



Help for non-English speakers, if you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the school office.

PURPOSE

Barton 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 a shared understanding amongst all members of the Barton Primary School community
- make clear that no form of bullying at Barton Primary School will be tolerated
- outline the strategies and programs in place at Barton 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 understand the importance of reporting 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, witnesses and students engaging in bullying behaviour)
- seek parental and peer group support in addressing and preventing bullying behaviour at Barton Primary School

When responding to bullying behaviour, Barton 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

Barton 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.

This policy also supports Barton Primary School's obligations under Victoria's Child Safe Standards. Preventing and responding to bullying helps us meet Standard 8 (ensuring staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe) and Standard 9 (ensuring physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing and minimise the risk of harm)

SCOPE

This policy addresses how Barton Primary School aims to prevent, address and respond to student bullying behaviour. Barton Primary School recognises that there are many other types of inappropriate student behaviours that do not meet the definition of bullying but are still unacceptable at our school. These other inappropriate behaviours will be managed in accordance with our Student Code of Conduct, Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy, and Inclusion and Diversity Policy.

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions. It also applies to bullying behaviour between students that occurs outside of school hours, where the behaviour impacts on student wellbeing and safety at school. Cyberbullying is treated with the same seriousness as face-to-face bullying. Barton Primary School recognises that online behaviours often occur outside of school hours or off school grounds but can have a direct impact on student wellbeing, safety, and learning at school. In these cases, the school will respond in line with this policy and relevant Department of Education guidelines. Students and families are encouraged to report cyberbullying to the school as soon as possible so that we can provide timely support, respond appropriately, and work in partnership with parents, carers, and external agencies where required.

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. 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
- It involves behaviours that can cause harm

There are four main types of bullying behaviour:

- **Physical** – examples include hitting, pushing, shoving, intimidating or otherwise physically hurting another person, damaging or stealing their belongings. This includes threats of violence.
- **Verbal/written** – examples include name-calling or insulting someone about an attribute, quality or personal characteristic.
- **Covert** - examples include deliberately excluding someone, spreading rumours, or speaking negatively about someone behind their back
- **Social (sometimes called relational or emotional bullying)** – examples include 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.
- **Cyberbullying** – any form of bullying behaviour that occurs online or via a mobile device. It can be verbal or written and may include threats of violence as well as images, videos and/or audio.

Bullying can be a form of racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia or other type of social prejudice when the behaviour is targeted at an individual or group because of a personal characteristic, such as race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability. Our school's Anti-Racism Policy and Inclusion and Diversity Policy provide further detail on how such behaviours are addressed.

For further information about bullying, refer to:

- [Bully Stoppers \(education.vic.gov.au\)](http://education.vic.gov.au)
- Department's [Bullying Prevention and Response](#) policy on the Policy and Advisory Library.

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 or inappropriate behaviours should report their concerns to school staff. The school will follow our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy and/or this Bullying Prevention Policy where appropriate.

- **Mutual conflict** involves an argument or disagreement between people with no imbalance of power. 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, such behaviours are not acceptable at our school and may have serious consequences. The Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy will guide responses to these incidents.
- **Harassment** is language or actions that are demeaning, offensive or intimidating. It includes sexual harassment and disability harassment.
- **Discrimination** is behaviour that treats someone unfavourably because of a personal characteristic (e.g., race, religious belief, disability, sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation).

Discrimination, harassment, and any other inappropriate behaviour are not tolerated at Barton Primary School. Serious consequences may apply for students engaging in such behaviour. Refer to our Inclusion and Diversity Policy for more information.

BULLYING PREVENTION

Barton Primary School has a number of programs and strategies in place to build a positive and inclusive school culture and relationships that promote wellbeing. We foster a school culture that prevents bullying by modelling, encouraging and teaching behaviour aligned with our school values: **Be Safe, Be a Learner, Be Respectful, and Be Kind.**

Our bullying prevention approach is supported by research indicating that a whole-school, multifaceted strategy is most effective. At Barton Primary School:

- We implement a School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) framework to teach and promote positive behaviours that prevent bullying
- We have a dedicated Wellbeing Team that provides both proactive and responsive support for bullying and other social concerns
- We build strong partnerships between school, families, and the broader community to ensure shared responsibility for student safety
- We participate in the Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships (RRRR) initiative to explicitly teach the behaviours that promote respect, anti-violence and gender equality
- Our Year 5 & 6 students complete the eSmart Digital Licence+ program through the Alannah and Madeline Foundation to build digital safety and intelligence
- We teach multicultural education and Aboriginal history, and celebrate the diversity of our school community to build social cohesion and mutual respect

- We use Safe Schools resources when appropriate to create a supportive environment for LGBTIQ+ students
- Teachers use classroom management strategies that discourage bullying and reinforce positive behaviour
- Year-level programs and incursions raise awareness of bullying and its impacts
- Social and emotional learning in classrooms includes strategies to build resilience, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving
- We promote upstander behaviour, encouraging students to act safely and responsibly when witnessing bullying
- Students are encouraged to look out for one another and seek help from trusted adults
- We participate annually in the **National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence**

For more on our wellbeing and inclusion initiatives, refer to the Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy.

