



FRANKSTON HIGH SCHOOL

BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY

Approved November 2019

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Policy Statement

Frankston High School is committed to providing a safe and caring environment and culture which enables positive relationships to be formed amongst all students and staff and which encourages self-esteem, cooperation, personal growth and a positive attitude to learning and teaching. A clear policy on bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment will inform the community that bullying and harassment in any of its forms will not be tolerated.

Frankston High 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
- Make clear that all forms of bullying at Frankston High School will not be tolerated
- 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 victims, bystanders and perpetrators)
- Seek parental and peer group support in addressing and preventing bullying behaviour at Frankston High School

When responding to bullying behaviour, Frankston High School 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

Frankston High 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 applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our school's Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy, Inclusion and Diversity Policy, Duty of Care Policy and Statement of Values and School Philosophy.

Definition

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:

- *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.

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.

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 processes as described in its *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. Frankston High 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 two forms of harassment, including definitions, is set out in our *Inclusion and Diversity Policy*. Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated at Frankston High School and may have serious consequences for students engaging in this behaviour. Frankston High 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

Frankston High 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 acceptance, kindness and respect.

Bullying prevention at Frankston High 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
- 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 Resilience Program seeks 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
- Professional development for staff relating to bullying including cyber-bullying, harassment and the strategies that counter-act them
- To provide programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving
- A bullying survey and yard survey will be administered and acted upon annually
- Each classroom teacher to clarify at the start of each year the school policy on bullying
- Structured activities available to students at recess and lunch breaks

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

Incident Response

Reporting Concerns to Frankston High 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.

In most circumstances, we encourage students to speak to their Year Level Coordinator or a member of the wellbeing staff. However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff.

Parents or carers who may develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Frankston High School should contact the school administration on 9783 7955.

Investigations

When notified of alleged bullying behaviour, school staff:

- Record the details of the allegations
- Inform the appropriate staff (Year level coordinators /wellbeing staff or Assistant Principal)
- The Year Level Coordinator is responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, the Year Level

Coordinator 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 relating to investigating an allegation of bullying will be managed sensitively. Investigations will be completed promptly 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 school 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.

The school may choose to implement some or all of the following strategies:

- Offer counselling support to the victim student or students
- Offer counselling support to the perpetrator student or students
- Offer counselling support to affected students, including witnesses and/or friends of the victim student, including referral to [insert i.e. the Student Wellbeing Team, SSS, external provider]
- Facilitate a restorative practice meeting with all or some of the students involved
- 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

- 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 an Individual Management Plan restricting contact between victim and perpetrator 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 Year Level Coordinators are responsible for maintaining up to date records of the investigation of and responses to bullying behaviour.

Frankston High School understands the importance of monitoring the progress of students who have been involved in or affected by bullying behaviour. Our ability to effectively reduce and eliminate bullying behaviour is greatly affected by students reporting concerning behaviour as soon as possible, so that the responses implemented by Frankston High School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

Further Information and Resources

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/what.aspx>

Evaluation

This will be reviewed on an [annual basis/1-2 year basis] following analysis of school data on reported incidents of, and responses to bullying to ensure that this 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 school council.