

# RED HILL CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL



## Bullying Prevention Policy

### POLICY and PROCEDURES

#### POLICY STATEMENT

Red Hill Consolidated School (RHCS) is committed to providing a safe and respectful teaching and learning environment where bullying and harassment is not tolerated. Red Hill Consolidated School believes that all students have the right to learn in a school environment in which they feel safe and secure.

This Bullying and Harassment Policy should be read in conjunction with the Red Hill Consolidated School Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy and the Student Code of Conduct.

#### PURPOSE

- To explain what bullying and harassment are, and the fact that they are unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
- To ask that everyone in the school community be alert to signs and evidence of bullying and have a responsibility to report it to staff whether as observer or victim.
- To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are appropriately investigated, addressed and that support is given to both victims and perpetrators.
- To seek parental and peer-group support in addressing and preventing bullying behaviour at RHCS.

When responding to bullying behaviour, RHCS aims to:

- be proportionate, consistent and responsive
- find a constructive and positive solution for everyone
- stop the bullying from happening again
- restore the relationships between the students involved.

RHCS 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 RHCS aims to prevent and respond to student bullying behaviour. RHCS 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.

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

## DEFINITIONS

**Bullying** is when a person, or a group of people, repeatedly upset or hurt another person or damage their property, reputation or social acceptance. Bullying may be direct physical, direct verbal, indirect or cyberbullying. Bullying is not a one-off disagreement between two or more people or a situation of mutual dislike.

Bullying may be direct or indirect, physical or verbal, and includes cyberbullying. Bullying is not a one-off disagreement between two or more people or a situation of mutual dislike. In this policy any reference to 'bullying' includes all forms of bullying including cyberbullying.

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, damaging a person's social reputation or social acceptance, or cyberbullying.

**Harassment** is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome and which is reasonably likely to humiliate, offend, intimidate or distress a person. For example, teasing a student because of their speech impediment.

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

### Other distressing behaviours

Many distressing behaviours may not constitute bullying even though they are unpleasant. Students who are involved in or who witness any distressing behaviours should report their concerns to school staff and our school will follow 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 harassment, nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If someone is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion, they are not being bullied. Harassment, nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different people is not the same as bullying. However, single episodes of harassment, nastiness or physical aggression are not acceptable behaviours at our school.

## BULLYING PREVENTION

RHCS 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 RHCS 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:

- Promotion and teaching of values Respect, Resilience, Responsibility, Empathy.
- 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 Buddy Program to 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.
- Staff professional Development programs occur periodically to keep staff informed of current issues/strategies for dealing with bullying and/or harassment issues.
- Zones of Regulation
- Fortnightly Newsletters promoting student wellbeing initiatives.
- Promote empathy through encouraging students to partake in 100 Acts Of Kindness.
- Embedded whole school mindfulness practices.

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

## INCIDENT RESPONSE

### Reporting concerns to RHCS

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.

In most circumstances, we encourage students to speak to their class teacher. However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff including teachers, wellbeing staff, school social worker etc.

Parents or carers who may develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at RHCS should contact Gus Wettenhall, Student Wellbeing Coordinator

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 RHCS are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

### Investigations

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

1. record the details of the allegations in Sentral
2. inform staff involved, i.e. the relevant Year Level Coordinator, Head of Wellbeing, Principal.

The Assistant Principal/Head of Wellbeing is responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, the Assistant Principal/Head of Wellbeing may:

- speak to the students involved in the allegations, including the victim/s, the alleged perpetrator/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 Assistant Principal/Head of Wellbeing 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 Assistant Principal/Head of Wellbeing 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 Student Wellbeing Team, teachers, SSS, Principal, Department of Education and Training specialist staff etc.

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, RHCS 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 victim student
- whether the perpetrator student or students have displayed similar behaviour before
- whether the bullying took place in a group or one-to-one context
- whether the perpetrator demonstrates insight or remorse for their behaviour
- the alleged motive of the behaviour, including any element of provocation.

Assistant Principal/Head of Wellbeing may implement all, or some of the following responses to bullying behaviours:

- Offer counselling support to the victim student or students, including referral to the Student Wellbeing Team, SSS.
- 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 victim student(s), the perpetrator students and a group of students who are likely to be supportive of the victim(s).
- Implement a Method of Shared Concern process with all students involved in the bullying.
- Implement disciplinary consequences for the perpetrator students, 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.
- Facilitate a Student Support Group meeting and/or Behaviour Support Plan for affected students.
- Prepare a Behaviour Management Plan restricting contact between victim and perpetrator students.