INCIDENT RESPONSES

REPORTING CONCERNS TO BARTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bullying is not tolerated at Barton Primary School. All bullying complaints will be taken seriously by all staff members and responded to sensitively, promptly, and with proportionate consequences.

Students experiencing or witnessing bullying behaviour are encouraged to report their concerns to school staff or another trusted adult as soon as possible. Timely reporting enables us to respond effectively and appropriately. We encourage students to speak with their Classroom Teacher. They may also approach any trusted staff member, including Wellbeing staff and the Leadership Team.

Barton Primary School values working in partnership with parents and carers to resolve bullying concerns. Families are encouraged to maintain open communication with the school so we can work together to support student wellbeing. Parents or carers concerned about bullying should first contact their child's classroom teacher. If further support is required, please contact the school.

Phone: (03) 8766 4000 | Email: barton.ps@education.vic.gov.au

INVESTIGATIONS

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

- Record the details of the allegations on Compass; and
- Inform the relevant Year Level Leader, Student Wellbeing Team, and Assistant Principal.

The **Wellbeing Team** is responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely, sensitive, and proportionate manner. Investigations may involve:

- Speaking with those involved in the allegations, including the target/s, alleged perpetrator/s, and any witnesses.
- Speaking with the parent/carer(s) of students involved.
- Consulting with the relevant classroom teachers and staff.
- Taking detailed notes of all discussions for documentation and future reference.
- Obtaining written statements, where appropriate.

All communications during the investigation will be handled respectfully and confidentially. The goal of the investigation is to determine:

- The nature of the conduct,
- The students involved, and

- The most effective and appropriate response.

Note: Serious bullying, including serious cyberbullying, may constitute a criminal offence and could be referred to Victoria Police under [Brodie's Law](#).

RESPONSES TO BULLYING BEHAVIOURS

Once the Wellbeing Team has established a clear understanding of the incident(s), they will consult with relevant stakeholders — including classroom teachers, SSS (Student Support Services), the Assistant Principal, and Principal — to implement appropriate, evidence-based responses.

In line with Barton Primary School's values of Be Safe, Be a Learner, Be Respectful and Be Kind, and consistent with the School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) and Respectful Relationships (RRRR) frameworks, the following factors will be considered:

- the age, maturity and individual circumstances 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.

Barton Primary School prioritises supportive, educational, and restorative responses to bullying behaviours. Our first aim is to help students build the skills, empathy, and understanding needed to prevent further harm and to repair relationships where possible. Disciplinary measures will only be considered when supportive strategies have not been effective, when the behaviour is severe, or when student safety requires immediate protective action. The Wellbeing Team may implement all, or some of the following responses to bullying behaviours:

- **Provide targeted wellbeing support** via school Youth Workers or referral to SSS for:
 - the student(s) targeted
 - the student(s) engaging in bullying behaviour
 - bystanders or peer witnesses who may be affected.
- **Facilitate a restorative practice session** to repair harm, promote empathy, and restore relationships where possible.
- **Hold a mediation meeting** between students (only when all parties are willing) to discuss conflict resolution and build understanding.
- Develop a **Behaviour Support Plan** as needed.
- **Establish a Safety Plan** to ensure the ongoing safety and wellbeing of students, including strategies to minimise contact between students involved.
- **Monitor student behaviour** over time and conduct follow-ups to ensure interventions are effective.
- **Deliver targeted social-emotional learning sessions** within the year level or cohort, e.g., through SWPBS focus lessons, classroom discussions, or Wellbeing Team presentations. Positive behaviours may be acknowledged via tools like **Class Dojo points**.
- **Apply proportionate disciplinary measures** aligned with the *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy*, the *Ministerial Order on Suspensions and Expulsions*, and other relevant DET policies. These may include:
 - Loss of access to activities or privileges,
 - Detention,
 - Suspension,
 - Expulsion (in serious cases).

Barton 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.

