships between staff and students, recognising the fundamental role this plays in building and sustaining student wellbeing
- creating a culture that is inclusive, engaging and supportive
- Developing community agreements and classroom expectations
- welcoming all parents/carers and being responsive to them as partners in learning
- analysing and being responsive to a range of school data such as attendance, Attitudes to School Survey, parent survey data, student management data and school level assessment data
- teachers at Aitken Creek Primary School use an instructional framework to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction to ensure that evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons
- teachers at Aitken Creek Primary School adopt a broad range of teaching and assessment approaches to effectively respond to the diverse learning styles, strengths and needs of our students and follow the standards set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching
- our school's Statement of Values are incorporated into our curriculum and promoted to students, staff and parents so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community
- carefully planned transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling
- positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents
- monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level
- students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Student Leadership Group, Student Voice and Action Teams (SVAT) and other forums such as classroom based community meetings. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Head of Department, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through the Better Buddies program
- we engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students,

which includes programs such as Respectful Relationships, also drawing upon other social skills resources such as: Calmer Classrooms, Stop Think Do and Zones of Regulation

- implementing a staged response to intervention
- modelling, teaching and acknowledging the school-wide values, rights and responsibilities and shared expectations
- all students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Assistant Principal, School First Aid Officer, Heads of Department, Assistant Principals and Principal if they would like to discuss a particular issue or feel as though they may need support of any kind. We are proud to have an 'open door' policy where students and staff are partners in learning
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour and wellbeing topics
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
- ensuring that students who have displayed unacceptable behaviours towards others can repair the relationship through Restorative Approaches and by implementing logical consequences
- implementing effective and supportive transition programs and processes into and out of the school, including student transitions between different learning areas and year levels within the school
- we build teacher capacity through professional learning, coaching and mentoring

Targeted - specialised group systems for students that need additional support

- each year group has a Head of Department, who monitor the health and wellbeing of students in their year, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support, in a timely manner
- connect all Koorie students with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer
- all students in Out of Home Care will be appointed a Learning Mentor, have an Individual Learning Plan and a Student Support Group (SSG) and will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- student support plans/safety plans are developed for identified students with all key stakeholders
- we embrace a case management approach to student wellbeing in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff each year
- we provide targeted social skills programs for identified students
- wellbeing and health staff will undertake health promotion and social skills development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff each year
- staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma
- providing additional resources for students identified as requiring additional needs
- reasonable adjustments are provided to classroom programs and environments to

support identified students

- establishment of classroom and yard sanctuaries to support emotional regulation
- development of small group intervention programs
- provide student and family counselling support

### Individual

- [Student Support Groups](#)
- [Individual Learning Plan](#)
- [Behaviour Support Plan](#)
- Safety and De-Escalation Plans
- [Program for Students with Disabilities](#)
- referral to Case Management team
- referral to [Student Support Services](#), ChildFirst, Foundation House, DFFH and other external services as appropriate
- referral to Attendance Officer

Referral to Department of Education and Training supports, such as:

- [Mental health toolkit](#)
- [Navigator](#)
- [LOOKOUT](#)

Aitken Creek Primary School implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These can include:

- building constructive relationships with students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances
- meeting with a student and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help the student engage with school
- developing an Individual Education Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan and/or a Safety/De-Escalation Plan
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up
- referring the student to:
  - school-based wellbeing supports
  - Student Support Services
  - Appropriate external supports such as council-based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, headspace, child and adolescent mental health services or Child First
  - Re-engagement programs such as Navigator

Where necessary the school will support the student's family to engage by:

- being responsive and sensitive to changes in the student's circumstances and health and wellbeing
- collaborating, where appropriate and with the support of the student and their family, with any external allied health professionals, services or agencies that are supporting the student

- monitoring individual student attendance and developing an Attendance Improvement Plans in collaboration with the student and their family
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
  - with a disability
  - in Out of Home Care
  - and with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

#### **4. Identifying Students in Need of Support**

Aitken Creek Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Student Wellbeing team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Aitken Creek Primary School will utilise the following information and tools to identify students in need of extra emotional, social or educational support:

- personal, health and learning information gathered upon enrolment and while the student is enrolled
- attendance records
- academic performance
- observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation
- attendance, detention and suspension data
- engagement with families
- self-referrals or referrals from peers

#### **5. Student rights and responsibilities**

All members of our school community have a right to experience a safe and supportive school environment. We expect that all students, staff, parents and carers treat each other with respect and dignity. Our school's Statement of Values and School Philosophy highlights the rights and responsibilities of members of our community.