- Provide discussion and/or mentoring for different social and emotional learning competencies of the students.
- 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.

The Assistant Principal/Head of Wellbeing is responsible for maintaining up to date records of the investigation of and responses to bullying behaviour.

RHCS 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.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies: [insert details of your related school policies. A sample list is provided as follows]

- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Parent Complaints policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Equal Opportunity 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!](#)

### **EVALUATION**

This policy will be reviewed on an 2 year 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:

- discussion with students
- regular student bullying surveys
- regular staff surveys
- assessment of school based data, including the number of reported incidents of bullying in each year group and the effectiveness of the responses implemented.

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

### **REVIEW CYCLE**

This policy was last updated on May 2019 and is scheduled for review in 2021

### **LINKS AND APPENDICES**

Links which are connected with this policy are:

- DET's [Student Engagement Guidance](#)
- The school's Acceptable ICT Use Agreement (re: cyber-bullying)
- DET's [Bully Stoppers: Make a Stand, Lend a Hand](#)
- DET's [Vulnerable Students](#)

Supporting links:

- [Bully Free World: Special Needs Anti-bullying Toolkit](#)
- Australian Human Rights Commission - [Human rights in the school classroom](#)
- [Safe Schools Coalition Victoria](#)
- [Racism. No way!](#) anti-racism education for Australian schools

Appendices which are connected with this policy are:

- **Appendix A:** Anti-Bullying (including cyberbullying) and Anti-Harassment Procedures
- **Appendix B:** Reporting on Incident of Bullying / Harassment – Template

## Appendix A

### Anti-Bullying & Anti-Harassment Procedures

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#### How will a student's bullying complaint be dealt with?

Bullying complaints will be taken seriously and treated sensitively. School procedures for responding to a student who bullies or harasses others are set out below.

**Note:** If at any time bullying or harassment persists or is sufficiently serious, the principal may contact parents/carers and commence formal disciplinary action in accordance with the School's Student Engagement Policy/Student Code of Conduct and DET's Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance.

#### **Level 1**

If the bullying or harassment incident is minor or a first time occurrence, teachers may elect to use one or more of the following:

- stopping the bullying/re-statement of rules and consequences/reminder of Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Thinking About My Behaviour form
- restorative questioning
- reflection time
- private conference
- shared control discussion

If the student does not take control over his/her behaviour, the Student Welfare Coordinator /Year Level Coordinator/Assistant Principal/Principal should be notified.

#### **Level 2**

If the bullying or harassment continues, or in instances of severe bullying or harassment, a referral should be made to the Student Welfare Coordinator who may:

- provide counselling support to the victim
- Thinking About My Behaviour form
- meet with the perpetrator to develop a Behaviour Support Plan/other type of behaviour modification strategy document and meet with parents of the student to discuss strategies
- provide discussion/mentoring of different social and emotional learning competencies including structured learning activities
- conduct a restorative conference separately with the perpetrator and "target"

#### **Level 3**

If the bullying or harassment continues still, or in instances of extreme bullying or harassment, a referral should be made to the Student Welfare Coordinator who may:

- Withdraw privileges, which may include withdrawal from the yard, classroom or specialist programs.
- Suspend the perpetrator.
- Provide continued support for victim, which may include making a referral to services

## Appendix B

### Red Hill Consolidated School - Reporting on Incident of Bullying / Harassment

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Staff member recording incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: / \_\_\_ /

Name of student(s) who appears to have instigated bullying

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Year/Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of target(s)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of witnesses

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Did you observe the incident? YES  No

If 'No' who reported the incident to you? \_\_\_\_\_

Brief description of incident (what was allegedly said or done to the student who appears to have been bullied?)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What form(s) of bullying took place? Verbal  Physical  Indirect  Cyber

Other  Please detail: \_\_\_\_\_



Describe how you responded (Did you use a school anti-bullying practice?)

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Describe how student responded to your intervention

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**Where / when / time incident took place:**

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

When: \_\_\_\_\_ before school  recess  lunch  in class  \_\_\_\_\_ after school

Time: \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ am/pm

Date incident took place: \_\_ / \_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional comments:**

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