The Wellbeing Team is 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
- Included in our staff handbook/manual
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request



FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies available on our school website:

- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Complaints policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy

Our school also follows Department of Education and Training policy relating to bullying including:

- [Bullying Prevention and Response](#)
- [Cybersafety and Responsible Use of Digital Technologies](#)
- [Equal Opportunity and Human Rights - Students](#)
- [LGBTIQA+ Student Support 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](#)
- [Report racism or religious discrimination in schools](#)
- [Kids Helpline](#)
- [ReachOut Australia](#)
- [Lifeline](#)
- [Bullying. No way!](#)
- [Student Wellbeing Hub](#)
- [eSafety Commissioner](#)
- [Australian Student Wellbeing Framework](#)

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed every **two years**, or earlier if required following a bullying incident, to ensure it remains effective, relevant, and aligned with current research and DET guidelines. If legislative or departmental policy changes occur before the next scheduled review, this policy will be updated sooner to remain compliant.

Data to inform this review will be collected through:

- discussion and consultation with students and parent/carers
- regular student, staff and parent/carer surveys
- assessment of other school-based data, including Compass data analysis (frequency/types of incidents logged), Wellbeing Team case notes and student focus groups
- Attitudes to School Survey
- Parent Opinion Survey

Proposed amendments to this policy will be discussed with student representative groups, parents groups, school council and staff.

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	26/07/2025
Consultation	Assistant Principal: Engagement, Leading Teachers, Wellbeing and Inclusion Leaders, School Council & Families
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	26/07/2027



BULLYING PROCESS



BARTON PRIMARY SCHOOL BULLYING

ZERO TOLERANCE



WHAT IS BULLYING

Bullying is **deliberate, targeted** and **repeated** behaviour that hurts someone else through words, actions, or exclusion. It involves a misuse of power to make someone feel unsafe, scared, left out, or targeted for being different.

WHAT BULLYING IS NOT

Bullying is not the same as everyday conflict.

One-off arguments, disagreements, or accidental actions are not considered bullying. However, all unkind behaviour is taken seriously at Barton, and we respond respectfully to support relationship repair.

DIFFERENT FORMS OF BULLYING



Physical Bullying
"Hurting someone with your hands or body."

- Hitting, kicking or pushing
- Tripping or bumping on purpose
- Taking or breaking someone's things



Verbal Bullying
"Using words to hurt someone's feelings."

- Name-calling or teasing
- Saying mean or rude things
- Threatening to hurt someone



Covert Bullying
"Hiding the bullying so others don't notice."

- Whispering about someone
- Giving nasty looks
- Passing around mean notes or secrets



Cyber Bullying
"Using devices or the internet to be unkind or hurtful."

- Sending mean or rude messages
- Posting or sharing hurtful photos or videos
- Leaving people out in group chats or online games



Social Bullying
"Leaving someone out on purpose to make them feel alone."

- Not letting someone join in a game or group
- Telling others not to play with or talk to someone
- Pretending someone doesn't exist

WE PROMOTE UPSTANDER BEHAVIOUR

A **bystander** is someone who sees or knows that bullying is happening. If they choose to do nothing, the behaviour may continue. At Barton, we encourage all students to be Upstanders. Individuals who stand beside those being targeted, report concerns to a trusted adult, and show kindness and support to help make things right.

WE TAKE BULLYING SERIOUSLY

We have a clear and consistent approach to addressing bullying. Our process focuses on education, accountability, and support, helping students learn from their choices while keeping everyone safe.

STEP 1: REPORT

- A student, parent, or staff member reports suspected bullying.
- Staff record the concern on Compass Chronicle.
- Notify the Year Level Leader, Wellbeing Team, and Assistant Principal.



STEP 2: INVESTIGATE

- The Wellbeing Team/Leadership leads the investigation:
- Speak to the student who was targeted.
 - Speak to the student(s) allegedly bullying.
 - Speak to any witnesses, staff, and parents as needed.
 - Take detailed notes; gather written statements if required.



STEP 3: DETERMINE NEXT STEPS

- The Wellbeing Team reviews findings with leadership and key staff.
- They consider:
 - Student age, intent, and history
 - Severity and impact
 - Group dynamics and level of remorse



STEP 4: RESPOND

- Support is provided for all students involved, which may include:
- Wellbeing support or referrals
 - Restorative conversations | Mediation sessions
 - Safety Plans to minimise further contact
 - Positive BSP for repeated behaviour
 - Targeted year-level wellbeing lessons



STEP 5: FOLLOW UP & MONITOR

- Ongoing check-ins with all students involved.
- Monitor student relationships and behaviour over time.
- Provide updates to parents/carers where appropriate.
- Record all actions in Compass and Wellbeing files.



If bullying behaviour is repeated after preventative and supportive strategies have been implemented, Barton Primary School will review and revise the student's Safety Plan and/or Behaviour Support Plan. Additional consequences may be applied, such as suspension, in line with Department policy. The matter will be escalated to the Principal, and external supports may be engaged to ensure the ongoing safety and wellbeing of the targeted student.