Students have the right to:

- participate fully in their education
- feel safe, secure and happy at school
- learn in an environment free from bullying, harassment, violence, discrimination or intimidation
- express their ideas, feelings and concerns
- Be treated justly and respectfully

Students have the responsibility to:

- participate fully in their educational program
- display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and members of the school community in all aspects of their schooling, including when online

- respect the right of others to learn
- display model positive behaviours
- attend school regularly and be punctual
- use technology in an appropriate manner following the ACPS Acceptable Use policy
- make responsible and thoughtful choices in line with with the school values documented within the matrix of expected behaviours

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.

## **6. Student behavioural expectations and management**

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's Statement of Values and School Philosophy. Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with Aitken Creek Primary School's ***Bullying Prevention Policy*** (see below).

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Aitken Creek Primary School will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's policies on behaviour, discipline and student wellbeing and engagement. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

Our school considers, explores and implements positive and non-punitive interventions that will teach and support pro-social student behaviour before considering disciplinary measures such as detention, withdrawal of privileges or withdrawal from class.

Disciplinary measures may be used as part of a staged response to inappropriate behaviour in combination with other engagement and support strategies to ensure that factors that may have contributed to the student's behaviour are identified and addressed. Disciplinary measures at our school will be applied fairly and consistently. Students will always be provided with an opportunity to be heard.

Disciplinary measures that may be applied include:

- warning a student that their behaviour is inappropriate
- teacher controlled consequences such as moving a student in a classroom or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour
- withdrawal of privileges - Schools are permitted to withdraw privileges from students as a logical consequence of breaches of school expectations.
- referral to the Head of Department
- restorative practices
- Detentions - when a student displays repeated undesirable behaviours, a teacher may keep a child in from recess breaks to either complete unfinished work or to enable the student to reflect on their choices. Notification to parents may be provided in writing notifying them of the events leading to the detention
- behaviour support and intervention meetings



- Exclusion from class - When a student's behaviour significantly interferes with the rights of other students to learn or the capacity of a teacher to teach a class, that student may be temporarily removed from regular classroom activities or, in more severe cases, required to leave the classroom for a specified period of time. For students who display ongoing disruptive behaviour, altered day arrangements will be considered.
- Suspension - We will only exclude a student from school in situations where all other measures have been implemented without success or where an immediate suspension is the only appropriate course of action in response to the student's behaviour. In applying consequences for unacceptable behaviour, both the individual circumstances and actions of the student and the needs and rights of school community members will be considered at all times. Consequences are applied to provide the opportunity for all students to learn, to ensure the safety of staff and students, and to assist students with accepting responsibility for their actions.

Reasons that a suspension can be enacted include:

- consistently behaving in an unproductive manner that interferes with the wellbeing, safety or educational opportunities of any other student
- Consistently engaging in behaviour that vilifies, defames, degrades or humiliates another person
- Failing to comply with any clear and reasonable instruction of a staff member so as to pose a danger, whether actual, perceived or threatened, to the health, safety or wellbeing of any person
- Possessing, using or selling or deliberately assisting another person to possess, use or sell illicit substances or weapons
- Committing or attempting to commit or is knowingly involved in the theft of property
- Causing significant damage to or destruction of property
- Behaving in such a way as to pose a danger, whether actual, perceived or threatened, to the health, safety or wellbeing of any person
- Expulsion - see DET Expulsions Policy below

Suspension, expulsion and restrictive interventions are measures of last resort and may only be used in situations consistent with Department policy, available at:

- [DET Suspensions Policy](#)
- [DET Expulsions Policy](#)
- [DET Restraint and Seclusion Policy](#)

In line with Ministerial Order 1125, no student aged 8 or younger will be expelled without the approval of the Secretary of the Department of Education and Training.

The Principal of Aitken Creek Primary School is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.

Corporal punishment is prohibited in our school and will not be used in any circumstance.

## **7. Engaging with families**

Aitken Creek Primary School values the input of parents and carers, and we will strive to support families to engage in their child's learning and build their capacity as active learners. We aim to be partners in learning with parents and carers in our school community.

We work hard to create successful partnerships with parents and carers by:

- ensuring that all parents have access to our school policies and procedures, available on our school website
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents and staff
- providing parent volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to school activities
- involving families with homework and other curriculum-related activities
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- Provide parent support information sessions
- including families in Student Support Groups, and developing individual plans for students.

## **8. Parent/Carer and Family behavioural expectations and management**

Behaviours that are considered inappropriate on and adjacent to school grounds or in relation to school business include when a person:

- is rude, aggressive or harasses others
- sends rude, confronting or threatening letters, emails or text messages
- is manipulative or threatening
- speaks in an aggressive tone, either in person or over the telephone
- makes sexist, racist or derogatory comments
- inappropriately uses social media as a forum to raise concerns/make complaints against the school
- is physically intimidating

Unreasonable behaviour and/or failure to uphold the school values may lead to further investigation and the implementation of appropriate consequences. This may include:

- utilising mediation and counselling services
- alternative communication strategies being applied
- formal notice preventing entry onto school premises or attendance at school activities. Written notice will follow any verbal notice given
- an intervention order being sought
- informing the police which may result in a charge of trespass or assault

## **9. Evaluation**

Aitken Creek Primary School will collect data each year to understand the frequency and types of wellbeing issues that are experienced by our students so that we can measure the success or otherwise of our school based strategies and identify emerging trends or needs.

Sources of data that will be assessed on an annual basis include:

- student survey data
- incidents data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Aitken Creek Primary School will also regularly monitor available data dashboards to ensure any wellbeing or engagement issues are acted upon in a timely manner and any intervention occurs as soon as possible.

## Communication

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

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included as annual reference on Compass

Our school will also ensure it follows the mandatory parent/carer notification requirements with respect to suspensions and expulsions outlined in the Department's policies at:

- [Suspension process](#)
- [Expulsions - Decision](#)

## Further Information and Resources

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

- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Bullying Prevention Policy (see below)
- Digital Technologies Policy

## Review cycle

<b>Policy last reviewed</b>	This policy was last updated in December 2023
<b>Consultation</b>	School Council parent members provided consultation on 6th December 2023
<b>Approved by</b>	Peter Katsikapis
<b>Next scheduled review date</b>	This policy is scheduled for review in August 2026

## Appendix:

# Bullying Prevention Policy



## Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the administration office who can support you further.

## Purpose

Aitken Creek Primary 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 Aitken Creek Primary School community
- make clear that no form of bullying at Aitken Creek Primary School will be tolerated
- outline the strategies and programs in place at Aitken Creek Primary 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 Aitken Creek Primary School.

When responding to bullying behaviour, Aitken Creek Primary 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.

Aitken Creek Primary School 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 Aitken Creek Primary School aims to prevent, address and respond to student bullying behaviour. Aitken Creek Primary School 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 Wellbeing and Engagement Policy and Inclusion and Diversity policy.

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 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
- It is ongoing and repeated, 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. Please see the [e-Safety Commissioner website](#) for more information.

### **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 procedures in our ***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. Aitken Creek Primary School will use its ***Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy*** to guide a response to single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression.

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. Further information about these forms of harassment, including definitions, is included in our ***Inclusion and Diversity Policy***. Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated at Aitken Creek Primary School and may have serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour. Aitken Creek Primary School will use its Student 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**

Aitken Creek Primary 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 behaviour that demonstrates our school values of Respect, Teamwork, Achievement and Responsibility.

Bullying prevention at Aitken Creek Primary School 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.
- 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 school framework of School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) and Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationship (RRRR) learning material encourage positive interactions between members of our school community. 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.

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

### **Incident Response**

#### ***Reporting concerns to Aitken Creek Primary School***

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

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 Aitken Creek Primary School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

We encourage students to speak to their teachers/Education Support Staff/Heads of Department. However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff including teachers and wellbeing staff.

Parents or carers who develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Aitken Creek Primary School should contact the school directly on 8338 3700.

### ***Investigations***

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

1. record the details of the allegations
2. inform appropriate staff involved, i.e. the relevant Head of Department, Student Wellbeing Team, Assistant Principal, Principal.

The Head of Department is responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, the Head of Department 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 with the Head of Department 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 Head of Department 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 in consultation with the Student Wellbeing Team, teachers, SSS, Assistant Principal, Principal and/or Department of Education and Training specialist staff.

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, Aitken Creek Primary School 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.

Aitken Creek Primary 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 Student Wellbeing Team, SSS or an external provider.
- Offer counselling support to the students engaging in bullying behaviour, including referral to the Student Wellbeing Team, SSS or an 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 an external provider.
- Facilitate a restorative meeting with all or some of the students involved. The objective of restorative conversations 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 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.
- 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.
- 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.

Aitken Creek Primary 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.

School staff are responsible for maintaining up to date records of the investigation of and responses to bullying behaviour.

## Communication

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

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes

## Further Information and Resources

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

- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy (see above)
- Digital Technologies 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:

- [Bully Stoppers](#)
- [Kids Helpline](#)
- [Lifeline](#)
- [Bullying. No way!](#)
- [Student Wellbeing Hub](#)
- [Office of the eSafety Commissioner](#)
- [Australian Student Wellbeing Framework](#)

## Review cycle

<b>Policy last reviewed</b>	This policy was last updated in December 2023
<b>Consultation</b>	School Council parent members provided consultation on 6th December 2023
<b>Approved by</b>	Peter Katsikapis
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